OVERVIEW:
The year brought many changes to University and many of these changes impacted on the Human Resources organization and delivery structure. Consequently, for the Benefits Committee much of our time and discussion was spent in developing an understanding of the impact of these changes on Library staff and how we could best present the new services and new communication options to the staff. Among these University wide changes were: the introduction of the timekeeping system PEOPLESOFT, the introduction of the web portal HARVIE which now serves as a clearing house of benefits information, and the transition of the assistance programs to the Wellness Corporation. It was indeed a time of great structural change and technological opportunity. We ended the year deliberating how the Benefits Committee could best meet the needs of the Library community in this new "on-line/web based" environment?

MEETINGS:
The Benefits Committee met on a regular basis roughly equal to one bi-monthly meeting throughout the year. During the year, one member was forced to resign due to pressing professional demands.
We began the year discussing the following areas for meetings and projects:

Pre-1973 pension program presentation.
Proposed working parents presentation
Proposed future presentation on TIAA/CREF investment options and working parents.
Project to create web-based list of lesser-known benefits to be sited on Librarians' Assembly WebPages.

With the shift to the Wellness Corporation and the rollout of the HARVIE benefits Intranet for employees, it became obvious that some of the proposals listed above would have to be modified or abandoned. It no longer seemed reasonable or necessary to create an addendum to the Librarians' Assembly web page with benefits, when HARVIE now serves as that function. In addition, working parents concerns seem to be a rather vaguely defined topic. Consequently, we concentrated our efforts on hosting two presentations that could directly serve the Library community and/or inform them of the benefits informational resources now readily available to all staff.
PRESENTATIONS:

March 30, 2004 Pre-1973 pension program presentation. Focused on retirement package for those employees who entered employment at Harvard University before the current retirement system was instituted.

May 6, 2004 Lesser-Known Benefits/HARVIE presentation. Paul Zizzo (Manager of Benefits Outreach Services) gave an hour-long presentation of some of Harvard's "Other Benefits". These included: parking, recreational, and mortgage/insurance benefits. Some of the benefits presented were more familiar than others, but the means of finding out about them through the Wellness Corporation or HARVIE was new. In fact, Mr. Zizzo said that much of this information is now available through the HARVIE web site. About 20 people attend.

CLOSING: During a year of many transitions, the Co-Chairs and committee members worked co-operatively and collegially. Much of our time was necessarily spent examining the new benefits communication and delivery system here at Harvard University and how our committee can serve to facilitate the staff's understanding of that new system. HARVIE, PEOPLESOFT, the Wellness Corporation all clearly bring new opportunities and new options to the individual staff member. But it is the consensus of the committee that there is still an important need for outreach to explain what resources and benefits are available to the staff and how they can use these new tools to find that information. Perhaps helping to meet this need for outreach, will be one of the ongoing missions of the Benefits Committee. Helping others to find the information tools they need is a goal that is very much in keeping with our role as librarians.

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