If a retiree should marry or remarry after his/her retirement begins, no benefits accrue to the new spouse/partner or new dependent children.

— Updated October 2009

Check out Human Resources’ other Making Sense of Your Benefits brochures, including:

- Making Sense of Your Benefits: Changes to your child’s dependency status
- Making Sense of Your Benefits: Having or adopting a child
Thinking about retiring soon? It’s recommended you start planning and exploring your options at least six to twelve months ahead of your intended retirement date. It’s important to know how your benefits through Lehigh may change when retirement arrives. It’s also important to understand the protocol for making necessary adjustments to your benefits elections and plan properly.

Leaving Lehigh employment due to retirement is considered a Qualifying Life Event (QLE).

But what is a QLE? Certain life events — such as marriage, birth or adoption of a child, or retirement, for example — can result in changes in an employee’s benefits needs and/or affect an employee’s eligibility for some of Lehigh’s benefits. A “qualifying event” is one that allows adjustments to benefit elections in response to a life event.

So, because you’re looking to retire, you can elect to make some changes to your benefits choices without waiting for the next Open Enrollment season.

Those changes, however, must be requested in a timely manner — within thirty (30) days of your retirement date — and be consistent with the nature of the qualifying event and previous elections.

It’s important to remember that whenever a QLE occurs, the Human Resources (HR) Office must be notified and the necessary forms and documentation must be provided to update the personnel file and/or change benefit elections, as applicable.

Retirement is a significant life event. In order to maintain optimum independence and lifestyle throughout retirement, it is important to start planning early. It may be helpful to speak to a professional financial advisor. Assistance is also available through the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF) (one of Lehigh’s 403(b) investment companies and financial manager for the Lehigh University Retirement Program for Faculty and Staff). Visit the TIAA-CREF Website at www.tiaa-cref.org for more information.

Retirement Checklists
At least ninety (90) days before the planned retirement date, you should:

- Notify your supervisor of your retirement date;
- Submit the appropriate forms and paperwork;
- Contact the investment company(ies) managing any retirement savings plans for information about disbursement options and procedures necessary to initiate payments; and
- Contact the Social Security Office to discuss and apply for Social Security benefits as appropriate.

You should also schedule an appointment with HR to:

- Review insurance options and make appropriate elections;
- Enroll in the Medical Premium Reimbursement Plan, if eligible;
- Consider life insurance conversion and portability options and make desired elections;
- Consider Lehigh University Retirement Plan disbursement options and make elections; and
- Discuss other benefits issues, as applicable.

Employees are encouraged to bring their spouse/partner to their appointment with HR.

Notification and Documentation
Employees planning to retire should