

Notables

UPCOMING EVENTS

Let's Have Lunch... And a Benefits Check-up!

Do you need answers to questions about NU's benefits?

Are you considering making a change to your benefits during Open Enrollment, but want to speak first with an NU expert about the implications of such a change?

Or do you have input on benefits that you'd like to share with NU's benefit experts?

Join us as we speak with Tom Evans, Director of Benefits, and Cliff Cornelius, Benefits Counselor, at NUSAC brown bag lunches on both campuses during November.

Bring a lunch—we'll provide coffee and cookies.

Chicago Campus
Monday, November 5,
Noon-1:30 p.m.
Prince Faculty Commons,
16th Floor, Tarry Bldg.

Evanston Campus
Friday, November 9,
Noon-1:30 p.m.
Northwestern Room,
Norris Center

What's New at NU?

We often receive questions or hear comments indicating that staff would like to know more about what is going on at the University, on what NU is spending money, and what we can expect to see going on during the coming year. We also hear a lot from staff about how difficult it is to locate important information on University programs and policies.

We hope the following guidance toward a few sources of information will pique your interest, or satisfy at least some of it.

Campaign Northwestern
<http://www.campaign.northwestern.edu/> from the main page, check out 'Progress Report' to see a list of recent major gifts.

Also, review 'Campaign Goals' which describes the University's funding objectives for the Campaign. As you might expect, these are geared toward maintaining and expanding NU's status as a premier academic institution. In the corresponding breakdown of funding goals, you'll see the emphasis on funding new academic programs, endowed chairs, and buildings. There is a \$75M goal for 'unrestricted giving' which we hope will lead to improvements in the infrastructure related to staff, such as salaries. We often hear that many donors wish to donate to a building or an endowed chair. But perhaps we as staff can come up with some good ideas to submit to the Development Division to encourage them to pursue further the idea of giving related specifically to staff. Let us know your thoughts!

Construction on Campus, and Parking
So what are all those new buildings going up on both campuses? http://www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/observer/stories/2_22_01/construction.html is an *Observer* feature from several months ago that describes some of the ongoing construction at NU.

http://www.northwestern.edu/facilities-management/construction_updates.htm provides updates on ongoing and planned construction on both campuses, and is maintained by Facilities Management.

This page includes a link to an Evanston map that will help you navigate which areas of the Evanston campus are barricaded, etc. http://www.northwestern.edu/university_maps.html displays a great parking map of Evanston showing the current status of campus lots. Chicago parking is managed by University Services, and a corresponding Chicago parking map is at <http://www.univsvcs.northwestern.edu/Parking/locations.html>

Staff Handbook Online
<http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/> under 'Recruitment & Employment Opportunities' is where you can click to download the latest Staff Handbook. It describes employment policies including work hours, vacation, sick time, job performance & conduct, and the staff conflict of interest policy. This booklet is a guide to your rights and responsibilities as an NU staff employee.

Training Information
<http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/development/> describes the curricula offered through Human Resources, which includes classes for staff involved in conducting University business, employee orientation, and professional development courses. Also, you should have received via campus mail the booklet of training classes offered through HR for the entire year.

For a warehouse of information on a variety of university policies and procedures, see <http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/policiesweb/>. This can also be accessed through the Faculty/Staff page, by clicking on 'Administrative & Business Policies'. This site is your window to policies from how to sign up for training for CUFIS, to downloading ORSP forms, to getting Travel policy and ORSP, to reading about NU's copyright & trademark rules. Click on 'Policies Web-Site Index' to see the breadth of categories covered, and link from there to the information you need.

NUSAC

Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council

FALL 2001



Benefits Changes and Open Enrollment for 2002

The University's Benefits Division has announced Open Enrollment and several changes to our Benefits Plans for 2001. NUSAC wants to highlight for you just some of the pertinent information regarding your benefits. We encourage all staff to carefully examine their current benefit coverage and consider making changes to their coverage in order to better suit their current needs.

What is Open Enrollment? It's the one time each year when staff may make major changes to certain benefits plans, and re-enroll in others like the FSA plans (flexible spending accounts for dependent care and/or healthcare). The period for making changes to these benefit plans, which take effect in 2002, is scheduled between October 22 and November 16.

You should expect a booklet containing information on major changes and forms to arrive via campus mail soon. But before the booklet arrives, see the Benefits web-site which details the new rates and benefits changes:

- <http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/benefits/spec-ans/open-enrollment/index.html> is the Open Enrollment page.
- <http://www.nwu.edu/hr/benefits-fms-literature/benpack/2002compare.htm> details coverages under the various health and dental plans.
- http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/benefits/spec-ans/open-enrollment/2002_mecinas.htm shows the schedule for Open Enrollment sessions which you may attend to find forms or ask questions of representative of the various plan providers.

