

# 2013 Fringe Benefits Survey

Report to the University Senate

Wednesday, April 3, 2013

By the Senate Fringe Benefits Committee

## Members

Nancy Barr, Chair

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# Purpose of Survey

- Seek input from employees about how they use the current benefits package and what they value most
- Provide the Benefits Liaison Group (BLG) and the Executive Team with feedback on recent changes
- Provide BLG and Benefits Office with ideas for ways to improve the current benefits package

# What will happen to the results?

- Written report summarizing key points and the complete results will be forwarded to:
  - University Senate
  - Benefits Liaison Group
  - Executive Team
- Possibility of posting complete results on the Senate website with ISO password access

# Response Rate – 64%

- Out of 1289 people invited to participate, 824 completed the survey, 106 did not finish it
- Respondents (Benefits Eligible)
  - University Senate Constituents
    - 263 faculty
    - 435 professional staff
    - 18 non-union support)
  - UAW and AFSCME (207)

# Survey Structure

- 27 multiple choice questions
  - 4 demographic questions
  - 15 questions on use of each benefit included in the fringe rate
  - 2 questions on vacation/sick time
  - 3 on salary/fringes
  - 2 on impact of recent health insurance changes
- 4 short answer soliciting comments

# Demographic Questions

- About 47% have worked at MTU 10 years or less
- The majority (about 75%) cover themselves and at least one dependent
- 34% report household incomes of less than \$60,000, with 4% below \$30,000

# Benefits Use Questions

- These questions sought information about whether people used a benefit and its importance.
- Key points:
  - People value having the ability to use sick time to care for family members
  - MPSERS highly valued even by those who cannot participate, perhaps with the hope that the program could be reopened

# Salary/Fringe mix questions

- 66% rated salary and fringes of equal importance in their compensation package
- 56% stated the benefits package was a very important factor in their acceptance of an offer of employment at MTU
- 48% stated salary was a very important factor in coming to MTU



# Impact of Benefits Changes

- Q. 26: Have the recent increases in deductibles and co-pays in the MTU health plans caused you or someone in your family to delay health care?
  - Nearly 54% said “yes”
- However, more than 76% of respondents or their dependents have taken advantage of the fully covered physical in the last year

# Question 28

- What fringe benefits would you like to see Michigan Tech add to its benefits package, e.g. paid time off, discounts for long term care insurance, and so on?
  - About 52.5 percent responded to this question
  - Majority mentioned lower deductibles and co-pays, restoring MTU contribution to the Health Savings Account, and free access to the SDC
  - Sore spots – loss of sick time, paying for parking, lack of raises

# Q. 28 Comments

- “1. MTU deposit \$2000/yr into the HSA account for 1 employee and 1 dependent. 2. Free parking. When you take away HSA deposits and start charging over \$100 for parking at a campus that has weather conditions which cause even the closest living location to drive, you're giving people a salary reduction. Insulting and noncompetitive. 3. Free use of ski trails and SDC workout room for employees and families. This campus has a atmosphere of "guarding" the athletic facilities. The administration adds barriers to working out instead of removing them. 4. What happened to the \$75 benefit for taking the annual physical? Perhaps that would be unnecessary if we had free access to the trail system and SDC machines.”

## Q. 28 comments cont.

- “I would like to see Michigan Tech consider eliminating Vacation and Sick time and replacing it with a Paid Time off policy. It would have been nice to solicit input on that with this survey. We can't stay with the same old ways of doing business. It is not realistic.”
- “Go back to the former sick days with the pool. This is a benefit we lost. FREE PARKING. It is costing more to have a transportation and parking office with staff and vehicle dedicated to babysitting parking. This is the biggest waste.”

# Question 29

- Question 29 What current fringe benefits, if any, would you like to see removed from the benefits package?
  - About 36.5 percent of respondents answered this question, perhaps indicating that the majority did not want to see anything removed from the current package.

