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2003 UNOPA Letter to Executive Board Members from Kathy Bennetch, Director

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May 8, 2003

TO: UNOPA Executive Board Members

FROM: Kathy Bennetch, Director Employee Concerns Ad Hoc Committee -
Scholarships for Part-time Employees

SUBJECT: Employee and Dependent Scholarship Program Proposal

Presently Employee Scholarships are available as a benefit to employees if they are in a regular, full-time appointment on the day classes start. Part-time regular employees with 0.5 FTE or greater are eligible for all the benefits of a full-time employee, i.e., insurance, sick leave, vacation and holidays (prorated according to their FTE), however, they are not eligible for the Employee Scholarship Program.

Last year there were 3,242 full-time staff and 311 part-time staff at UNL (0.5 FTE to 0.99 FTE) (*Source: SAP/HR October 2001- University of Nebraska-Lincoln Fact Book*) The number of staff who would become eligible for Employee Scholarships if the benefit were extended to part-time employees is very small. **It would be beneficial to the University to extend Employee Scholarships to that small pool of staff who have an FTE of 0.5 to 0.99 on a regular appointment, who are now eligible for all other employee benefits on a prorated basis..**

A survey was done by UNOPA of the peer institutions of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. UNL is the only university in the group that requires 1.0 FTE to receive Employee Scholarship benefits. Seven of the peer institutions grant such benefits to 0.5 FTE employees, and two require 0.75 FTE. Among Lincoln businesses that offer tuition benefits to part-time employees as well as full-time employees are McDonald's Restaurants, Union Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, and Allstate Insurance Company.

UNL Human Resources defines full-time employees as those who work 40 hours a week during a twelve-month appointment (2,080 hours annually); a ten-month appointment (1,733 hours annually); or a nine-month appointment (1,560 hours annually). All employees in those categories receive full-time benefits, including Employee Scholarship benefits. In comparison, part-time employees on a regular twelve-month appointment at 0.83 FTE work 1,726 hours annually; those at 0.75 FTE work 1,560 hours annually; and those at 0.5 FTE work 1,040 hours annually. **Though many part-time staff work annual hours equal to or greater than those classified as full-time, they receive no Employee Scholarship benefits.**

With the current budget cuts, there are employees who might be willing to take a reduction in FTE if they could enroll in University classes with full Employee Scholarship benefits. The

University is a learning institution and should encourage all employees to better themselves with more education.

Another incentive we recommend to encourage voluntary reduction of FTE is full university-supported insurance benefits. **We were very disappointed by the Board of Regents' action on April 26, 2003 to grant full-time benefits to a narrow segment of part-time employees.** Money would be saved even if full benefits were extended to all 0.75 FTE employees. In addition, making the change to full-time benefits universal for employees at or above 0.75 FTE would prevent the administrative nightmare of applying different benefit formulas to employees based on the date of a classification change or the reason for the change. **Benefits should be applied equitably within work classifications,** or it will be even more difficult for the University to recruit and retain good employees in these times of economic hardship.

We encourage you to reconsider offering Employee Scholarship benefits to all regular employees at 0.5 FTE or more.