



# THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY FLEXCASH PLAN AND TAX ADVANTAGE PREMIUM PLAN

September 2005

This booklet is intended to provide the highlights of the California State University (CSU) FlexCash Plan and Tax Advantage Premium Plan. Complete details of the plans are provided in the official plan documents, which supersede in the event of any discrepancy. If you have questions about the plans, or if you would like to review the plan documents, please contact your Human Resources Office.

## Overview

The CSU offers two programs to help you tailor your benefits package to meet your needs and save you valuable tax dollars. If you have medical and/or dental coverage outside of the CSU, the FlexCash Plan pays you cash in lieu of CSU coverage, allowing you to receive only the coverages you and your family need.

If you want coverage through the CSU, the Tax Advantage Premium Plan (TAPP) allows you to pay for your medical insurance coverage on a pre-tax basis, so that you pay lower income and Social Security/Medicare taxes.

## What Is FlexCash?

FlexCash is an optional benefit plan that allows you to waive CSU medical and/or dental insurance coverage in exchange for cash, provided you have other non-CSU coverage. If you waive medical and/or dental insurance coverage, you will receive additional cash in your paycheck each month. The FlexCash payment is treated as taxable income and will be subject to the same payroll taxes (i.e., federal, state, Social Security, Medicare) as regular salary. However, FlexCash will not be considered compensation for retirement purposes. The additional cash income will be reported as income on Form W-2 for the year you receive it.

You should ensure your medical and dental needs are met before you choose the FlexCash Plan. If you decide to waive the CSU medical and/or dental coverage, you will be required to certify on the FlexCash Enrollment Authorization form that you have alternative non-CSU medical and/or dental coverage.

## How Much Is The Cash Payment?

If you choose to receive cash in lieu of medical and/or dental coverage, you will receive the following monthly cash payments:

<u>If You Waive</u>	<u>Payment</u>
Medical and Dental	\$140 per month
Medical Only	\$128 per month
Dental Only	\$ 12 per month

## Who Is Eligible?

You are eligible for the FlexCash Plan if:

- You meet the eligibility requirements for CSU medical and dental benefits, and
- You are an active nonrepresented employee, or an active represented employee in a bargaining unit for which FlexCash participation has been negotiated, and
- You have other, non-CSU medical and/or dental coverage through an individual policy, private group coverage, or coverage related to employment outside the CSU system.

You are not eligible to participate in FlexCash if you are covered for medical and/or dental as a dependent of another CSU employee, or retiree (dental only).

## Enrollment And Effective Date Of Coverage

The annual open enrollment period is normally September - October. The effective date of coverage will be Jan.1 - Dec. 31 of the following year.



New employees may enroll in the FlexCash Plan within 60 days of becoming eligible or during open enrollment. Coverage will become effective on the 1st of the month following enrollment, subject to campus and State Controller's Office processing timelines.

Your FlexCash enrollment will continue each plan year, unless you complete forms to enroll in medical and/or dental coverage during subsequent open enrollment periods or within 60 days of a status change event. At that time, you will have to complete a FlexCash form to change or cancel your FlexCash amount in addition to the required medical and/or dental forms.

Please note: Continued enrollment in FlexCash is subject to verification that you are enrolled in a medical plan and/or dental plan without any lapse(s) in coverage.

If you do not enroll in FlexCash during the open enrollment period, you may enroll during the plan year (from January 1 through December 31) only if:

- You are a new employee hired after the open enrollment period and you meet medical and dental plan eligibility; or
- You were on an approved leave of absence during the open enrollment; or
- You experience a status change event as defined.

### **How Do I Enroll?**

You must complete the FlexCash Enrollment Authorization form to enroll. When you sign the form, you certify that you are covered by a non-CSU medical and/or dental plan and you agree to the terms and conditions of the FlexCash Plan. When you enroll in the FlexCash Plan, you will also need to complete forms to cancel the corresponding CSU medical and/or dental coverage if you are currently enrolled. Your enrollment in the FlexCash Plan will continue from year to year until you change or terminate your enrollment.

### **Can I Change My Election During The Plan Year?**

You may not start or stop your FlexCash election in the middle of a plan year, except for allowable status change events as defined by Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations. These regulations specify that changes in FlexCash elections must be necessary, or appropriate as a result of the status change. Enrollment changes must be requested within 60 days of the status change event.

If allowable status changes occur, you can make the following changes by completing new enrollment forms within 60 days of the status change event:

- If you chose cash, you can now choose medical and/or dental coverage.
- If you kept your medical and/or dental coverage, you can now choose cash.

