The members of the committee are as follows: Doug Cherkauer, Faith Crampton, Teresa Johnson (Chair), Sharon Keigher, Judy Panich, Randall Ryder, Jean Salzer, Winston VanHorne, Linda Wittmann-Kirsch, Wendy Young. ShaRon Williams and Elizabeth Bolt have served as ex-officio members because of their position as Human Resources Director

I. COMPOSITION AND MEETINGS OF THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS COMMITTEE

1. At the EBC's last meeting in Spring 04, Teresa Johnson was elected to chair the committee for the 2004-05 academic year.

2. The committee met nine (8) times over the course of the academic year--four (4) times in Semester I, 2004-045 and four (4) times in Semester II, 2004-05. Director ShaRon Williams and Elizabeth Bolt of UWM's Department of Human Resources regularly attended meetings of the committee.

II: ACTIVITIES OF THE EBC IN SEMESTER I, 2004-05

1. Domestic partner benefits - The issue of providing benefits for domestic partners has been brought to members from other members on the campus community. The issue of partner benefits as a strategy to retain qualified faculty and staff was also discussed. The committee also reviewed a chart with UW System campus resolutions and letters regarding Domestic Partner Benefits, the marriage amendment and the Inclusivity Initiative, and a table with cost estimates of same sex domestic partner health coverage for UW System employees (not all state employees). An article opposing a ban on civil unions and same gender marriages was also reviewed.

2. Occupational Health Nurse Position - Discussion centered on the duties of this position and where the position should be located. Discussion included coordination between risk management, environmental health and safety, and issues of workman’s comp. and disabilities. A motion was passed that read as follows:

   *The Economic Benefits Committee recommends that a position be created for a masters prepared occupational health nurse to be involved in health promotion and case management for individuals with disabilities and workman comp issues. This person will work closely with environmental health as related to environmental work issues as well.*

3. The chair contacted and met with Chancellor Carlos Santiago per the instruction of the committee in December. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the rules that will govern the distribution of faculty and staff compensation on campus in the 2005-07 biennium, and other matters that fall within the statutory responsibility of the EBC under UWM's Policies and Procedures. The meeting was productive and the Chancellor said that he would contact the chair or committee later in the year for dialogue regarding salary and benefit issues.
4. Discussion of Health Insurance for Milwaukee County - The issue of HMOs in Milwaukee for next year was discussed. R. Ryder & S. Williams reported that it was quite probable that as of January 2006 there will be no HMOs in Milwaukee. If that happens, the Standard Maintenance Plan (hereinafter SMP) would take the place of the HMOs. The SMP would be at Tier 1. It also was noted that the SMP will have a Preferred Provider Option (PPO). The committee will continue to monitor availability of providers for SE WI.

III: ACTIVITIES OF THE EBC IN SEMESTER II, 2004-05

1. Benefits questionnaire - The "Benefits Questionnaires" was distributed to the EBC and reviewed several times throughout the year. After continued fine-tuning, Panich shared the draft with the Academic Staff Economic Benefits Subcommittee. A final version of the questionnaire was distributed to all non-represented faculty and academic staff during the spring semester. Results have not yet been collected or prepared for distribution.

2. Health Insurance and Drug Benefits - The committee discussed concerns about Navitus Drug Benefit Management Company that have been raised by members of the campus community. Many committee members have heard anecdotal information about dissatisfaction with resolution of complaints. A couple of the examples include “they demanded I submit 8 years worth of medical records to get coverage of a medication my daughter has been using”; and different co-pays have been applied to people all using same medication, etc. Many feel these are diversionary tactics so consumers will quit trying to get the med they need, “and just give up.” Members were encouraged to have employees contact both Navitus for grievances, HR, and Tom Korpody at ETF (per his conversation with the EBC last spring).

3. Mental Health Benefits with Humana - Humana dropped their MH contract with APS (to whom they were paying 45% of cost). Now they’ve contracted with MentalHealthNet, which pays a smaller amount of the cost of services. This has become discriminatory, as all those consumers had to switch providers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Humana has reduced its mental health coverage and benefit by decreasing the reimbursement rates it is paying to the new provider, Mental HealthNet. Employees report that the payments for group therapy and Psychiatric evaluations have been reduced by half. This is essentially a benefit reduction, since many of the providers members are currently using do not belong to MentalHealthNet. This appears to have become a significant barrier to continuity in mental health care, as well as a big cost cut to providers. Plus, this appears to have been implemented after the 2005 plan was already in effect.

There were questions raised about the new reimbursement & whether it meets the contract regarding reimbursement? Humana members were sent a letter in the fall explaining this MH change. Chair Johnson emailed Thomas Korpady at Employee Trust Funds (ETF) regarding the most recent changes to Humana’s mental health contractor. Per ETF, there will be no request made to Humana for a change in contractor. Employees should file a grievance directly with Humana, Grievances and Appeals, PO Box 14546, Lexington, KY 40512-4546.
4. HR Resources Education- The committee asked during fall 04 that educational resources and dissemination of information regarding benefits be distributed to HR. Suggested topics included long term disability, income continuation insurance (ICI), social security, benefit coordination, how to use benefits such as sick leave conversion to health insurance, rolling appointments, ombudsman for Health issues, and Navitus. Suggested ways to disseminated information were newsletters, memos, email and brown bag lunch sessions. R. Ryder also suggested departmental meetings. E. Bolt noted that the UW M Report has a benefit updates column. She also noted that multiple ways of disseminated benefit information was best. Additional training for Department Chairs was suggested. Personnel Representatives could also raise issues at departmental meetings. Although initially Williams reported that the Human Resources Department (hereinafter HRD) will begin publishing an e-newsletter in the spring of 2005, by the Spring 05 the UWM Report has increased the space allotted to benefits information. The issue of increasing information provided to new faculty and staff was discussed.

5. Faculty Salaries - A Fact sheet of faculty salaries was started in the fall. Work continued until May with multiple modifications per suggestions of committee members. The purpose of the sheet was to have a one page document that could be used by faculty with legislators and members of the public to demonstrate that faculty salaries have not kept up with peers from other universities, do not reflect the increases in state income, and that many years there have been no increases. R. Ryder has provided the sub committee with a majority of the materials used for the graph.

During the May meeting, a revised Fact sheet was distributed. The membership concluded that without tax collections, faculty salaries; projected tax collections; and personal income for all years of the 20 year period, the document should not be distributed for use. Also data sources need to be included on the fact sheet. This may be revisited again during Fall 2005.

6. Pay plan - A Pay Plan Resolution was passed by the committee. Given the empirical fact that in the 2003-05 biennium the pay plan provided raises of 0 and 1%, it is the conviction of the Economic Benefits Committee (EBC) that merit and worth have not been rewarded. Therefore, the EBC recommends that any pay raise of 3% or less in either year of the 2005-07 biennium be distributed across the board.

The chair forwarded the resolution to the Chancellor, Provost, and University Committee. However no action was taken because suggestions for the pay plan had already gone from the regents to the legislature.

Committee leadership – Faith Crampton (School of Education) has accepted the chair nomination for 2005-06 academic year.

The EBC had a productive year. The members served this institution well and took the initiative to engage substantively critical benefit concerns that touch us all.