

Benefits Advisory Committee Charter

MISSION AND PURPOSE

Simmons University recognizes the vital role both staff and faculty play in the success and vibrancy of our campus community. In line with our commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace, we prioritize the Benefits Advisory Committee to ensure that employees have access to the resources and benefits that promote their well-being and satisfaction.

This Charter outlines the role of the Benefits Advisory Committee in representing the perspectives of staff and faculty on the University's employee health and welfare offerings. The Committee's primary goal is to ensure that the University community is well-informed about benefits offerings and any changes to them, and also to share employee perspectives with the Benefit Department and HR leadership about program offerings and wellness initiatives.

While the Benefits Advisory Committee is not a decision-making body, members of the Committee provide valuable input and foster open communication among staff and faculty and the Benefits Department, which will be shared with the University Strategy Team (UST) to ensure that benefits align with the University's mission and strategic objectives.

RESPONSIBILITIES/ DUTIES

A. Review and Advise on Benefit Plan Design Changes

- Review and discuss significant changes to the University's benefit plans and wellness offerings, and provide feedback on how these changes may be received by staff and faculty.
- Advise the Director of Benefits on proposed benefit design modifications and wellness initiatives, to promote alignment with staff and faculty needs and University objectives.

B. Communication and Awareness

- Assess and recommend communication strategies to inform faculty and staff about the University's benefit offerings and any changes.
- Recommend benefit communication strategies, and advise on improvements to media, timing, content, and educational methods.

C. Feedback and Collaboration

- Provide employee feedback regarding benefits, and promote the incorporation of staff and faculty perspectives into benefit offerings and communication strategies.

MEMBERSHIP, COMPOSITION AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Members of the Committee shall include benefits-eligible staff and faculty members who have been employed by the University for at least six (6) months. The Committee reserves the right to reduce the service requirement to three (3) months.

The Benefits Advisory Committee shall be composed of no fewer than four (4) and no more than ten (10) members, with at least two (2) faculty members and at least two (2) staff members. In the event that an insufficient number of individuals are unwilling or unable to serve, Simmons may revise the required total of individual membership (in total or from any particular group) as appropriate. The total number of faculty and staff members combined shall not exceed eight (8) from either group. All committee members must be benefits-eligible. Whenever practicable, the Benefits Advisory Committee should include at least one (1) Staff Advisory Council member, at least one (1) Faculty Senate member, at least one (1) part time or proportional employee, and at least one (1) fully remote employee.

The goal of the Committee's composition is to ensure diverse representation from staff and faculty across the University. There shall be no criteria based on an individual's race, color, natural or protective hairstyle, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, including sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, age, disability, genetic information, marital or parental status, ancestry, socioeconomic status, or veteran status as qualification for membership on the Committee.

A representative from the University Employee Benefits Department will attend each meeting to provide updates on benefits programs and ensure smooth communication with the Committee. The representative will facilitate the meetings, gather and relay feedback, and address any issues raised by the Committee, and will escalate key issues to the UST as needed.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS, ATTENDANCE AND COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

The Benefits Advisory Committee should meet at least twice (2) per year and more frequently, as needed, to fulfill its responsibilities and address matters outlined in this Charter. Meetings of the Committee may be called by the Director of Benefits. Agenda topics for upcoming meetings may be proposed by Committee members and the Director of Benefits. The Committee may, at its discretion, invite members of management or other relevant individuals to attend meetings (or portions thereof).

Committee members are expected to attend all pre-scheduled meetings, either in person or via Zoom. Any member who is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings may be removed from the Committee at the sole discretion of the Director of Benefits.

The Director of Benefits may occasionally invite members of the community to submit nominations for the Benefits Advisory Committee. If there are more nominations than available openings, the Benefits Department may, but is not required to, direct the longest-serving committee members to step down to accommodate new appointments.

Committee members shall abide by all applicable University rules, policies, and procedures. Committee members who are placed on a Performance Improvement Plan, or who are found to have violated University policies will be required to step down.

AMENDMENTS TO THE COMMITTEE CHARTER

Motions for amendments to the Charter may be initiated by Committee members, the Director of Benefits, or the UST. An amendment becomes effective when approved by a two-thirds vote of the Committee members and the Director of Benefits or by a vote of a simple majority (51%) of the UST.

DISSOLUTION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee may be dissolved by a simple majority vote of the UST.