

**Annual Report of  
Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee, 2018-2019**

1. Health and Wellness Programs – The committee has engaged in discussions on the possibility of an employee wellness program over the last two years. A subcommittee on employee wellness was created for the purposes of engaging in deeper discussion on topics related to his important priority. The subcommittee created a quick online survey for the purposes of obtaining input from faculty and staff concerning the most desired types of wellness initiatives. At the present moment, the Human Resources team is considering the questions included for possible distribution in the future. At the same time, the Human Resource team has created its own committee for +exploring the feasibility of wellness programs at UCF. A liaison between the faculty and staff committee and the HR committee was put in place to ensure communication between the two work groups. The faculty and staff subcommittee on wellness also had the opportunity to meet with the Director of the wellness center at the College of Education. It was revealed that the current wellness center lacks resources to update its equipment and personnel to launch initiatives. Benchmarking was conducted on the wellness benefits offered by various universities. The conclusions from the benchmarking study suggest that all institutions offered some kind of wellness program, though the scope and budget associated with each varied greatly. The committee also explored the option of obtaining grant money to support wellness programs at the university. The current challenges to wellness at the university include the lack of budget for a wellness program, the need for a wellness champion to lead the initiative, and the lack of decision-making on health insurance plans (which usually sponsor some aspect of wellness such as biometric screenings). It is the recommendation of the committee, that the university expand the options for employee wellness.
  
2. OPS (Other Professional Services) employees and benefits: At the present moment, the University of Central Florida and other state universities employ a great number of workers under the OPS designation. This designation has a variety of benefits for the departments and universities, namely an expedited hiring process. Following the university closure for a week during the last hurricane to impact the central Florida area, many of these employees were not allowed to return to work. Since they have no paid time off, many of them received smaller paychecks during that period. Although the OPS category was originally intended as temporary employment, many workers remain under this category after years of employment at the university. The committee explored the possibility of offering some kind of emergency relief or emergency pay in the likelihood of a future natural disaster. Upon investigation, the committee discovered that Florida statutes prohibit offering benefits to OPS workers. Furthermore, the committee’s research revealed that the University of Florida established a pilot program whereby OPS workers are transferred to an employment agency. Since the program is new, the benefits and drawbacks of such practices are yet to be understood. The Human Resources team explained some of their plans for handling the hiring and onboarding of OPS employees in the future. The problem still remains that a great number of UCF employees are classified as OPS workers when in fact they have providing services to the university on a full-time basis for several years, thus being de facto regular (as opposed to temporary) employees. The committee recommends that the university conduct a study concerning the current employees in the OPS category and whether such designation is appropriate given the nature of their job, essential duties, and expected length of employment.

3. UCF E-Mail Access for Retirees – The committee discussed the lack of continuing access of faculty and A&P retirees to the UCF e-mail. At the present time, retiring faculty members are switched the “Knights E-Mail” a few months past retirement. The committee investigated the reasons for this policy, but found conflicting explanations. The committee is also aware that the Information Technology committee at the Faculty Senate is also engaged in a similar discussion. Furthermore, the committee is aware that this is a subject currently being collectively bargained. While not every retiree may wish to keep their original e-mail address, it is the committees’ recommendation that they’d be offer the option to continue with their original UCF e-mail address with the offering to reinstate access to their original e-mail address within a limited timeframe.
  
4. Leaves of Absence – The committee had several discussions about the option of a paid parental leave benefit to out of unit faculty and A&P workers at UCF. This topic was also discussed last year by the Personnel Committee. The faculty senate made a request, which was previously denied by the office of the Provost citing lack of resources. Given the current status of parental leave discussions at the university level, the committee decided to table this topic.

The committee met four times: November 30, 2018; February 4, 2019; March 18, 2019; and April 22, 2019.

Respectfully submitted:

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Chair  
Faculty and Staff Benefits Committee  
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