

April 20, 2005

Dear Mr. Rugg,

On behalf of each campus triumvirate, I would like to thank you for meeting with us on Wednesday, April 13, 2005, to discuss the current status of domestic partnership benefits at the University of Illinois.

This was an important meeting that provided for a robust discussion of issues that need to be addressed as well as the recommendation of specific actions to be taken which will further the goal of the availability of fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory benefits to all U of I employees. Your role in this is central and meaningful, and we appreciate your attention as well as your amenability to meet with us on a quarterly basis to discuss the progress on this policy.

Further, we appreciate the following:

- willingness to look at multiple ways to assist in the process of moving toward equity regarding domestic partnership benefits and recognizing there is some room for interpretation on the current policy being offered and enforced
- receptivity to review the specific concerns raised in the memorandum submitted to Trustee Devon Bruce in April 2004 and resubmitted in November 2004
- goodwill to re-issue a RFP for a group policy insurance plan (possibly to include other universities to create a larger group for the RFP) that will include same-sex domestic partners
- willingness to address inconsistent implementation of supervisor enforcement/interpretation behind the domestic partnership benefits now offered and to be clear and explicit about domestic partnership benefits throughout the U of I system
- investigating the inconsistency that UIUC graduate students can buy in completely to the U of I health system for domestic partnership benefits which represents a significant disparity of benefit distribution and practice with faculty, staff, and undergraduate students.

Further, we applaud the University Council of Equal Opportunities newest recommendations to:

- edit the university nondiscrimination statement by adding “including gender identity” after the words “sexual orientation”
- revise language to include “domestic partnership in-laws” to bereavement and funeral leave
- clarify the policy to include employees whose same-sex partner gives birth or adopts a child regarding parental leave.

Our own further recommendations include:

- adding the words “domestic partners” to all policies and including the written enforcement of all policies in relevant publications
- designing and implementing a website that explains clearly domestic partnership benefits offered by the University including procedures and enforcement practices
- having the nondiscrimination policy being printed in full on all U of I official materials
- reviewing Mary Beastall’s work on the three-campus audit of benefits as they are offered and enforced on each U of I site and implementing a new study
- scheduling a meeting in late September to follow up on our April meeting.

Finally, and most importantly, we encourage you to challenge CMS to open coverage for domestic partners. This is clearly the biggest and simplest step toward equity and will help to put a human face on this human issue. From where we stand, it is hard to see CMS’s resistance as anything other than homophobia. Your voice can make a tremendous difference.

Thank you, again, for your time and attention. If we can assist your process and education, please do not hesitate to call on us.

Sincerely,

Patrick Finnessy, Director  
UIC Office of GLBT Concerns  
on behalf of Mary Ellen O’Shaughnessey, Jim Hall, Jane Reid, Margot Duley, Allan Cook, Pat Langley, Kelly Kinnison, and John D’Emilio

cc: John Loya, Devon Bruce, [www.glbc.uic.edu](http://www.glbc.uic.edu)