

## **CAREER MOBILITY**

### **Section 46a-68-91**

This section was found to be in compliance in the previous filing and there were no proposals/recommendations.

Career mobility at UConn Health is an organizational commitment in compliance with section 4-61t of the Connecticut (CT) General Statutes and section 46a-68-91 of the CT State Regulations to provide opportunities to employees for career as well as personal development. This commitment is a natural extension of UConn Health's mission of education, research and patient care. The ongoing training and educational culture within an institution of higher education fosters the creation, development, implementation, and continuous improvement of employee development programs that support upward mobility opportunities.

UConn Health continues to offer trainings to staff that provide the necessary skills that impact career mobility. Many of the identified competencies such as computer training, customer service, business writing etc., are addressed through the Learning Opportunities that are available at UConn Health and Department of Administrative Services. This information is posted on Human Resources (HR) website, **Exhibit # 1**.

The Organization and Staff Development (OSD) created a career development training for employees, *Assess and Navigate*. The workshop's curriculum includes planning for education and training, navigating UConn Health hiring system, planning career goals, and assessment of experiences, interests, skills, and resume. This is being offered to employees in the fall and spring, **Exhibit #2**.

UConn Health was not able establish any specific upward mobility programs due to current collective bargaining contracts that do not allow targeted movement from one unit to another. The majority of positions at UConn Health where true Upward Mobility could be established require negotiations between the affected bargaining units in order to target an employee or a class to move from one position to another.

Other upward mobility activities that UConn Health supports are as follows:

#### **1199 Career Mobility Committee**

UConn Health participated along with representatives of other human service agencies, on the Funds Committee of the New England Health Care Employees Union, District 1199. The Committee funds a bank of leave hours for employees who are pursuing a post-secondary degree. The general eligibility requirements have exceptions/waivers for students pursuing Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, and Masters of Social Work degrees. The Committee also funds reimbursement of health care related certificates. Please see sample in **Exhibit #3**.

During the Plan year, nine (9) employees from various job groups participated in the summer, fall, and spring program:

- **3A Registered Nurse** – one (1) white female
- **3C Specialized Nurses** – one (1) white female
- **5C Health Care Support** – one (1) white female
- **5G Licensed Practical Nurse** – four (4) white females, two (2) black females

### **Tuition Reimbursement Program**

The Tuition Reimbursement Program is another mechanism used by Department of Human Resources to facilitate professional development for employees. The program is available to all classified and unclassified bargaining unit employees as well as managerial/confidential employees.

Classified bargaining unit contracts provide tuition reimbursement. Each contract determines the amount reimbursed per credit and the amount of credits allowed per fiscal year. Some collective bargaining funds may be exhausted during the reporting period. The Fiscal Policy Division of the Office of the State Comptroller maintains the state priority lists for the collective bargaining units utilizing such lists. Each employee receives reimbursement in the order of application and reimbursement is issued in sequence of these lists.

The University Health Professionals contract is administered through UConn Health and provides for the following:

- **Article 21.4 - Tuition Reimbursement**  
Tuition is reimbursed at the rate of 100% for courses taken at the University of Connecticut, and for courses taken elsewhere 75% of the UConn rate or the rate at the school he/she attends, whichever is less. Reimbursement for part-time employees will be pro-rated based on their full time equivalent (FTE). Employees are eligible for reimbursement up to 6 credits per semester, not to exceed 12 credits per fiscal year.

For professionally related courses, which a principal investigator or a supervisor outside the bargaining unit requires an employee to take, all tuition shall be reimbursed provided that the employee successfully completes the course.

An employee shall be eligible for up to \$450.00 per year to attend conferences and workshops.

- **Tuition Waiver:**  
The Tuition Waiver Program is available to all University Health Professionals (UHP) and Managerial/Confidential employees. The University shall provide a waiver of tuition and a partial waiver of credit fees equivalent to tuition for undergraduate and graduate courses taken at UConn on a space available basis. To

qualify for a graduate waiver, the employee must either be a matriculated student or the class must be work related. The employee must be employed at least 50%; the waiver will be pro-rated to the employee's full-time equivalent.

The tuition waiver program only applies to the Fall and Spring semesters; there is no limit to the amount of credits that may be waived. Intersession, Summer semester, or laboratory courses are not covered under this program.

### **Educational Leave:**

Request for leaves for University Health Professionals staff is based upon union contract.

- **Article 12.4 - Educational Leave**

12.4a - Non-degree paid or unpaid educational leave to attend conferences, seminars or workshops may be granted by the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs (Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean, School of Medicine) or his/her designee or the Hospital Director as appropriate, for purposes of professional growth and personal development. Such leave shall be related to the employee's duties and be of perceived value to the employer.

12.4b – Degree. Leave of absence without pay may be granted by the President for reasons considered being in the best interest of the University and in the interest of professional growth and improvement of the staff member concerned. All such cases are treated as special cases. Staff members desiring such leaves should apply through their Department Head and Dean to the Executive Vice President.

In accordance with the By-Laws of the University of Connecticut (Section XIV.L.1) the privilege of sabbatical leave is open to all full-time teachers who have at least the rank of assistant professor or a corresponding rank and who have been in continuous full-time service at the institution for at least six (6) years. Following a grant of sabbatical leave, the privilege may be renewed after an additional period of continuous full-time service of at least (6) years.

