IMPORTANT NOTICE

Although this communication deals with cost reduction, we have made the decision to bear the cost of delivery to your home address as it is important that all staff members receive this information in a timely manner.

Date: April 30, 2003

To: Academic Staff Members & Retired Staff Members

From: John Hoddinott and Phyllis Clark
President, AAS:UA Vice-President (Finance & Administration)

SUBJECT: Phase I Changes to ACADEMIC BENEFITS

We are writing to provide you with initial decisions taken by the Academic Benefits Review Task Force. You will recall that in July, 2002, in conjunction with the academic salary settlement, the membership also ratified the Terms of Reference for this Task Force. The Administration and the AAS:UA each acknowledge that we have a joint responsibility to contain the rate of increase in benefits costs and a need to reform the benefits program to better reflect and meet the needs of members and to bring the increase in benefit costs under control. In addition, we must ensure that the University is well-positioned to address the increasing external pressures of healthcare reform, both provincially and federally.

This communication provides you with the Phase I Changes to ACADEMIC BENEFITS and, as mentioned in the April, 2003 edition of the AAS:UA Newsletter, the containment options that will be implemented are:

- **Effective July 1, 2003, restriction of the massage benefit to therapeutic massage services delivered by a single provider;**
- **Effective August 31, 2003, restriction of the (staff member only) tuition remission program to credit courses in a recognized degree program offered by the University, up to the equivalent of 12 credits per year in Arts and Science;**
- **Effective June 30, 2004, elimination of the Bridge Benefits Program.**

Selecting among benefit containment options will require ongoing work by the Task Force and the subsequent Academic Benefits Advisory Committee that is to be set up jointly by the University and the AAS:UA. We will continue to communicate regularly with the membership on the progress of these discussions. Phase II changes will be announced by the end of this year.

It is important for retired staff on the Bridge Benefits Program to note that you will be affected by all current and future implemented changes to the various plans for which you are eligible.

In making these important decisions, the Task Force has closely reviewed the financial data and the benefits reform options available to us in context with the results of the Benefits Survey which was conducted in November, 2002. Please review the enclosed information carefully.

**MASSAGE THERAPY BENEFITS (SUPPLEMENTARY HEALTH CARE):**

Effective **July 1, 2003**, massage therapy will be available from one service provider (to be determined by the Academic Benefits Advisory Committee, e.g., Glen Sather Sports Medicine Clinic) and will be limited to therapeutic massage services (to be determined by the service provider and your physician).

Massage therapy received according to existing claims standards will cease on June 30, 2003 (you will continue to have 24 months to claim these services).
TUITION FEE REMISSION PROGRAM:
Effective August 31, 2003, staff members will only receive tuition remission for credit courses in a recognized degree program offered at the University.

The annual tuition remission fee amount remains the same, at the equivalent of 12 credits in Arts and Science.

Approval in advance for fee remission for non-credit courses offered after August 31, 2003 will not be granted.

NO NEW ENTRANTS TO THE BRIDGE BENEFIT PROGRAM on or after July 1, 2004

Article 18 (Faculty, APO, Librarian and FSO Agreements):

Retired staff currently receiving bridge benefits will remain on the program until their normal retirement date; however, their program will be adjusted in a manner consistent with current staff members (i.e. change to massage therapy).

Staff members who are currently on a reduced workload leading to retirement under Article 18 will remain eligible for the bridge benefits program, regardless of the effective date of retirement.

Staff members who retire with an effective date on or before June 30, 2004 under Article 18 will remain eligible for the bridge benefits program following retirement until their normal retirement date.

Staff members who opt for a reduced workload leading to retirement of 50% of duties effective on or before July 1, 2003, i.e., a retirement date of no later than June 30, 2005, will also remain eligible for the bridge benefits program until their normal retirement date.

- This special arrangement will not apply to the reduced workload options of four years at 25% duties or three years at 33 1/3% of duties.
- The requirement for six months notice under the provisions of clause 18.11 will be waived in this instance only.

Please read Article 18 of your Agreement thoroughly, then contact your Department Chair as soon as possible to discuss the possibility of this option.

Additional advice regarding Article 18 may be obtained by contacting Academic Staff Administration: Betty Hoyem (492-1917) or Donna Herman (492-4959).

Pension estimates may be obtained by contacting the Staff Assistance Centre at 492-4555.

All other staff members will not be eligible to participate in the bridge benefits program. However, they will be provided access to an alternate benefits program that would be 100% paid by the individual.


The University considers health and dental benefit programs to form an important component of total compensation for staff and they are integrally linked to our ability to attract and retain good people. We believe that appropriate benefit programs contribute to overall employee health and productivity. However, we wish to ensure that employees understand the value of their benefits program and are empowered to take responsibility for their own health.

Task Force Members & Resource Staff:

**AAS:UA**
George Richardson, Assistant Professor, Secondary Education
Tom Scott, Professor, School of Business
Mary-Jane Turnell, APO, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences
John Hodinott, President, AAS:UA (Alternate)
Howard Welch, Executive Director, AAS:UA (Resource)

**ADMINISTRATION**
Phyllis Clark, Vice-President (Finance & Administration)
Donna Herman, Director, Academic Staff Administration
Art Quinn, Deputy Provost
Diane Albrecht, Director, Staff Programs (Resource)
Martin Coutts, Director, Financial Services (Resource)
Betty Hoyem, Academic Personnel Officer (Resource)