

A Statement of Principles of the Whitman College Fringe Benefits Program
(developed by the Faculty and Staff Fringe Benefits Committees in consultation with President Bridges. May, 2011)

(1) Whitman College is committed to providing its employees with a core set of benefits in the areas of health care, retirement savings, and the education of the children of Whitman College employees.

(2) In addition, Whitman College recognizes that a competitive benefits plan

- a. is critical to attracting and retaining the talented employees necessary to carry out the mission of the College; and
- b. contributes to a positive campus work environment and a healthy and productive College workforce.

(3) As a community, Whitman College seeks to provide employees with necessary core benefits. While employee benefits must be considered within the broader context of all institutional needs and priorities, Whitman College recognizes that core benefits are among its top priorities.

(4) In order to sustain a competitive plan during times of flux in College programs and fiscal resources, the fringe benefits program of Whitman College is guided by the following principles:

- a. To provide employees with a core set of benefits, which includes health care benefits, retirement savings, and education benefits.
- b. To ensure that employee salaries and benefits remain essential parts of the budget infrastructure and among the top priorities in budgeting decisions.
- c. To maintain a benefit program that is as good as or better than those at our peer educational institutions and regional employers.
- d. To recognize that the College's financial circumstances change over time and that the College must remain flexible and open to adjusting specific benefits priorities -- up or down -- in response to employee needs, external conditions, the competitive market or the College's financial position. However, if benefits must be reduced in quality, scope or by cost sharing due to temporary fiscal constraints, the college will strive to restore the reduced benefits to the most generous and competitive level and quality possible, when financial conditions allow.
- e. To recognize that Whitman College's rural location may present significant challenges, such as higher costs in some areas of benefits than some peer institutions.

- f. To implement any significant changes in benefits as gradually as possible and with as much advance notice as possible, allowing time for employees to plan for financial changes.
- g. To consult the College's Fringe Benefits Committees before any significant modifications to benefits, with adequate time and information provided to these committees for their careful consideration and substantive input.

(5) These principles will be regularly reviewed and/or revised by the Fringe Benefits Committees, in consultation with the President and other budget officers.

(6) Specific Principles Pertaining to Health Care Benefits:

- a. To maintain a fair and equitable shared responsibility between employees and the college for the costs of health care benefits.
- b. To structure health care benefits costs shared by the College and its employees in a manner that provides the greatest benefit to College community as a whole, protects against catastrophic expenses, and encourages responsible use of benefits.
- c. To maintain a cost-sharing plan for total health care costs that imposes a lighter financial burden on employees with lower salaries.
- d. To maintain a cost-sharing plan for total health care costs that values the health care needs of families and does not unduly burden employees with dependents.
- e. To consider any increases in employee contribution to health care benefits relative to changes in salary.
- f. To recognize the benefits to the College of having a healthy workforce in both mind and body, by providing lifestyle programming, budget planning and other continuing education opportunities to employees when feasible.

(7) Specific Principles Pertaining to Education Benefits:

- a. To maintain education benefits which reflect a shared commitment to a college education for all children of Whitman faculty and staff who qualify for such an education and choose to pursue it.

- b. To maintain education benefits which reflect a shared commitment to affordable access to education at a high-quality liberal arts college for all children of Whitman faculty and staff who qualify for such an education and choose to pursue it.
- c. To recognize the necessity of generous education benefits for recruiting and retaining qualified staff and faculty at an institution in a rural community.
- d. To recognize that since education benefits typically involve long-term financial planning and often involve long commitments to the institution, Whitman will strive to preserve tuition benefits equivalent to those in effect when employees joined the Whitman community.

(8) Specific Principle Pertaining to Retirement Benefits:

- a. To provide the most generous and competitive retirement benefits possible in its Employer Matching Contributions 403(b) retirement plan.