Information and applications for this reimbursement are on the UConn Health website under Human Resources/Benefits. Reminders to employees to submit applications to HR are sent via broadcast messages, please see **Exhibit # 4**. A total of three hundred and eighty-six (386) employees took advantage of tuition reimbursement benefits.

### **Examinations/Promotions**

In hiring for competitive positions in the Classified Service, UConn Health participates in the centralized testing system administered by Department of Administrative Services, as required by state statute. In addition, UConn Health has utilized the “promotion by reclassification” process which allows promotions to competitive positions without requiring the candidate to take the state examination as long as all requirements under this provision are met.

## Career Counseling

Career Counseling is available through the Department of Human Resources. The counseling is designed to assist employees in determining work interests, aptitudes and aspirations in planning for promotional opportunities within UConn Health and within the larger state system. Human Resources Officers serves as Generalists and are a direct service provider to both external and internal customers. During this reporting period, fifteen (15) white females, nine (9) white males, six (6) black females, three (3) Hispanic female, and four (4) other females participated in career counseling. The majority of the counseling was related to assisting and advising employees in completing SEBA paperwork due to layoffs. Applicant's qualifications were reviewed with them and applicants were encouraged to apply for all positions for which they were interest in and qualified for. Employees in the professional/non faculty, research, and secretarial groups participated in counseling

Human Resources Officers are not only responsible for the recruitment function, but are active in UConn Health's training and development program. HR has developed and taught various training modules such as resume writing and interviewing techniques. On average Human Resources Officers devote 10% to 15% of their time to career counseling which includes employees experiencing layoffs due to the non-renewal of grants.

The Department of Organization and Staff Development (OSD) unit of HR provides a Career/Employee Development service that helps create and implement individual and/or team development planning to align employee training and development efforts with the mission, goals, and objectives of the agency. OSD also provides customized training and works with a group to develop or renew knowledge, skills or values relative to a group goal.

## Training and Development

The OSD unit of Human Resources serves and supports UConn Health staff and managers by developing and conducting in-house professional development programs throughout the year. Please see **Internal Communication, Exhibit #14** for samples. A range of classroom courses and workshops are offered, allowing employees to choose specific topics that meet their professional and personal development needs. General topics include communication skills, interpersonal skills, leadership skills, Lean training, workplace effectiveness and wellness programs. If needs within a specific work unit or department extend beyond these courses, OSD also offers customized workshops, consultation, facilitation and coaching. Topics include career/employee development, communication skills, business communication, business process redesign, change management, customer service, customized training and team building. Additionally, a Management Development Program is offered twice in the year, offering tools, knowledge and skills needed to succeed as an UConn Health leader. Experts in the areas of human resources, financial management and compliance regulations guide managers and supervisors through a variety of managerial topics.

## **Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Learning Center**

To help Connecticut agencies develop and maintain a knowledgeable and effective workforce DAS Learning Center provides specialized training for Connecticut state employees in the areas of human resources, managerial support, computers, safety, and career development. Two hundred and seven (207) employees participated in DAS educational initiative.

### **Process for Accommodations**

UConn Health has an established and effective program of accommodation for employees. The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) is currently responsible for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and as such is charged with processing and facilitating requests for employee ADA accommodations. Associate Vice President Elizabeth Conklin is UConn Health's ADA Coordinator.

UConn Health employees in need of an accommodation are encouraged to contact OIE and complete a Reasonable Accommodation Request Form for Employees, **Exhibit #5**. Employees in need of an accommodation need to provide appropriate medical information to support the request. The Authorization for Disclosure and Release of Medical Information Form authorizing OIE to contact the employee's health care provider or qualified practitioner is available for this purpose, **Exhibit #6**. All employee requests for an accommodation and accompanying medical information are promptly evaluated and kept confidential consistent with state and federal law. To respond to an employee's request for accommodation, an OIE Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Investigator meets with the employee and review medical documents, the essential job functions of his/her position, and the specific facts of each request. OIE utilizes this information to determine whether the employee is eligible for an accommodation.

OIE next facilitates a discussion with the employee's manager to determine what accommodations may be reasonable. To explore the request, the department is informed of the employee's functional limitations and the accommodation he or she requested, but medical information is only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Following this interactive dialogue between the employee and manager, OIE assists the parties in determining whether an agreement regarding specific accommodations can be reached. At the conclusion of the interactive process, OIE communicates to both the employee and the manager the steps that were taken and the process for providing any mutually agreed-upon accommodation(s). The employee is responsible for contacting the OIE EEO Investigator if the reasonable accommodations are not implemented in an effective and timely manner, or if the accommodations require additional modifications. OIE works with the employee and the manager to resolve disagreements regarding the agreed-upon accommodations.

OIE also monitors UConn Health compliance with the ADA's requirements for workplace accommodations. UConn Health forbids all forms of disability discrimination, including the failure to provide reasonable accommodations and discrimination or harassment based on physical or mental disabilities. To that end, incidents of discrimination or discriminatory harassment (including disability discrimination, and failure to provide a reasonable accommodation) by UConn Health employees are investigated by OIE. Complaints regarding such incidents are processed in accordance with OIE's complaint procedures. Please see Discrimination Complaint Process, **Exhibit #1**.