

Senate Resolution 08/09-04: Partner Benefits

Whereas, all of the top ten technology and engineering focused universities and seventeen of the top twenty offer domestic partner benefits for same-sex couples,

Whereas, in order to remain competitive in hiring top candidates we must match what these universities offer,

Whereas, UAH seeks to be a cultural leader in its community,

Whereas, the UAH Anti-Discrimination Policy states that we are:

"committed to making employment opportunities available to qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. All personnel actions and programs, including recruitment, selection, assignment, classification, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff and recall, termination, determination of wages, conditions and benefits of employment, etc. shall be administered in accordance with this equal opportunity policy. It is the intent of the University that, in all aspects of employment, individuals shall be treated without discrimination on any of the foregoing bases and that employment decisions shall instead be premised upon a person's ability, experience and other job-related qualifications,"

Whereas, current University policy does not recognize domestic partnerships for same sex or opposite sex couples in its current benefits package for employees,

Whereas, such benefits do constitute "conditions and benefits of employment" as promised in the Anti-Discrimination Policy statement,

Whereas, the failure to offer said benefits could thus be discrimination,

Therefore Be It Resolved That:

the University of Alabama in Huntsville follow the recommendations of the report of the Committee of GLBT Concerns and implement the following policies, taken from the report:

1. Include Domestic Partner in university policies that address employment benefits including insurance programs (health, dental, vision, and life), tuition reimbursement, library privileges, and equal access to recreational facilities (such as the UAH Fitness Center).
2. Incorporate Domestic Partner and Dependent Children of Domestic Partner in the definition of qualified family member in any Family Medical Leave, Bereavement Leave or other relevant benefit policies.
3. Assure that premiums and all other terms are equitable to that of married couples and their families.
4. Continue to assure that all present and future benefits affecting Domestic Partners, not identified in this report, be brought to equitable status.
5. Incorporate Domestic partner benefits and policies in documents given to prospective employers during recruitment.
6. Establish a definition of Domestic Partner for same-sex and opposite sex couples and a registration procedure to file a Domestic Partner affidavit modeled after those used at other universities.
7. We recommend the following eligibility criteria for Domestic Partner, drawn from the Human Rights Campaign Website^[1]:
 - a. Two people who reside together in a mutually responsible relationship,
 - b. Of either opposite or the same sex,
 - c. Each of whom is 18 years of age,

- d. Each of whom is mentally competent to enter into a relationship,
- e. Each of whom is not currently in another marriage or relationship,
- f. And who file an affidavit testifying to these facts.
- g. If the University requires a residency requirement, we follow HRC in recommending it be no more than 6 months. However, we discourage a residency requirement, as Alabama State Law currently recognizes a status of Common Law Marriage that has *no* length requirement whatsoever. Parity demands the same for Domestic Partners.

[1] See <http://www.hrc.org/issues/workplace/benefits/4826.htm>