



UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND  
UNIVERSITY SENATE

1100 Marie Mount Hall  
College Park, Maryland 20742-4111  
Tel: (301) 405-5805 Fax: (301) 405-5749  
<http://www.senate.umd.edu>

May 7, 2010

Professor Linda Mabbs  
Chair, University Senate  
1100 Marie Mount Hall  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742-7541

Dear Professor Mabbs:

Early in the Spring 2010 semester, the Senate Staff Affairs Committee invited Luke Jensen, Director of the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Equity, to speak at a committee meeting. It had been brought to the attention of the committee by a committee member that Jensen was currently working on an effort to recommend expansion of campus-based benefits to same-sex domestic partners. Jensen had expressed interest in working with the committee on this effort, and the committee welcomed his presentation.

At the meeting, Jensen explained possibilities for how to extend benefits such as bereavement leave, Family and Medical Leave, sick leave, and tuition remission to domestic partners. Jensen explained that he has been working on this issue since 1992, and that domestic partners recently received health care benefits when the State of Maryland instituted a statewide policy. Jensen provided an overview of what types of benefits are offered at our peer institutions. He explained that his office would like the support of the University Senate through the passage of a resolution recommending that bereavement leave, Family and Medical Leave, sick leave, and tuition remission benefits be extended to domestic partners at the University of Maryland College Park. The committee requested that his office draft a document that contains specific information about what he wants the committee to support. This document was subsequently forwarded to the committee for its review (it is enclosed for your reference).

Willie Brown, Chair of the Council of University System Staff (CUSS), serves as a voting ex-officio member of the Staff Affairs Committee. At a recent meeting, he reported that CUSS is currently in discussions regarding the expansion of system-wide domestic partner related policies (sick leave, tuition remission, family medical leave, and nepotism) with the Chancellor's Office. He explained that the Chancellor is willing to review these policies with CUSS leadership. Because CUSS will be in conversation with the Chancellor regarding this topic on a system-wide manner over the coming months, the committee would like to support CUSS's efforts.

Thus, the Staff Affairs Committee asks that the Executive Committee charge the 2010-2011 Staff Affairs Committee with reviewing the status of CUSS's work on this topic throughout the academic year. Additionally, the committee would like to be charged with crafting a letter of endorsement and support of CUSS's final recommendation, if appropriate for the University. At our meeting on May 3, 2010, the committee voted unanimously in favor of supporting this request.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Shaw  
Chair, University Senate Staff Affairs Committee

Enclosure: Draft of proposal from the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Equity

CS/cb

Cc: Reka Montfort, Executive Secretary and Director, University Senate  
Willie Brown, Chair of the Council of University System Staff (CUSS)  
Luke Jensen, Director of the Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Equity

## **DRAFT Proposal from Luke Jensen, Director of the Office of LGBT Equity**

### Domestic Partner Benefits – Completing the Task

Beginning in the early 1990s, discussions about Domestic Partner Benefits at the University of Maryland recognized three levels of benefits: campus benefits, system benefits, and state benefits. In 2006, the campus moved forward in offering campus benefits and President C. D. Mote, Jr. appointed a Human Resources Working Group to examine how we could offer the full range of benefits to domestic partners. The committee was chaired first by John Porcari and later by Ann Wylie. On April 11, 2007, the HR Working Group submitted its recommendations to President Mote. They included the following.

The Working Group recommends that the University of Maryland, College Park, be authorized by the Board of Regents and the State of Maryland to offer the same health insurance benefits for domestic partners that are currently available to spouses of employees. Any additional costs for this benefit would be borne by the institution.

The Working Group recommends that UMCP be authorized by the Board of Regents to offer the same tuition remission benefits for domestic partners enrolled at UMCP that are currently available to spouses. Any additional costs for this benefit would be borne by the institution.

The Working Group recommends that on behalf of the University of Maryland the Board of Regents work with the State to allow domestic partners the same survivor benefits that are currently available to spouses of UMCP employees.

On April 16, 2007, President Mote sent these recommendations to Chancellor William E. Kirwan. The Chancellor determined that the complete University System of Maryland should move forward as one entity on the issue of health care for domestic partners and deferred further consideration to the State. Following legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly and an official definition of Domestic Partner issued by the Maryland Health Care Commission, both in 2008, and additional legislation passed in 2009, the administration of Governor Martin O'Malley provided access to health care insurance for the domestic partners of all state employees including the University System of Maryland.

Tuition remission and other system-level benefits have gone unaddressed.

This proposal moves that

- a) "UMCP be authorized by the Board of Regents to offer the same tuition remission benefits for domestic partners enrolled at UMCP that are currently available to spouses" as proposed most recently in 2007.

We also propose that domestic partners be included for the following "soft" benefits.

b) Use of sick leave for “illness or injury in the employee’s immediate family and medical appointments, examinations or treatments for the immediate family member with an accredited, licensed, or certified medical provider.”

c) Paid “Bereavement Leave, not to exceed three (3) work days, of five (5) days if overnight travel is required, on account of the death of any member of the employee’s immediate family.”

d) The inclusion of domestic partners in policies regarding Family and Medical Leave. This would simply parallel policies mandated by Federal Law.

Domestic partners should also be included in all other relevant policies of the University System of Maryland.

Because there is an established affidavit employees must submit to access health insurance coverage for Domestic Partners, it is understood that the same form would be used for Tuition Remission. ([http://www.uhr.umd.edu/benefits/benefits\\_forms.cfm](http://www.uhr.umd.edu/benefits/benefits_forms.cfm))