


SC 229
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UNIVERSITY
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Many Traditions One Alaska

Attachment 229-5
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 8, 2012
TO: Joe Hayes, System Governance Council Chair
FROM: Pat Gamble, President 
RE: System Governance Council Motion 2012-1

This is in regard to System Governance Council motion 2012-1(SGC 2012-1). The subject of the motion was employee education benefits. SGC 2012-1 supported Staff Alliance motion 2011-9. The Staff Alliance motion incorporated four resolutions. Inasmuch as the four resolutions were the actionable items please let me address each of those resolutions.

The first resolution stated, "The UAF Staff Council finds no statistically significant failure of courses that creates the need for change to the UA Employee Tuition Waiver benefit according to the FY06-FY10 data provided and does not support altering the employee tuition waiver for non-represented staff as described in the May 3rd, 2011 email message." We agree with that resolution. The University's revision of regulation R04.06.010 does not have financial consequences with regard to failure of courses.

The second resolution stated, "The UAF Staff Council considers the employee tuition waiver a valued benefit for non-represented staff at UAF and will engage in further research, as this issue requires." Once more, we agree with that resolution. In fact, I understand completely that the tuition waiver is a valued benefit for all University of Alaska employees and their dependents. And of course, since we are a university more research and data is always welcome on any subject including the tuition waiver.

The third resolution stated, "The UAF Staff Council supports further data-driven review of this benefit and a cost/benefit analysis of the proposed changes to the UAF Tuition Waiver program - -." Statewide staff did in fact perform extensive analysis

of the subjects covered in the revision of R04.06.010. For example, after researching data about tuition waiver recipients who fail a course(s) my staff concluded that the failure rate was low and the cost of tuition recovery high. Accordingly, that proposal was pulled. Similar data-driven processes went into decisions about Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), 500 level courses, and year-long courses. For example, we can handle the SAP issue by requiring students in degree programs who receive financial aid to achieve a "C" average or better for undergraduate studies and a "B" average or better for graduate level studies. 500 level courses are excluded from Federal and State financial aid, so of necessity the revision of R04.06.010 excludes those courses from the tuition waiver. Year-long courses are all being eliminated by the MAUs, making the point moot. Finally, where we can find improvements we certainly will, such as adding the additional employee/dependent credit limits.

And finally, the fourth resolution states, "BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that at this time the UAF Staff Council requests that the University of Alaska Board of Regents reject any changes to the UA Tuition Waiver." That is a problem. Our response has to also address concerns about the tuition waiver program made by members of the Alaska Legislature. An example of that sensitivity resulted in the decision requiring employees to complete employment probation before the tuition waiver benefit becomes available. Not being responsive to certain legislative concerns and not being in accord with State of Alaska student financial aid regulations would place the entire tuition benefit in a risky position.

So obviously the "any" part is the problem with the fourth resolution. But if we can come together on the responses we have provided to you and Staff Alliance Motion 2011-9, then the health and well-being of the tuition waiver program for our employees will not be jeopardized in any way.

PKG

Attachment (Revised R04.06.010)

cc: Donald Smith, UA Interim Chief Human Resources Officer (with attachment)
Juella Sparks, Staff Alliance Chair

UNIVERSITY REGULATION
PART IV - HUMAN RESOURCES
Chapter 04.06 – Benefits and Leave

R04.06.010. Employee Education Benefits.

Regular employees, spouses and dependents are authorized a waiver of course charges under the following conditions:

- A. Regular employees and employee dependents are education benefits eligible after the employee completes an employment probationary period. Any waiver of this requirement must be in writing with document coordination between the chancellor or president, as appropriate, and SW Human Resources.
- B. Eligible regular employees of the university may have a maximum of eight credit hours waived in each fall and spring semester.
- C. Eligible regular employees may have a maximum of four non-credit courses waived in each fall and spring semester. The non-credit course must be chosen from a UA-approved list of acceptable courses. This waiver requires prior written approval by the employee's supervisor.
- D. In an academic year a maximum of sixteen credit hours and eight non-credit courses may be waived. An academic year begins with the fall semester and ends with the summer term. Prior to the start of each academic term, the list of UA-approved non-credit courses will be provided by the Statewide Office of Human Resources.
- E. Eligible regular employees with an employment agreement with the university for the following academic year, but who are off contract during the summer, may have up to sixteen graduate or undergraduate course credit hour charges waived per summer session. That same category of employees may have up to eight non-credit courses waived from a UA-approved list per summer session. In all cases these waivers, combined with fall and spring semesters, cannot exceed the sixteen credit and eight non-credit course limitation in each academic year.
- F. Eligible regular employees may take up to three credit hours during working hours with prior written approval by the supervisor. Employees are not required to make up the time if the supervisor believes the coursework will directly benefit the university.
- G. Eligible regular employees may take UA-approved non-credit courses during working hours with prior written approval by the supervisor. Employees are not required to make up the time for their attendance at UA-approved non-credit courses.

- H. Eligible regular employees may attend credit courses that do not directly benefit the university during working hours with prior written approval by the supervisor. The employee will use accrued leave time or be responsible for making up lost work time through a flexible work schedule requested through and approved by the supervisor.
- I. Spouses, financially interdependent partners, and dependent children under the age of 24 of eligible regular employees will have course credit hour charges waived. Course charges for non-credit courses will not be waived for spouses, financially interdependent partners, and dependent children of employees.
- J. An individual who qualifies for permanent disability during his/her regular employment under the University of Alaska's long-term disability plan will have course credit hour charges waived for a period of three academic years following qualification.
- K. An employee who has included university coursework as part of an approved leave of absence is entitled to the same education benefits as an eligible regular employee.
- L. 500 level courses and year-long courses are not eligible for the education benefit.
- M. Employees and dependents receiving undergraduate education benefits must maintain a "C" or better GPA in the waived courses. Employees and dependents receiving graduate level education benefits must maintain a "B" or better GPA in the waived courses. Appeals will be handled through academic channels as per normal.
- N. University employees who by virtue of their employment status qualify for the education benefit cannot also claim spouse or dependent education benefits.
- O. Education benefits cease upon termination of employment except for those courses in which the employee, spouse or dependent(s), are currently enrolled and classes are in session at the time of termination.
- P. Education benefits provided by this section apply to the total number of credit hours in which the employee, spouse, and/or dependent enrolls.
- Q. An employee is responsible for any tax liability generated from employee education benefits.
- R. With the exception of non-credit UA-approved courses taken by employees, other self-support course charges are not eligible to be waived under this benefit.
- S. For a student enrolled in the WWAMI Medical Program the education benefit is applicable only for University of Alaska-provided coursework.