Description:

Please expand your previous report on extended health benefits (which the Executive Committee appreciates given the short time frame) by consulting Vice President for Diversity Christine Stanley, Dean of Faculties Antonio Cepeda-Benito, the Diversity Committee, and peer institutions regarding possible extensions to health benefits such as “employee plus one”.

Action:

Please see attached.
Whereas the Personnel & Welfare Committee of the Faculty Senate finds that:

1) the limitation of health care benefits to TAMU employees, spouses, and their children restricts the ability of TAMU to recruit and retain faculty and staff and remain competitive in both university and private industry markets;

2) a majority of TAMU’s peer and aspirant schools offer health care benefits to the same-sex domestic partners of their faculty and staff, and sometimes to the children of these partners, even in States where recognition of same-sex marriage and civil unions is expressly prohibited;

3) at least 83% of Fortune 100 companies and at least 59% of Fortune 500 companies offer health care coverage to the same-sex domestic partners of their employees (as of 2009);

4) a number of health benefit carriers in Texas offer same-sex domestic partner coverage (including Aetna, CIGNA HealthCare, UNICARE, and United Healthcare, among others);

5) the Uniform Insurance Benefits Act for Employees of the University of Texas System and the Texas A & M System appear to empower the Texas A & M University System to create a new category of beneficiary for health care provision in order for the units within the System to recruit and retain faculty and staff in a competitive fashion; and

6) the Texas Family Code and the Texas State Constitution appears to allow for such a beneficiary to be based on a generic “plus-1” category where the additional beneficiary designation could be based on proof of financial dependence but NOT specifically on same-sex domestic partner designation;

Therefore be it resolved that the Faculty Senate request the TAMUS Board of Regents to create such a category of beneficiary to receive health care benefits at TAMU.

Note: The interpretations of the Uniform Insurance Benefits Act for Employees of the University of Texas System and the Texas A & M System, the Texas Family Code, and the Texas State Constitution are based on a legal report commissioned by the University of Texas Faculty Council (report issued 9/2/09) and an independent investigation conducted by Dr. Ramona Paetzold, J.D. and Chair, Personnel & Welfare Committee.