

FacCheck

*Newsletter of the George Washington University
Faculty Association*

November 2014

Health Insurance 2015: At Best a Mixed Bag for GW Faculty and Staff

In September, GW faculty and staff learned that a number of changes were in store for our health insurance plans for 2015. Although the premium increase of 4% on existing plans was well below last year's increase of 12.5%, that bit of good news was offset by other changes that once again served to shift the cost of our healthcare from employer to employee. The most painful change for many of us was the decision of the university administration to abolish the Premium Plan. This plan carried a higher premium but had no deductible and thus was the choice of many faculty and staff with high cost health needs. The administration justified elimination of the plan by noting that so-called Cadillac Plans like GW's Premium Plan would incur a steep tax under the Affordable Care Act. What the University failed to explain was why the plan had to be eliminated in 2015 when the tax would only take effect in 2018. At a recent CCAS faculty meeting, an HR representative claimed that the administration was simply trying to spare faculty and staff the hardship of enduring multiple changes in insurance policies in a couple of years. *GWToday* noted that the move was made "to allow sufficient time to make subsequent changes if needed in advance of the implementation of the excise tax provisions." These explanations are both inadequate and disingenuous. Follow-up inquiries with University Human Resources also did not lead to any clearer explanation. The fact is that by removing the Premium Plan three years before the law required the change, the University saves itself a tidy sum of money while those faculty and staff who relied on the plan will have to pay thousands of dollars more in deductibles. GWUFA is planning a series of actions around this issue in the months before the changes take place. ***If you have lost your Premium Plan health insurance as a result of these changes and believe you will be adversely affected, GWUFA would like to hear from you. Please contact us at gwufacultyassociation@gmail.com.***

GWUFA Supports Staff Protest of Tuition Benefit Reductions

GWUFA has endorsed a staff-led petition protesting changes in the university's tuition benefits. The administration's efforts to shift staff tuition costs onto employees is further evidence that the percentage of the university's budget dedicated to fringe benefits (3%) is simply too small. Endorsement of the petition accords with GWUFA's commitment to supporting "related activities of part-time faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students to achieve similar goals commensurate with creating an excellent and equitable university."

Focus on the Budget: What are the GW Administration's Priorities?

In keeping with its commitment to promoting the university's core mission of teaching, research, and service, GWUFA is undertaking an investigation into the university administration's budgetary priorities. This is a longterm project that will draw on a range of publicly available documents and the expertise of our members. For those of you who are interested in seeing some of the figures, you might look at the [financial report](#) that was recently released by the administration. Please contact GWUFA at gwufacultyassociation@gmail.com if you would like to help out with this project.

Faculty Code Revision: GWUFA Remains Vigilant

Chairman of the Board of Trustees Nelson Carbonell has convened four task forces to discuss revision of the Faculty Code. A GWUFA Steering Committee member is currently serving on the Senate's Professional Ethics and Academic Freedom Committee, which will review all changes proposed by the task forces. Already, thanks to the efforts of several GWUFA members serving as faculty senators, the revisions to the section on academic freedom do not contain a "civility clause" similar to those which have opened academic freedom to administrative veto at other institutions. GWUFA will continue to monitor closely the recommendations that are made and GWUFA senators are prepared to propose revisions as necessary. For those of you unfamiliar with the [Faculty Code](#), please take a few minutes to read it.

GWUFA's Inside/Outside Strategy

The Faculty Association is pursuing an inside/outside strategy, working both through and around the established institutions of shared governance. GWUFA is, first and foremost, a grassroots organization with no official ties to the university or its administrative structure. This means that the association is open not just to tenured and tenure-track faculty, but to all full-time faculty who share our goals and principles. It also means that we are able to organize petitions and other forms of grassroots activism on behalf of our members. At the same time, we recognize the value of working with existing, official bodies representing faculty interests on campus. GWUFA continues to work with the Faculty Senate, serving on several of its most influential subcommittees, including the benefits, budget, educational policy, and professional ethics committees. GWUFA members are also serving as senators. With the recent election of two new CCAS senators, GWUFA members now constitute more than a fifth of senators.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING GWUFA EVENTS

GWUFA “Mixer” with GW’s part-time faculty union and other groups.
Thursday, Nov. 20, 4:30. Location: [Recessions](#), 1833 L St NW, lower level.

General Meeting of the GWUFA membership, Tuesday, December 9,
2:30-3:30. Location: TBA.



GWUFA members and their families enjoy fine food and conversation at our potluck picnic in September.

GWUFA in the News:

From *The Hatchet*: <http://www.gwhatchet.com/2014/10/19/staff-editorial-an-administrator-departs-a-budget-falls-short-and-a-faculty-code-is-up-for-review/>

<http://www.gwhatchet.com/2014/10/09/grassroots-faculty-group-looks-to-gain-recognition-from-university-leaders/>

Other Articles of Interest to GWUFA Members:

On administrative bloat:

<http://necir.org/2014/02/06/new-analysis-shows-problematic-boom-in-higher-ed-administrators/>

INTERESTED IN JOINING GWUFA? PLEASE CLICK [HERE](#)

GWUFA welcomes questions and comments. Please contact us at gwufacultyassociation@gmail.com.

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