

October 21, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Nancy Kinnersley, President of University Senate
Chris Steadham, President of Faculty Senate

FROM: Diane Goddard, Vice Provost for Administration & Finance
Mary Lee Hummert, Vice Provost for Faculty Development

SUBJECT: University Senate's Proposal to Expand Tuition Assistance

Dear Nancy and Chris,

Thank you for submitting the University Senate task force report on tuition assistance and University Senate's endorsement of the proposal to increase tuition assistance coverage.

The recommendations of the task force would result in significant changes to our current tuition assistance program. These changes include:

1. Expand tuition assistance to cover the dependents, spouses, and domestic partners of faculty and staff. Currently, only direct employees of the institution, faculty and staff, are eligible for the tuition assistance program.
2. Increase the number of credit hours covered by the tuition assistance program to 7 credits per semester without expense. Currently, one course or up to 5 credits hours are covered by the program.
3. Expand coverage to all full-time and part-time employees who have at least 6 months of service. Currently, faculty and staff must hold a 50% or higher appointment in order to qualify for the program.

As the task force notes in their report, Bold Aspirations includes goals that can be linked to employee benefits programs such as the tuition assistance program. At this time, the Classification/Market Study is our active project in conjunction with implementation of Bold Aspirations goal 5: Developing Excellence in People. This study will provide data to allow us to revise our classification and salary system, while also ensuring that the salaries of our employees are competitive in the marketplace. Retaining and attracting highly-qualified and engaged employees is critical for the success of KU.

The report recommends using savings from changing for Excellence to pay for the expansion of the program. Indeed, the savings from CFE will be used to transform KU in order to invest in our Bold Aspiration priorities.

Before we could implement this proposal, we would need to develop financial models to enable us to make predictions regarding the budgetary impact of each recommendation. Among other data points, we would need a better estimate of the number of college age dependents of our faculty and staff. A paramount concern for leaders at KU, our governing Board of Regents, and our institutional accreditors is that we are responsible stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us, even more so given our current fiscal climate.

The detailed report provides clear evidence that the task force conducted a good deal of research in developing the report. We appreciate the work and creative ideas of the task force. Thank you for taking the time to communicate these ideas regarding additional efforts through which we can develop excellence in our employees.

cc: Ola Faucher, Human Resources
Kathleen Levy, University Governance
Amy Smith, Policy Office