# Q. 29 comments

- “While I don't need some of the benefits offered, I think it is important to have a full suite of benefits for people at all life stages.”
- “How about cafeteria style choices. So, if I don't choose life insurance, maybe I'll take more in healthcare benefits. If I don't need daycare, perhaps I'll take TechFit.”
- “I would like to see TechFit be an option for employees. Not everyone takes advantage of it, so why not give them the option of taking TechFit ,giving them a raise, or adding money into their HSA account. TechFit is a nice option to those that use it ,but...”

# Q. 29 Comments Cont.

- “I don't think any of the current fringe benefits should be removed but it should be given the option for the employee to use differently. For example, I currently don't use the TechFit and I lose it. That money could be added to my HSA account.”
- “I would like more control on what the money goes towards for myself. If the university is spending \$X0000 on me in benefits and I rarely take vacation or sick time allow me the ability to put more of that money into a different category.”
- “Maybe each employee could have a block amount to choose from whatever current benefits are offered and pay for additional benefits beyond that amount. We could customize coverage to reflect individual needs as our age, family situation, etc. changes.”

# Question 30

- Question 30 What, if anything, could Michigan Tech do to help you improve your health and/or your access to health care?
  - Just under 50 percent responded to this question.
  - Fringe benefits hot topics:
    - HSA/PPO
    - Exercise
    - Healthcare
    - Other



# Q. 30 Comments

- “I really can't afford to have my healthcare coverage continue to increase in cost each year without a salary increase to cover that. This year my take home pay is less due to having to pay for parking.”
- “Don't force me to chose between money or health”
- “I am in good health and believe Tech benefits have contributed to that. Over the past five years I have had two expense procedures where my co-pay out of my HSA was not a burden. The Tech trails and Tech Fit are very helpful to get me out hiking and skiing.”
- “I don't feel it is MTU's responsibility to help me improve my health. Our access to affordable quality health care is limited by our location and expertise in our area.”
- “Stop the steady reduction in benefits that result in more OOP \$\$ for employees. Combined with no raises, it is a double whammy.”

# Q. 30 Comments continued

- “Stable and consistent program scope and coverage. Changes always complicate the interactions with health care management.”
- “Have someone on campus...not downtown ... that can answer health care questions quickly and in person...not by email”
- “Telling us how we can ‘shelter’ thousands of pre-tax dollars in an HSA is only useful if you have the money to put in an HSA.”
- “I would like to see the university contribute to the HSA for those that participate. We helped the university save thousands of dollars by choosing this plan and are now being penalized for it.”
- “Change my attitude. I used to be a dedicated hard working employee, but the administration has removed all incentive to be good and convinced me that this is just a job.”
- “Cut administrative positions by 50% for starters.”

# Question 31

- Question 31 What, if any, additional feedback do you have on fringe benefits issues such as ease of use, customer service of providers or the Benefits Office, etc.?
  - Just over 38 percent responded to this question

# Q. 31 Comments

- “Medical - Increased cuts really hurting staff. They're taking home less than they did several years ago. They came to MTU not for the salary which was subpar, but for benefits. If cuts continue may have to leave MTU.”
- “Tests, prescriptions and treatments have been deferred because of cost. Fringe changes should be a % of salary. Reduce the deductible and out of pocket expenses.”

## Q. 31 Comments cont.

- “Don't get rid of PPO. If it goes, I may go. Its absence will make it harder to hire.”
- “Move Benefits back to main campus. Increase Tech Fit support and make it more flexible (e.g. online Weight Watchers).”
- “Retirement- Liked 5-5-5 program. Keep RSVP- if it goes, I go.”

# Recommendations

- USE THE RESULTS!
  - Employees spoke loud and clear. The University should address employee concerns about compensation/benefits changes.
- Administration should survey employees on how they want their compensation packaged
- Educate employees about benefits, choice, use, and implications of different choices for both employee and employer