Health-insurance premiums increase: Monthly premium will rise to cover a portion of the increasing cost of prescription drugs:
Plan A: Increases range from 8.7% (single, bracket 1-\$4/mo. incrs.) to 7.4% (single, bracket 4-\$10mo.

incrs.). The brackets themselves will move about 4% to reflect NU's average salary increase this year.

HMO ILL	Increases approx. 13%
HUMANA	Increases approx. 18%
UNICARE	Increases approx. 12%
UNITED	Increases approx. 29%

We remain concerned that the University is not picking up more of the increase in the health premiums as well as prescription costs. Currently the University pays for about 75% of our health insurance. We know particularly for lower-paid staff, that annual increases in health and dental premiums as well as University parking permit increases reduce the value of our modest salary increases.

Prescription co-pay for Plan A (Blue Cross PPO) & HMO Illinois members increases: As you may recall two years ago, the University's drug co-pays ranged from \$5-\$12 for a month's supply of a prescription. Last year, a new structure including higher co-pays for high cost 'designer' brands was added. We recognize the national trend of a 20% increase in such costs, which is affecting the plans of other employers as well as ours, and we have continued to strongly advocate for the University to pick up a greater share of these increases.

Co-pays will remain at 3 levels: generic, brand name, and high-cost drugs, priced as follows.

	2001	2002
Generic (retail/mail)	\$5/6	\$5/10
Name Brand	\$10/15	\$15/20
High Cost	\$20/30	\$25/40

In an effort to provide some protection to employees, the University is instituting a new maximum limit on out-of-pocket expenditures, or a stop-loss feature for AdvancePCS users (Plan A & HMO Illinois). This means a patient won't have to pay more than \$1,000 in prescription co-pays in 2002.

INSIDE

HR & BENEFITS

The latest on benefits changes

NOTABLES

What's new at NU?

QUICK TAKES

Meet NUSAC and our current Chair, Claudia Kunin

UPCOMING

EVENTS

Let's Have Lunch... and a Benefits Check-up!

continued on page 2

HR & Benefits

continued from page 1

If you regularly take certain prescription medications check out the alphabetical index that shows how each drug is priced by the various health insurance providers: http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/benefits/sps/health/rxprograms/2002_rx_program_drug_lists_by_inscio.html And, to help you navigate the drug categories, dispensing limits, and costs for your drug plan, please see and bookmark: http://www.northwestern.edu/hr/benefits/sps/health/rxprograms/2002_rx_program_summary.html

Premiums & benefit maximum increases on dental plans:

- > Dental premiums will rise about 9% for First Commonwealth and 5.3% for Blue Cross.
- > Blue Cross: Annual benefit maximum increases from \$2,000 to \$2,500 benefit for orthodontia.
- > Blue Cross: Annual benefit maximum increases from \$1,500 to \$1,750 for other dental services.

New employee-funded Long Term Care insurance plan: Similar to Short-term disability, employees may purchase this plan through payroll deduction. Long-term care provides a variety of services for individuals who are unable to care for themselves. These could include assistance in the home with day-to-day activities, or special attention in a nursing home. Staff may purchase long-term care for themselves while their parents and parents-in-law may purchase this insurance directly with the CNA, the sponsoring insurance company.

New choice of select Vanguard Group investment funds: Participants in the Fidelity retirement plan will be able to select from 10 Vanguard funds, also administered by Fidelity. Faculty have long requested Vanguard investment funds as part of the University's retirement plan.

No change in premiums for Short-term Disability, Long-Term Disability, Group Term Life Insurance, and Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance.

Other Issues to Consider

Open Enrollment is also when you must submit completed forms to re-enroll in the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) plans for 2002. This is required to continue participation.

Other plans have not changed but are still available to you. Last year, the maximum benefit for the employee Educational Assistance Plan increased from \$5,250 to \$8,000 per calendar year. This means employees have been able to take about one course per quarter at Northwestern with the benefit covering at least 3/4 of their tuition expense.

Some plans, like the University's retirement plan may be changed at times other than during Open Enrollment. NUSAC encourages you to participate in the retirement plan, if possible at the maximum contribution and University match entitled to you. Your contributions are made on a pre-tax basis which lowers your taxable income. And for every dollar you contribute, Northwestern contributes two, but only if you enroll in the plan! Also, we recommend that you learn more about your investment options to ensure that funds are invested in the portfolio that best serves your needs.

