

1-1-2002

DOC 2002-01 Resolution in Support of Proposal by the Office of Human Resources to Modify Eligibility Standards for the Tuition Exchange Program

University of Dayton. Faculty Affairs Committee

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Recommended Citation

University of Dayton. Faculty Affairs Committee, "DOC 2002-01 Resolution in Support of Proposal by the Office of Human Resources to Modify Eligibility Standards for the Tuition Exchange Program " (2002). *Senate Documents*. 60.
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PROPOSAL TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE

TITLE: Resolution in Support of Proposal by the Office of Human Resources to Modify Eligibility Standards for the Tuition Exchange Program

SUBMITTED BY: Faculty Affairs Committee

DATE: February 15, 2002

ACTION IS: Consultative

REFERENCE IS: Office of Human Resources–Tuition Exchange Program

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Introduction

The Office of Human Resources wishes to amend its current policy to make clear that the exercise by one member of a family for the tuition exchange benefit for a child of that family does not affect the ability of another family who is eligible for that benefit to utilize it for another child in that family. The Office of Human Resources wishes to have the support of the Academic Senate in this endeavor. The following resolution, lends the support of the Academic Senate to the change proposed by the Office of Human Resources:

Resolved that it is the sense of the Academic Senate that it supports the proposal of the Office of Human Resources to change the language of the standards for eligibility to participate in the Tuition Exchange program offered by the University. Specifically, the Senate supports the proposal to change the language of the standards to make clear that if more than one member of a family is eligible to take advantage of tuition exchange program as an active, retired or deceased employee of the University, the utilization of the tuition exchange benefit by one child in the family affects the eligibility for the benefit of only one of the members of that family. Where, however, a family has more than one active, retired or deceased employee eligible to take advantage of the Tuition Exchange Program, the employee with the greatest amount of seniority for purposes of the Tuition Exchange program must be the first to take advantage of that program.

Background

The current language of the Tuition Exchange program provides that employees who are eligible for the Tuition Exchange program are given preference for participation in the program in order of seniority of service at the University. If an eligible employee does participate, the program provides that the person's seniority becomes zero for

purposes of the Tuition Exchange program, and starts accruing again from the time of the eligible employee's child receives benefits from the program.

The current language of the standards for the program can also be read to suggest that participation in the Tuition Exchange program is limited to one eligible employee per family.¹ Thus, if a family has more than one employee eligible to take advantage of the program, e.g., a husband who is a staff member at the University and his wife who is a faculty member at the University, and a child of that family receives benefits from the Tuition Exchange program, the seniority of all eligible employees in the family for purposes of the Tuition Exchange Program is set back to zero.

The Office of Human Resources has indicated that it wishes to change the language of the standards because it was not the intent of that Office or the University to preclude a second eligible employee in a family from availing him or herself of the benefit of the Tuition Exchange program merely because another eligible employee in the family utilizes the program to obtain benefits for one of the children in the family. The Office of Human Resources has asked the Academic Senate for its support to change the language of the standards.

Rationale and Discussion

After discussion, the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate unanimously agreed with the proposed change suggested by the Office of Human Resources. The Committee believes that any person employed by the University is employed as and should be treated as an individual. The employee is entitled to benefits as an individual, regardless of whether anyone else in his or her family who is also employed by the University has taken advantage of those benefits.

The proviso with respect to requiring that the tuition exchange benefit be availed by members of a single family in order of seniority for eligibility was placed in the resolution by the Committee in order to avoid "gaming" of the seniority system when multiple members of a family are eligible to avail themselves of the Tuition Exchange program. For example, assume that a married couple have respectively twenty five and fifteen years of seniority for eligibility purposes. They judge that in a particular year fifteen years of seniority will suffice to ensure that one of their children will receive benefits from the program. The Committee does not wish to have one spouse using their fifteen year seniority in that year, reserving the other spouse's twenty five plus years of seniority for a year in which more than fifteen years of seniority will be needed to take advantage of the program. The Committee believed that allowing the use of such a strategy would be unfair to families in which only one individual was eligible for benefits under the Tuition Exchange Program.

¹ The specific language is as follows:

Once awarded a tuition exchange scholarship, additional children in the same family of UD active employees, deceased employees or retirees will be eligible for the tuition exchange program only if there is space available and there are no other qualified applicants.