Date: February 15, 2016  
To: Research Faculty Council  
From: Sari Bennett  
Re: Policy Clarification of Employment Categories/Elimination of the *Part-Time/Benefits Eligible Category

In July 2008, the USNH Board of Trustees and USNH Presidents’ Council approved the elimination of status benefits eligible appointments below 75% (with the exception of clinical and research faculty). Prior to 2008, employees who were in positions 50%-74% were allowed to carry health benefits but at a higher premium rate than those employed at 75% and above*.

Clinical and Research Faculty were exempt from this change because research faculty are sometimes subject to unexpected changes in grant funding due to factors beyond their control or clinical faculty are subject to fluctuations in student enrollment. Since then, other options have been developed to meet the challenge of funding or student enrollment fluctuation.

**Bridge Support:** The Bridge Support program is intended to match funds provided by the Research Faculty member’s home unit and results in no change to FTE. Bridge support addresses the need for salary and fringe benefit support for a temporary loss of external (sponsored) funding due to factors beyond the faculty member’s control. Bridge support requires a minimum dollar-for-dollar match from the Research Faculty member’s home unit. More information can be found at [http://www.unh.edu/research/options-meet-challenge-funding-fluctuations](http://www.unh.edu/research/options-meet-challenge-funding-fluctuations).

**Partial Leave:** A partial leave allows employees to apply for a leave of absence at any FTE for a maximum of one year. USNH will continue its usual employer level of contribution to faculty/staff members' benefits for the duration of the leave or for 120 days, whichever is less. For a partial leave greater than 120 days, those faculty/staff members who have been employed in a status position for at least a year and who are working at least 50% time are eligible to continue benefits by making their employee contribution for the designated leave period or a total leave period of one year, whichever is less. Those working less than 50% are eligible to continue benefits by paying the full cost of the employee and employer contributions for the designated leave period or a total leave period of one year, whichever is less. Regardless of FTE, the retirement benefit, life insurance and long term disability insurance are all based on the partial leave salary.

**Full Leave:** In addition to partial leave, employees have the option to take a full unpaid leave of absence. For the first 120 days of unpaid leave, health benefits continue at the same employee cost share as when working 75% FTE or greater. After 120 days the employee must pay the full premium cost to continue health benefits.

**Leave Limits:** The maximum duration of a leave is one year and at the end of the leave there is a twenty-four month wait before one can apply for another leave.

**Leave Exceptions:** If the faculty member wishes to apply for an exception to the one year maximum of a full or partial leave, or the twenty-four month wait before one can apply for another leave, they must submit a written request with rationale which requires approval of the Chair, Dean or Unit leader, and Provost Office.

*The Part-time/Benefits Eligible category is also referred to as “Premium Conversion”. Health benefits costs for the employee consist of the regular employee cost share of premiums for a 75% or greater FTE plus ½ the USNH employer cost share.*