### **What Is A Status Change Event?**

Allowable status change events include:

- Marriage, divorce, annulment or legal separation;
- Domestic partnership or dissolution of domestic partnership;
- Death of spouse, domestic partner or dependent, (or loss of eligible dependent status);
- Birth, adoption or placement for adoption of a child;
- Change in custody that affects the child's eligibility for coverage under this Plan or the plan of the child's parent;
- Termination or commencement of employment of employee, spouse, domestic partner, or dependent;
- Commencement or return from an unpaid leave by employee, spouse, domestic partner or dependent;



- Change from full-time to part-time employment (or vice versa) by either you or your spouse or domestic partner, if that change affects your medical and/or dental coverage;
- Gain or loss of alternative non-CSU coverage;
- A significant change in the alternative non-CSU coverage;
- Entitlement to Medicare or Medicaid by an employee, spouse, domestic partner or dependent; or
- A change in worksite or residence resulting in eligibility or cessation of the employee's coverage under any health maintenance organization offered through the Plan.

### **What If I Go On Leave While Enrolled In FlexCash?**

FlexCash payments continue during periods of paid leave, but when you take a leave without pay, the payments stop until you return to active status.

### **What If I Terminate While Enrolled In FlexCash?**

If you choose to participate in the FlexCash Plan and waive coverage under the medical and/or dental plan, you also waive any Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) continuation rights you may have had. This means you will **NOT** be able to combine group medical and/or dental coverage if your CSU employment ends. Refer to the appropriate benefit plan booklet for continuation coverage information.

### **What If I Retire While Enrolled In FlexCash?**

FlexCash payments stop when you retire. If you are not enrolled in a CalPERS medical and/or CSU dental plan prior to retirement, but you retire within 120 days of separation, you (and your eligible spouse) may enroll within 60 days of retirement, or during any subsequent annual open enrollment, in conjunction with Gov. Code Section 22831. (See also 22830/22839)

Enrollment requests at that time would be handled through Human Resources Administration in the Office of the Chancellor (dental only). If, as a retired annuitant, you subsequently die while not enrolled in the medical and/or dental plan, your surviving spouse may be allowed to enroll within 60 days of your death, or during any subsequent open enrollment period, provided you have met the 120 day requirement and your surviving spouse is eligible to receive a monthly CalPERS allowance.

### **What If I Die While Enrolled In FlexCash?**

If you are married and waive medical and/or dental coverage under the FlexCash Plan, and you subsequently die without coverage, your surviving spouse will **NOT** have the right to enroll in medical and/or dental coverage as part of the surviving spouse benefit package, even if the spouse is eligible for a monthly CalPERS allowance. Additionally, family members who are not enrolled in a CalPERS medical and/or CSU dental plan at the time of the employee's death do **NOT** have a right to COBRA continuation coverage.

## **The Tax Advantage Premium Plan**

### **What Is TAPP?**

The Tax Advantage Premium Plan (TAPP) is known also as the California State University Premium Conversion Plan. TAPP allows you to pay required health plan premiums from your salary on a pre-tax basis. Any such premiums for the CSU-sponsored coverage you have selected will be deducted each month from your salary before federal and state income and Social Security/Medicare taxes are calculated and deducted. This means you will not pay taxes on those premiums—they are converted to tax-free expenses.

### **Who Is Eligible?**

You are eligible to participate in TAPP if you are an active CSU employee enrolled in a CalPERS health plan.



## **How Do I Enroll?**

If you are a new employee enrolling in health coverage, you will be enrolled in TAPP automatically. If you prefer to pay your premiums from after-tax salary, you must notify your Human Resources within 60 days of becoming eligible or during the open enrollment period in September - October for coverage for a full plan year (January 1 through December 31).

## **Can I Change My Election?**

Once your choice of pre-tax premium payment has become effective for a plan year, you can only make changes during the annual open enrollment period, unless you have a status change event. The open enrollment period is every September - October for coverage effective January 1 through December 31 of the following year. Status change events are explained in the FlexCash section of this booklet.

## **What Happens If My Premium Changes Or If I Go On Leave?**

If your premium contributions change during the year, your TAPP deductions will be adjusted automatically for the change. Contributions will continue during any paid leave, but will stop if your leave is unpaid. If your unpaid leave qualifies for continuation of benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act, you may continue your coverage during your leave on an after-tax basis.

## **What Effect Does TAPP Have On My Other Benefits?**

TAPP will have no impact on your CalPERS retirement, nor on any other CSU-paid benefit. However, depending on your salary, your Social Security Benefits at retirement may be reduced slightly, because you will have paid Social Security taxes on a lower wage.



September 2005

