Date: January 15, 2013

To: Academic Staff

From: Chris Cheeseman, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Human Resource Services) and Academic Benefits Management Committee (ABMC) Co-Chair

Frank Trovato, Professor and ABMC Co-Chair

Phyllis Clark, Vice-President Finance & Administration

Donna Wilson, President AASUA

Subject: Changes to Academic Benefits

There are a number of recent improvements to your benefits that were recommended by the Academic Benefits Management Committee (ABMC), a joint committee of AASUA and Administration.

The ABMC is charged with the responsibility for monitoring the benefits plan to ensure benefits are responsive to staff member needs and the plan is financially sustainable into the future. In meeting this responsibility, the ABMC conducted a survey of members in 2012 to identify needs and priorities among the membership. Details on benefit changes and their effective dates are outlined in this letter. These changes will result in a modest benefit package cost increase within the amount available through negotiated funding agreements. Other benefit changes are currently under review by the ABMC.

Basic Life Insurance

Effective December 1, 2012 Basic Life Insurance coverage was increased as follows;

- Coverage for full-time and part-time continuing staff appointed under the Faculty, Librarian, APO and FSO agreements was increased to $100,000 (previously $60,000).
- Coverage will be introduced for new Phased Post Retirement appointments under Article 18 of the Faculty, Librarian, APO and FSO agreements that commence on and after December 1, 2012. This coverage will be $50,000 (previously no coverage) will apply for the entire terms of the phased post retirement appointment up to a maximum of 3 years.
- Coverage for full-time staff appointed for contract periods of a minimum of a one year in duration under the Trust/Research (TRAS), Contract Academic Teaching (CAST) and Sessional and other Temporary (SOTS) staff agreements was increased to $100,000 (previously $60,000).
- Coverage for full-time staff appointed for contract periods of a minimum of eight months to a maximum of one year in duration under the Trust/Research (TRAS), Contract Academic
Teaching (CAST) and Sessional and other Temporary (SOTS) staff agreements was increased to $50,000 (previously $25,000).

- For staff members who were in receipt of long-term disability benefits or on a leave without pay from the University on December 1, 2012 their effective date for this increased basic life insurance coverage will be the first day that they return to their regular duties.

**Supplementary Health and Dental Care Plans**

- Effective January 1, 2013 coverage for Optometrist and Ophthalmologist services will change to once each calendar year (previously once every 24 months).
- The timeframe for submitting claims for reimbursement will change on January 1, 2013. Services received on or after January 1, 2013 must be submitted for reimbursement no later than 90 days following the end of the calendar year in which they were incurred. This timeframe aligns with the timeframe for submission of Health Spending Account claims; this alignment will allow better coordination of claims between these benefits.

**Health Spending Account**

- Effective January 1, 2013 the annual benefit available through the Health Spending Account will increase to $750 per member (previously $500 per member).

**Child Care Benefit**

- Effective January 1, 2013 for the 2012 claim year, the plan has been simplified in three ways to enhance member equity and administrative efficiency. Reimbursement will remain at a level of 50%, and remain subject to a maximum reimbursement per child per eligible employee of $2000 per calendar year.
  1. The maximum daily rate reimbursement level for both full-and part-time care will be eliminated and child care benefits will be based upon the total aggregate annual child care expenses incurred by the staff member.
  2. The proration of the child care benefit for part-time continuing appointments will be discontinued, with part-time staff eligible for the child care benefit at the same level as full-time staff.
  3. The limit of only one child care benefit per eligible child will be eliminated; parents employed in University of Alberta with appointments eligible for the child care benefit will each be able to apply for the child care benefit for the same child.

If you have any questions about these changes, please contact Pension & Benefit Advisory Services in Human Resource Services at benefits@ualberta.ca or telephone 780-492-4555.