

UCC 0099 09S

Response to UCC 0095 09S

Morales, Jeanette F

From: Murphy, Diane L [DLMurphy@Central.UH.EDU]
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2009 12:31 PM
To: Nelson, Joan M
Cc: ucc@uh.edu; Coltharp, Sandy ; Lee, Elwyn C; Murphy, Diane L
Subject: Employee Wellness Program

This message contains comments on the proposed Employee Wellness Program policy. The proposed policy references a statute which we have not been able to obtain. I say we, because Diane Murphy and Dr. Elwyn Lee are composing this response together. We are responding without knowledge of that statute and are assuming that all of the proposal's provisions are discretionary.

The goals of the proposed policy are worthy pursuits. However, given the current economic situation in the country and the tight budget situation on campus now may not be the time to adopt such a policy. The proposal calls for approved employees to receive up to three hours per week of fitness release time. With the recent expansion of enrollment more staff are needed to supply necessary services. With the tight budget situation many departments will be unable to add as many new staff as they might need. In other words, we need more staff hours, not a reduction in staff time. While we know the proposal calls for the prior approval of the supervisor, morale will suffer if there is such a policy and supervisors are called upon to routinely deny requests due to manpower needs.

The proposal suggests that membership in the UH Campus Recreation and Wellness Center (CRWC) would be part of the program. Under State law all members of the CRWC must pay a membership fee equal to or greater than the membership fee for students. Over the years various staff and faculty have put forth various rationales why they should be allowed a free membership and we have been constrained in every instance to inform them that State law does not allow us to grant such a request. Currently the best rate we have for staff is \$150 per semester, pre-paid. Assuming no legal exceptions to the statute I reference, each staff member using the facility regularly would have to be a member and someone would have to pay the membership fee.

The proposal sets forth a number of responsibilities for staff and the Assistant Director for Campus Recreation and Wellness. These duties include supervising the completion of various forms, approving the Fitness Release Time (FRT) application, tracking staff time at the CRWC, and of course coordinating the actual fitness activities. Obviously this would be in addition to all the things we are currently doing and would probably necessitate additional staff – either professional or graduate assistants. If the participants have paid membership fees, CRWC probably could add the additional staff from its own funds up to a point. How many additional staff would be required would depend on the number of people participating in the program and the times they would be participating.

You might want to have the proposal reviewed by our General Counsel who can determine if there is any legal interpretation that would permit CRWC to provide substantial discounts to staff. Without this flexibility this proposal is probably not financially feasible.

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