

Ad Hoc Committee for Domestic Partner Benefits
motions to the Faculty Senate

MOTION #1:

That the Faculty Senate recommend that Eastern Kentucky University adopt the following definition of domestic partnership and add it to the Faculty/Staff Handbook.

Proposed definition:

A domestic partner is defined as a person over 18, unrelated by blood to an extent that would preclude marriage under the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, who has demonstrable financial interdependence with an employee of Eastern Kentucky University and shares an exclusive relationship which both partners intend to maintain indefinitely.

MOTION #2:

That the Faculty Senate extend the following recommendation to the President and the Board of Regents to consider:

Eastern Kentucky University considers domestic partners of employees, as defined by the Faculty/Staff Handbook, to be eligible for all benefits extended by the University to spouses of married employees. Eligible employees must complete the Declaration of Domestic Partner Relationship form to enroll the non-employee partner for benefits, and a Termination of Domestic Partner Relationship form must be completed within sixty days of the dissolution of a domestic partner relationship.



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Memorandum

March 16, 2000

To: Dr. Robert Kustra, President

From: William C. Goodwin
William Goodwin, Assistant Professor of Music
Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Domestic Partner Benefits

SUBJ: Preliminary Report on Domestic Partner Benefits

Dear President Kustra,

The enclosed report is being submitted to you and the University Counsel for review. The committee has reached a general consensus that providing benefits to Domestic Partners represents a logical extension of the non-discrimination statement recently adopted by Eastern Kentucky University.

Members of the Committee are continuing their research and, after consultation with both you and University Counsel, will issue a final report. We made the decision that the wisest course in this matter would be to propose only those benefits changes which would fall completely within the purview of the University. Issues requiring legislative action would be better served as a separate and subsequent initiative.

You will find supporting information in the Appendices of the preliminary report. I would also like to direct you to:

<http://www.music.eku.edu/faculty/goodwin/comreportpg1.htm>

There are links at the bottom of that page to other sources, which I update continuously. There is a considerable amount of attention being devoted to this issue across the country, and Eastern Kentucky University is definitely not alone in considering extension of benefits to domestic partners.

Please call me with any questions or concerns you have regarding this report and I will relay them to my committee. We look forward to working with you to craft a policy for the University which will help us to recruit and retain the best available faculty and staff.

Cc: Katherine Coleman, University Counsel



Preliminary Report on Domestic Partner Benefits

March 15, 2000

Introduction

The Ad Hoc Committee for Domestic Partner Benefits has completed preliminary investigation of the issue of domestic partner benefits and recommends initial adoption of the plan proposed in this report. While this preliminary report deals only with issues that fall within the purview of the University, the Committee recommends that the scope of work in this area be extended to include benefits that would require legislative action to implement. An Appendix is attached to the Committee's report with supporting documents, including lists of universities and corporations that have domestic partner benefits policies, a list of insurance carriers that offer coverage for domestic partners, statistics reflecting use of domestic partner benefits at other institutions and sample enrollment/termination forms as well as proposed enrollment/termination forms for use by Eastern Kentucky University.

Justification

Eastern Kentucky University is a close-knit campus community that cares about the welfare of all employees. It is committed to recruiting and retaining highly qualified faculty and staff in a competitive national market. The rising costs of health care and the role employers play in providing access to insurance have made benefits an increasingly important factor in the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff.

Benefits addressed in the following proposal are limited to those which fall within the jurisdiction of the University and do not require external legislative approval. For all those services which fall within the purview of individual campus discretion, domestic partners should be granted access on the same basis as legal spouses and dependents.

Eligibility

To qualify for coverage under University-sponsored benefit plans, an employee and his or her domestic partner must complete a Declaration of Domestic Partner Relationship form certifying that they live in a committed relationship and are each other's sole domestic partner and intend to remain so indefinitely; are not related by blood to a degree of closeness which would prohibit legal marriage in the state in which they legally reside; are jointly responsible for each other's common welfare and share financial obligations which can be demonstrated by providing proof of the existence of at least three of the following: 1) joint mortgage or lease or other appropriate written evidence of common residence such as joint utility bills; 2) designation of domestic partner as primary beneficiary in the domestic partner's will, life insurance plan, or retirement plan; 3) durable property or health care power of attorney; 4) joint ownership of motor vehicle; or 5) joint checking account or joint credit union. (Sample form attached.)

Proposed Statement: "Federal law mandates that, in certain cases, an employee, spouse, or dependent may continue group health coverage beyond normal eligibility. Eastern Kentucky University additionally extends this benefit to recognized domestic Partners. If an employee or a member of his/her family is losing coverage because of terminating employment, death of a spouse or parent, divorce, legal separation or dissolution of a domestic partnership, the employee should check with Human Resources to determine whether continuation coverage is available."