**Faculty Senate Resolution: Domestic Partner Benefits**

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Whereas Utah Valley University (UVU) prides itself in exceptional care as a core value of the institution with an active commitment to inclusion; and

Whereas UVU conceptualizes inclusion as “promot[ing] civility and respect for the dignity and potential of each individual... [and] valu[ing] and promot[ing] collegial relationships and mutual respect among students, faculty, and staff.”; and

Whereas UVU acknowledges and seeks to “address the needs of populations who are underrepresented as we strive to provide access and support for all students and employees in ways that are culturally relevant and responsible”; and

Whereas UVU maintains an institutional value of exceptional accountability and a long-standing practice of providing equal opportunity and fostering an environment that permits the University to achieve academic excellence in a community that is inclusive, free from discrimination, and committed to the fair equitable treatment of each of its members by providing nondiscriminatory benefits for its employees while nurturing inclusion; and

Whereas, to attain its goals of academic excellence and diversity UVU must be able to recruit and retain the most qualified candidate and have in place employee programs that are competitive with programs offered at institutions with whom UVU competes for such employees; and

Whereas, 309 colleges offer same-sex domestic partner benefits[[1]](#footnote-1); and

Whereas, UVU’s policy states that the University does not discriminate based on marital status or sexual orientation; and

Whereas, UVU’s ability to recruit and retain high-quality employees may be compromised by its lack of competitive benefits; and

Whereas, provision of benefits to domestic partners does not have a significant effect on the cost of programs[[2]](#footnote-2) ; and

Whereas UVU currently offers health and wellness benefits, life and disability benefits, and retirement benefits to eligible dependents; and

Whereas UVU currently defines eligible dependents as “Dependents of the employee eligible for coverage include dependent children from birth to their 26th birthday and the employee's spouse. Married dependents under age 26 may be covered, however, the plan does not cover their spouse or dependent children.”[[3]](#footnote-3); and

Whereas the University of Utah has a broader definition of eligible dependents that is inclusive of domestic partners and not just employee's spouse:

An eligible domestic partner is someone with whom the employee has a partnership that meets the following requirements:

Note: This is the exact definition used by the University of Utah as found at <https://www.hr.utah.edu/benefits/dependents.php>. We agree with the definition used at the U of U for use at UVU.

* Both are over the age of eighteen
* Reside together in a permanent residence and have done so for at least six months and will remain members of the same household for the period of coverage
* A serious and committed relationship which they intend to continue indefinitely
* An emotional commitment to one another
* Joint responsibility for the common welfare and financial obligations of the household or one is chiefly dependent upon the other for financial assistance
* Not related in any way that would prohibit legal marriage
* Not legally married to anyone else or the domestic partner of anyone else[[4]](#footnote-4); now, therefore,

**Be it resolved** that UVU adopt a definition of eligible dependents that is inclusive of domestic partners that coincides with the definition from the University of Utah.

Note: Because a domestic partner is not a recognized dependent under current tax law, the portion of premiums an employee pays for a domestic partner and domestic partner's children will be paid with after-tax dollars. In addition, the employee will be taxed on the amount the department contributes for the domestic partner and domestic partner’s children[[5]](#footnote-5)

\*Above note is an exact notation used by the University of Utah as found at <https://www.hr.utah.edu/benefits/dependents.php>. We support the notation as written by the U of U for use at UVU.

1. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/07/18/partner-benefits-higher-ed-evolve-more-states-recognize-gay-marriage> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.aclu.org/other/true-cost-providing-domestic-partner-health-care-benefits> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.uvu.edu/hr/benefits/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.hr.utah.edu/benefits/dependents.php> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.hr.utah.edu/benefits/dependents.php> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)