Benefits Liaison Group (BLG) 2015

The Purpose
The Benefits Liaison Group is intended to contribute to shared governance by providing a sounding board for full discussion of issues who knows or comes to know and understands the fringe benefits offerings at Michigan Tech. It is an avenue to learn the issues and evaluate the possible options given the limited resources.

The Charge
To review and evaluate the current fringe benefit package which includes but may not be limited to retirement, health/dental, and wellness.

To provide recommendations to the Vice President for Administration on fringe benefits plans to attract and retain exceptional faculty and administrative talent. The BLG will contribute in a collaborative manner that takes into account developing recommendations that will be cost effective given the University’s competing resources. The recommendations must include supporting information. The BLG is encouraged to benchmark with institutions that the University competes with for talented faculty and staff. Also the BLG may consider developing surveys and creating focus groups, if appropriate. The BLG should offer several options, with costing considerations for the employee/retiree/University.

Group Structure
The membership of the BLG in whole would reflect both diversity of the employee/retiree, and have the demonstrated knowledge and experience in higher education with expertise in fringe benefits, finances, budgeting and auditing.

Each member is expected, over a very short period of time, to gain a working understanding of the complicated issues surrounding fringe benefits campus-wide.

Members will include:
- ONE representative from Financial Services and Operations appointed by the Executive Director of Financial Services and Operations;
- TWO representatives elected by a vote of the full Senate, one faculty and one staff;
- ONE representative elected by Staff Council;
- ONE faculty appointed by the Provost;
- ONE staff appointed by the Vice President for Administration;
- ONE department dean/chair appointed by the Provost;
- ONE retiree appointed by the Vice President for Administration; and
- The Manager of Benefits (or one holding similar title/responsibility) will serve as ex-officio member and chair of the BLG.
Governance

The Vice President for Administration will call the first meeting to provide an overview of the role and responsibilities of the BLG. The Chair will arrange all meetings, develop the agenda in consultation with all BLG members, and invite personnel/guests, such as consultants, as necessary.

The BLG works on the principle of consensus in making recommendations to the Vice President for Administration. However, the BLG will adopt the majority vote, of those present, in the event that consensus is not possible. The Chair will vote only to break a tie.

The BLG will meet regularly at key decision making times during the benefit calendar cycle, but at least two (2) times during the academic year. Meetings during the summer will be determined as needed.

All deliberations and meetings will be confidential until such time that the BLG has vetted the options and determines the need to distribute information and/or solicit the campus community for feedback. Final recommendations of the BLG are non-binding. Any public releases will be in accordance with all proprietary agreements.

The BLG is an advisory administrative group seeking to promote understanding and communication, acknowledges the role of other committees, task forces, or groups, including the Senate Fringe Benefit Committee (FBC). The FBC has been assigned the responsibility for matters pertaining to benefits under the University Senate Constitution. The FBC provides contributions regarding and receives information on such issues through the Senate members on the BLG. It will also utilize the BLG as the primary link for communication to the administration.

The BLG will work according to any rule of order that it adopts.

The effectiveness of the BLG will be evaluated after two (2) years to determine continuation or modifications.