VII – 3.00 – POLICY ON WELLNESS PROGRAMS

(Approved by the Board of Regent October 9, 2015)

I. PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY:

To encourage University System of Maryland (USM) Staff employees to participate in Wellness programs offered by USM institutions and other state entities in order to improve health and maintain a healthy lifestyle. This policy applies to all Nonexempt and Exempt Staff Employees on Regular or Contingent status.

II. DEFINITIONS

Release Time – An approved absence from duty during the work day without loss of any pay for the purpose of attending an employer-approved wellness activity.

III. WELLNESS PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Each institution shall establish a Wellness Program for employees.

A. To the extent that such resources are available on campus, employees shall have access to:

1. Institution recreation, fitness and pool facilities;
2. Campus wellness and benefits fairs;
3. Wellness information on campus websites, employee newsletters and other sources;
4. Relaxation and meditation rooms on campus; and
5. Retirement and other financial wellness planning workshops and other information sources.

B. To the extent that such resources are available, institutions may provide low- or no-cost wellness activities and benefits to employees, which may include:

1. Smoking cessation, nutrition and weight loss, stress relief, and other classes to promote wellness;
2. Exercise, dance, and other physical fitness classes and programs;
3. Collaborations with private and local government fitness and wellness program providers to provide discounted access to institution employees;
4. Health screening programs;
5. Employee Assistance services, including counseling and work-life referral services; and access to mental health counselors through an Employee Assistance program; and

6. Other wellness activities & benefits that the institution may establish.

IV. RELEASE TIME FOR WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

Each institution shall provide a reasonable amount of release time for employees to participate in specified wellness activities and events taking place at the institution, operations permitting and with the permission of the supervisor.

A. Such release time may be used for screenings, preventive health services, seminars, classes and other special events provided as part of the institution’s wellness program.

B. Release time may be in the form of sick leave, paid administrative leave, or other form of paid time away from duty, as determined by the institution.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES:

Each President shall identify his/her designee(s) as appropriate for this policy, develop procedures as necessary to implement this policy, communicate this policy and applicable procedures to his/her institutional community, and post it on its institutional website.