

Domestic Partner Benefits for BCTC/KCTCS Employees

WHEREAS, Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) unmarried employees currently are denied access to spousal benefits for their domestic partners;

WHEREAS, Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC)'s Policy and Procedures Handbook, Section 2: Administrative Policies and Procedures prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, stating the following: "Bluegrass Community and Technical College is committed to a policy of providing educational opportunities to all qualified students regardless of economic or social status, and will not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, marital status, beliefs, age, national origin, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability"¹;

WHEREAS, BCTC's VISION, MISSION AND VALUES statement includes:

"BCTC has been given great responsibility for the prosperity and well-being of all Kentuckians. Our values reflect that, and include:

- Responsiveness to students, employers, and communities
- Access with innovative and flexible delivery
- Trust, respect, and open communication
- Continuous improvement
- Inclusion, multiculturalism, and engagement"²;

WHEREAS, BCTC allows its employees to add domestic partners to Department of University Recreation memberships³;

WHEREAS, Kentucky's existing non-discrimination ordinances in Covington, Lexington, Louisville and Vicco ban certain discrimination because of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity;

WHEREAS, domestic partnership benefits at public universities have not been a drain on state budgets. Data from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA) indicate that only 8 percent of institutions pay all health insurance costs for family coverage; it is far more common for employees to pay for some or all of the costs associated with covering additional family members;⁴

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of the Treasury and the IRS ruled on Aug. 29, 2013, that same-sex couples who were legally married will be treated as married for federal tax purposes, including the pretax treatment of a spouse's health insurance coverage, in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Revenue Ruling 2013-17 applies, in other words, regardless of whether the couple now live in a state that recognizes same-sex marriage or a state that does not recognize same-sex marriage;

WHEREAS, 311 U.S. colleges and universities offer same-sex spouse or same-sex domestic partner health benefits to their employees, including, three of BCTC's peer community college institutions (Bucks County Community College - PA, Portland Community College - OR, Los Rios Community College – CA) Iowa State University, Purdue University, University of Minnesota, and nearby Indiana University,

nearly a dozen faith-based colleges and universities, and 218 colleges and universities in states with laws or constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage⁵;

WHEREAS, Significantly, the largest and most successful companies are the most likely to offer domestic partner benefits, recognizing that they provide a competitive edge in the search for talent. Currently 269 of the Fortune 500 companies provide domestic partner benefits. Of the nation's 100 top-grossing law firms, 88 provide health benefits to same-sex partners of employees;

WHEREAS, 88% of the top 50 and 79% of the top 100 national universities as ranked by U.S. News and World Report offer same-sex spouse or same-sex domestic partner health benefits to their employees⁶;

WHEREAS, In a resolution as early 1995, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) stated its opposition "to discrimination based upon an individual's sexual orientation in the selection of faculty, the granting of promotion or tenure, and the providing of other conditions and benefits of academic life." Faculty on campuses across the nation have taken up this cause, and even those who would not directly benefit from domestic partner benefits are calling for equal benefits on their campuses as a symbol of a non-discriminatory and inclusive community;⁷

WHEREAS, the costs of implementing same-sex domestic partner health benefits is often less than 1% of the institution's health care budget;⁸

WHEREAS, more than 9,000 employers, including colleges and universities, offer same-sex domestic partner health benefits to their employees, "believing that it makes good business sense," and seeing this "as an inexpensive way to attract and retain talent and to gain an advantage over the competition";⁹

WHEREAS, BCTC and KCTCS has the opportunity to be a leader in equality in employee benefits within the local, regional, and national communities;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Faculty of Bluegrass Community and Technical College asks that both the BCTC and KCTCS Administration implement a policy that extends equal benefits to the domestic partners of their employees.

References

¹ <http://bluegrass.kctcs.edu/Marketing/Compliance.aspx>

² http://www.bluegrass.kctcs.edu/About/Our_Mission_and_Vision.aspx

³ UK Johnston Center
<http://www.uky.edu/studentaffairs/sites/www.uky.edu.studentaffairs/files/jcPamphlet.pdf>

⁴ American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2007). Domestic Partnership Benefits: Equity, Fairness, and Competitive Advantage. Retrieved from
[http://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/PolicyAndAdvocacy/PolicyPublications/domestic_partners07\(1\).pdf](http://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/PolicyAndAdvocacy/PolicyPublications/domestic_partners07(1).pdf)

⁵ Human Rights Campaign. (2012). Employer database. Retrieved from
<http://sites.hrc.org/issues/workplace/list.asp>

⁶ U.S. News and World Report. (2012). National university rankings. Retrieved from
<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-universities>

⁷ American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2007).

⁸ American Civil Liberties Union. (2005). The true cost of providing domestic partner health care benefits. Retrieved from http://www.aclu.org/lgbt-rights_hiv-aids/true-cost-providing-domestic-partner-health-care-benefits

⁹ American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2007).