



## **University of Pittsburgh Education Benefits Policy Committee Charter**

### **I. Preamble**

This body is called the Education Benefits Policy Committee (Committee). It is authorized by the Chancellor and will serve at the Chancellor's discretion. The Chancellor has authorized the Senior Vice Chancellor for Business and Operations (SVC-BO) to direct the operations of this Committee, consistent with the terms of this Charter. This Charter outlines the purpose, relevant background, scope, responsibilities, composition, and operations of the Committee, as well as the review process for any proposals generated by this Committee.

This document should be read in conjunction with Policy AO 01, Establishing University Policies, and all other applicable University policies, protocols, and procedures.

### **II. Purpose**

The Committee is created for the purpose of proposing new or updated University Policy (or Policies), and supporting documents, that govern tuition benefits available to eligible faculty and staff, as well as their spouses, domestic partners, and dependents.

### **III. Background**

Currently, the rules governing the eligibility for education benefits to University staff and faculty, their spouses, domestic partners, and dependents is governed by the following four University Policies:

- AC 21, Employee/Spouse/Dependent Scholarships for Faculty; Dated March 2011;
- AC 20, Effect of Separation on Eligibility for Faculty Scholarship; Dated July 1994;
- ER 05, Effect of Separation on Eligibility for Tuition Benefits; Dated July 1994; and
- ER 06, Employee/Spouse/Dependent Scholarships Staff; Dated July 1994.

As noted above these policies have not been updated in several years and in some cases over two decades. This Committee will review these policies together to comprehensively address the way the University administers these benefits, including examining whether these policies could be combined or streamlined to improve implementation by the University and comprehension by members of the University community who are seeking to use the education benefits.

This comprehensive review is also needed to address how these policies are implemented. For instance, potential inequities between the faculty and staff requirements related to the timing and eligibility have been identified by members of the University community. Also, given the length

of time since these policies were reviewed, it is now necessary to examine which programs are eligible for the benefit.

Finally, the University must comply with certain reporting requirements regarding its tuition remission. This comprehensive review will allow the University to identify more efficient methods by which it can comply with these requirements.

#### **IV. Scope and Authority**

The Committee will recommend a revised or new University Policy (or Policies), and supplemental documents (e.g., guidelines and procedures), which will govern the education benefits offered by the University. In doing so, the Committee's deliberations must address the following topics:

- Procedures and Standards. Revise or develop procedures and standards associated with using the University education benefit in support of any new or updated Policy (or Policies), including those necessary to ensure compliance with relevant federal/state/local laws.
- Clarity. Ensure any new or updated Policy (or Policies), and any associated procedures and guidelines, describe the requirements and guidelines in a way that can be understood by the University community.
- Cost. Consider potential changes in cost of the education benefit to the institution given potential changes to eligibility.
- Recruitment and Retention. Consider the impact of proposed changes to the Policies may have in the University's recruitment and retention of employees.
- Eligible Programs. In consultation with Deans (or representatives), consider any potential limitation on the types of programs that can be eligible for the education benefit.
- Eligible Recipients. Develop criteria for a person to be considered eligible for the education benefit, and where possible, make that criteria consistent between faculty and staff including employees of the Medical Health Sciences Foundation.

#### **V. Responsibilities**

As provided above, the Committee is created to propose a new or updated University Policy (or Policies), and its supplemental documents (e.g., guidelines and procedures), on the availability of education benefits. To perform this function, the Committee has the responsibility to:

- Review and consider current University policies, practices, and processes related to education benefits;
- Research and discuss best practices in higher education for education benefits, including a benchmarking of peer universities' respective policies;

- Consistent with the terms of this Charter, consult with University Deans (or their representatives) to ensure various school standards (e.g., degree requirements) are appropriately taken into consideration;
- Consult with PAE on the application of this policy to the Medical Health Sciences Foundation.
- Recommend a new or updated draft Policy (or Policies) for review pursuant to the process described in Section VIII below and consider feedback received during that review.
- Recommend a draft procedure (or procedures) needed for the effective and efficient implementation of the new or updated Policy (or Policies).

It is expected that the Committee will work in confidence to have full and frank discussion of all options. Individual members should maintain the deliberations of the Committee confidential and are expected to not discuss the content of the Committee's deliberations outside of the Committee, unless authorized to do so by the Committee. The broader community will have an opportunity to consider the Committee's proposals pursuant to the process described in Section VIII below.

## **VI. Composition**

This Committee, at the direction of the VC-HR, will be chaired by **John Kozar**, Assistant Vice Chancellor, University Benefits. The Committee will include the following members:

1. **Victoria Lancaster**, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Operational Excellence, Business and Operations
2. **Michaela Hardy**, Administrative Assistant, Benefits Department
3. **Ivy Pan**, Student Financial Services
4. **Amy Tuttle**, Director, Faculty Affairs, Office of the Provost
5. **Jennifer Seng**, Assistant Vice Chancellor & Deputy Chief Legal Officer
6. **Pamala Rikstad**, Staff Association Council and Senior Department Administrator, Department of Communication Science and Disorders
7. **Chris Bonneau**, Immediate Past President Faculty Senate and Professor of Political Science
8. **Linda Tashbook**, Chair, Faculty Senate Benefits and Welfare Committee
9. **Linda Renninger**, Payroll Director
10. **James Vesco**, Director, Tax Department
11. **Christian Stumpf**, Vice President, Student Affairs Johnstown Campus

**Anthony Graham**, Senior Policy Specialist, will help facilitate and support the Committee's work on behalf of the Office of Policy Development and Management.

## **VII. Operations**

The Committee will meet once per month or more frequently as circumstances dictate, until the work set forth above is complete. The Committee's proposed new or updated Policy (or

Policies), and supporting documents (e.g., guidelines and procedures), will be submitted to the SVC-BO in Spring 2022. The SVC-BO may ask for interim status reports.

After the SVC-BO's review is complete, the draft new or updated Policy (or Policies) will be submitted to the Office of Policy Development and Management (Policy Office) to coordinate its review consistent with Policy AO 01.

### **VIII. Proposed Policy Review Process**

The review process for the Committee's recommended new or updated Policy (or Policies) will include:

- University comment period;
- Council of Deans;
- University Senate's Benefits and Welfare Committee;
- Faculty Assembly;
- University Senate Council; and
- Administration Leadership

The Committee will coordinate with the Policy Office to consider feedback provided throughout this process.

Once this review process is complete, the proposed new or updated Policy (or Policies) will be sent to the Policy Office for review and submission to the Chancellor in accordance with Policy AO 01.

### **IX. Amendment**

Any amendments to this Charter must be made in accordance with Policy AO 01 and receive the approval of the Chancellor or designee.

This Committee shall expire on the publication of a new University Policy (or Policies) that governs education benefits, unless otherwise directed by the Chancellor.