FAQ’s...collected from phone calls, emails and the 10/24/2014 VESP general meeting

1. Can you provide more information on the 30 day waiting period for employees retiring under MPSERS before they can be rehired at GRCC?

Employees cannot work the first full month of retirement. For example, if you retire from GRCC effective 6/30/2015, your effective date of retirement with ORS would be 7/1/2015,…this means you cannot work the month of July.

2. If an employee is not part of MPSERS do they have to wait the 30 days to be rehired?

Employees who separate and retire via their Optional Retire Plan do not have to wait the 30 days.

3. Will COBRA be offered to employees who are not part of MPSERS, and therefore do not have any health insurance option through the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)?

Yes, COBRA will be offered upon separation. You may elect and pay for your health care coverage/COBRA for 18 months following separation.

4. Is the end of the fall 2015 semester a separation date option under the VESP?

This is not an option under the VESP plan. Employees can only choose from the dates indicated in the VESP plan. The plan and the separation dates were designed to allow for adequate workforce planning.

5. Is there a limit to the number of employees who can VESP in 2016?

There is no limit on the number of participants for 2016.

6. Would an employee retiring under a disability be able to participate in the VESP?

You must meet the eligibility requirements to participate in the VESP. This means that you must be active at work by the December 5th deadline to submit your VESP application or on an approved FMLA. If you are currently on an approved FMLA and submit a VESP application, you must return from FMLA and remain at work through your date of separation.

If your status is currently beyond FMLA (on an extended medical LOA or long term disability for example), you are not eligible to participate in the VESP.

7. What was the reason for a cap on the number of employees who can participate in 2015?

Based on our past experience of employees who are eligible and request to participate in voluntary early separation plans (VERP in the past), administration recognized the need to provide adequate time for workforce planning. The maximum number of faculty and staff participants for 2015 was determined by our Executive Budget Control Officers.
8. If a faculty member retires and returns as an adjunct instructor, what would their per contact hour rate be?

Returning retirees will be paid at the same rate of pay for new adjuncts. For example, a returning retiree with a Master’s degree...teaching less than half time.....would earn $937 per contact hour.

9. Clarification on how seniority will determine who can VESP if more than the allowed limit of applications is received?

The plan document indicates the following (page 2): If there are too many applicants, Employer will use seniority in a full time benefits position with Employer to determine which employees may separate under the Plan during 2015. If any applicant for separation for 2015 is denied a 2015 separation date, the application will be accepted for separation in 2016. Yes, if you held two different full time benefit positions here at GRCC...your total time in full time benefit positions will be added together to determine your seniority.

10. Can a person request a 2016 date? The information addresses what happens if someone requests 2015 and may have to be moved to 2016. It does not mention requesting a 2016 date.

Yes, you may request a 2016 date. As a faculty member, you may select the end of winter semester 2016 (after graduation) or June 30, 2016 (top of page 3 on the plan document). Staff members may select June 30, 2015 or June 30, 2016. You indicate your preferred date on page 2 of the VESP application.

11. Can a person teach as adjunct for the college after separating ... maybe after a waiting period?

Yes, you may request to teach as an adjunct following separation. And you are correct....if you are eligible and you retire with MPSERS, there is a 30 day waiting period. You may not be employed (as an adjunct or any position) for 30 days following your separation date. Rates of pay and ability to request classes may be different based on your individual situation.

12. I hired in at the end of June 2000. I won’t have 15 years in for another 8-9 mths. Do I really qualify for this retirement?

This is not a retirement incentive. This is a separation incentive. You need to check your MiAccount to determine your retirement eligibility. If you have 15 years in as of June 30, 2015, then you would qualify for this separation incentive.

13. Are there tuition waivers or discounts for dependents here after separation?

No, there are no tuition waiver benefits for employees who separate. Retired faculty members have some limited GRCC tuition waiver benefits and should refer to the faculty contract for the specifics.
14. What is the difference between a VESP and a VERP?
Our last two "early incentives" were called a "VERP". Voluntary Early Retirement Plan. To be eligible, you needed a combination of age and service to reach a certain number.
The VESP......is a voluntary separation plan. Eligible employees have 15 years of service as of 6/30/15. (or you may be eligible with 10 years of service AND you've met MPSERS requirement of age and service to retire).

15. If an employee has served 10 years but less than 15 years in a full time benefit eligible position with the Employer by June 30, 2015 and satisfies the MPSERS age and service requirements for retirement but has chosen TIAA CREF (the Optional Retirement Plan) rather than MPSERS for retirement benefits, does the employee qualify for the Voluntary Early Separation Plan?

Yes, an employee with ten years of service and who satisfies the age and service requirements of MPSERS is eligible for the VESP......even if they are in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). This means an employee who is in the ORP who is at least 60 years old and has worked for GRCC in a full time position for at least 10 years is eligible to apply for the VESP.

16. I have a dependent (under the age of 26) on my GRCC health insurance plan. If I separate and retire through MPSERS, will my dependent be eligible to be on my retiree health insurance plan?

Dependents on the MPSERS retiree health plans would need to be a full time student to have coverage between the ages of 19 and 25. The law that allows coverage under GRCC's insurance......regardless of student status...does not apply to the insurance under ORS.