Finally, we encourage you to review the University's benefits package and provide us and/or your University administrators with feedback! Please join us for Brown Bags on both campuses to learn more about your NU benefits (See 'Let's Have Lunch...' and a Benefits Check-Up').

Meet the Members of NUSAC 2001-2002

We are your NUSAC representatives for the coming year! Whether or not you already know one of us, please do not hesitate to contact us with your input. You can also reach us by e-mailing nusac@northwestern.edu. We look forward to serving you!

Claudia Kunin
Chair

Carolyn Wharton
Vice Chair

S.J. Murray
Secretary

Darlene Peterson
Treasurer

Beverly Aaltonen
Benefits Committee Chair

Karen Koehler-Davis
HR Committee Chair

Suneetha Vaitheeswaran
Communications Chair

Mary Kate Barley-Jenkins
Evelyn DiLisio
Sue Della
Chris Fabri
Rebecca Griffiths
Jason Grocholwski

Judith Mitchell
Shericka Pringle
Roger Safian
Valerie Thomas
Mary Lynne Williams

Quick Takes

What is NUSAC?

NUSAC, the Northwestern University Staff Advisory Council, is a group of eighteen non-exempt and exempt staff from various areas and schools, representing both the Chicago and Evanston campuses. Our mission is to serve you, the staff, by representing your opinions, concerns, and experiences.

NUSAC makes recommendations to the University's senior administration on behalf of staff. We focus on the issues that impact you the most, particularly in the areas of benefits and HR-related programs. The members of NUSAC work together to review, discuss, research, analyze, and provide proposals or recommendations for many University policies and programs. You can view our input on a variety of issues at <http://www.northwestern.edu/nusac/issues.html>

Please note that we serve you by advising the senior administration of Northwestern on what staff need and want, through meetings and correspondence. We meet once a year with the President, Henry Bielen; and regularly with Senior VP for Business and Finance, Eugene Sunshine; Assoc. VP of Human Resources, Guy Miller; and Director of Benefits, Tom Evans. We make our case, we advocate for you, and we push - But ultimately the University's administrators make all decisions affecting policies and programs. So in addition to contacting us, we encourage you to voice your concerns directly to your administrators on issues of importance to you!

NUSAC also works to improve the Northwestern community. We sponsor brown bag sessions, arrange and co-sponsor the President's State of the University Address, are involved with the Employee of the Year Event honoring staff, and the annual Benefits Fair. NUSAC representatives also serve on the Northwestern Community Council, the University Parking Committee, the University Crime Prevention Committee, and various task forces as they arise, such as the Child-Care Task Force recently convened by Provost Lawrence Dumas.

We recognize that the staff at Northwestern have many concerns and issues of importance. Our challenge is to focus limited resources on several priorities each year, in order to enable progress. But we need to hear from you as to what's most important, so please Email us at nusac@northwestern.edu or contact any member of NUSAC. (See page 2)

FY2002 priorities for NUSAC include: recommending a strengthened benefits program with focus on equity for staff in the retirement plan, and portable tuition benefits for employees; recommending HR programs to improve recruitment and retention of employees.

How can you join NUSAC? Eligible staff apply for membership and are interviewed by the entire council each summer. Based on NUSAC's recommendations, new members are appointed by the President and serve three-year terms. Participation is voluntary and in addition to each member's regular job responsibilities.

Spotlight on NUSAC Chair: Claudia Kunin

Claudia Kunin is the NUSAC Chair for 2001-2002. Claudia is Manager of Operations in the Theatre and Interpretation Center on the Evanston campus. She started at NU sixteen years ago as the Box Office Manager for the Theatre Department. Claudia enjoys reading, gardening, and movies.

Why did you join NUSAC?

As a long-term employee of Northwestern, I've always tried to contribute to the University community. My experience has given me an insight into both the positive and negative experiences of employees here at NU. NUSAC offered the perfect opportunity to collaborate with people from all over the University on efforts to improve the environment for the staff.

What is your favorite spot on campus?

The Shakespeare Garden. It is a beautiful and historic garden. I have always enjoyed it as one of the few peaceful spots on a busy campus. Recently I have been working toward a certificate at the School of the Chicago Botanic Garden and now I also really appreciate the diversity of plants and the design of the garden.

What advice would you give to a new NU staff member?

I would encourage them to learn about and take advantage of all of the resources that the University has to offer. The University has a wonderful library, an amazing range of arts events, and a beautiful location near the lake to enjoy. I would also encourage them to attend campus-oriented brown bags, and take advantage of all the opportunities that will keep them informed about the happenings at Northwestern University.