

DATE: July 2001

TO: Skidmore Community

FROM: Lorraine Bittel, Chair

SUBJECT: Benefits Committee 2000-2001 Annual Report

First, please accept my apologies for the lateness in getting this report out to you - I'm afraid time rather got away from me! This was a relatively quiet year for the Benefits Committee; we met seven times during the academic year and addressed the following items:

Healthcare Plans: While prescription and medical costs continue to climb nationally, the 2001 benefits under all three Skidmore healthcare plans were able to remain unchanged. This was achieved in part by the increase in the brand name drug co-payments a year ago, and the belief that the number of large medical claims which occurred in calendar year 2000 would decrease in 2001. The Committee is very conscious of the desire to continue to provide the same level of coverage to our Community, and we continue to investigate different ways to continue to achieve this in the face of continuously rising costs.

Committee Training: Kathy Carter continued to hold mini informational training and updating sessions for the Committee in various areas, so that members could become more familiar with benefits as a whole, thereby being able to answer questions from members of the College community.

Constituency Questions: The Committee addressed several issues brought to us by members of the Community, some which fell under our umbrella, and some which did not:

Affordable Child Care

The question of childcare that was affordable to all members of the College community at the Greenberg Childcare Center was raised. While the Committee realizes that the provision of childcare is not an employee benefit, we respectfully proposed the creation of a sliding scale for Skidmore employees, based on income levels. We also suggested that the Office of Development might be instrumental in raising additional scholarship funds as a compliment to the original gift that established the Greenberg Center as a service to employees.

External Masters Program

The possibility of the External Masters Program being made available as a benefit on the same order as the internal Skidmore tuition benefit. While operating costs for the MALS program do not permit this to be an option at this time, Dean Don McCormack is most amenable to re-examining this issue again at a later date.

Dental Coverage

Provision of dental coverage as a benefit was another issue raised. As the Committee checked into how the costs of our current benefits would be impacted by this, it was quickly realized that to do so would result in having to reduce benefits in another area. It was therefore decided that the option of continuing to offer this as part of our Flexible Benefits Plan and paying for the plan on a tax-free basis, with the additional option of utilizing the Health Care Reimbursement Account, seemed to be the best way to keep from having to cut back on other areas of medical coverage already being provided by the College.

Health Care Plan Copays

The cost of copayments and deductibles to the participants for the Skidmore College Healthcare Plan was also brought to us. In looking back over the past several years, we realized that we've been fortunate in that the cost

of our medical copayments has not risen. The use of the Healthcare Reimbursement Account to help defray these costs was strongly encouraged, as it is taken from pre-tax dollars.

Health Insurance Coverage - Self Insured Healthcare Plan

We were asked if the inclusion of oral contraceptives in the Skidmore College healthcare Plan was mandatory. While this has been a hot topic in the news lately, at this time federal mandates don't apply to self-insured plans such as ours. We were reminded that we do offer two healthcare plans that do cover oral contraceptives and the choice was still open to employees.

Graduate Studies Assistance

The possibility of tuition support for graduate courses at other schools was another area we reviewed. While we could not recommend an expansion of our Tuition Program, we did find that when job-related, some departments have begun to fund some of these costs from their departmental budgets.

The new Chairperson elected for 2001/02 is James Kennelly, Assistant Professor of Management and Business. The Committee continues to welcome questions, suggestions, and input from all of the members of the Skidmore community!

2000 - 2001 BENEFITS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Kathy Carter non-voting

Phil Cifarelli/Mike Hall non-voting

Administrative:

Michael Profita (2001) voting

Barbara Beck voting

Chuck Joseph (designee from Dean of Faculty's Office) voting

Faculty:

Mehmet Odekon (2001) voting

Denise Smith (2002) voting

James Kennelly (2003) voting

Support Staff:

Mary Monigan/Janis Petroski (2001) voting

Lorraine Bittel (2002) (Chairperson) voting

Anne Petruzzelli (2003) voting

2001 - 2002 BENEFITS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Kathy Carter non-voting

Phil Cifarelli/Mike Hall non-voting

Administrative:

TBA (2004) voting

Barbara Beck voting

Chuck Joseph (designee from Dean of Faculty's Office) voting

2001 - 2002 BENEFITS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP, CONT.

Faculty:

Denise Smith (2002) voting

James Kennelly (2003) (Chairperson) voting

Patricia Colby (2004) (on leave Fall '01 - replacement TBA) voting

Support Staff:

Lorraine Bittel (2002) voting

Anne Petruzzelli (2003) voting

Janis Petroski (2004) voting