

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BOARD REGULATIONS RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS OF FACULTY AND STAFF

**Background Information:** The University is committed to providing educational benefits to its faculty and staff. This commitment is evident in Board Regulations Section II (Faculty and Administrative Employees), Subsection D (Benefits), 9 (Educational Benefits), a (Employees) and Section III (Civil Service Employees), Subsection C (Benefits), 7 (Educational Benefits), a (Employees). Members of the University Advisory Committee raised concerns regarding limiting language and unclear language in these Board regulations.

In particular, two concerns were raised. First, in the last few years the university has adopted differential tuition for several programs. The language in the Section III of the Board Regulations is unclear whether differential tuition is covered as part of the educational benefit. Whereas, the language in Section II seems to indicate that the costs of differential tuition are not covered. However, given the increasing number of programs that have charged differential tuition and the commitment to employees receiving educational benefits, the administration supports covering the costs of differential tuition. Such a policy change will have minimal impact on the university's budget.

Second, the previous regulation was unnecessarily inflexible in certain circumstances. Employees were not always able to take full advantage of the waivers. For example, some degree programs require more than six credit hours to be taken during the summer. However, the previous regulation limited the ability for employees to do so, even if they did not meet the overall credit limit for the academic year. This proposed change will provide employees greater flexibility while still maintaining the regulations original spirit.

### **Proposed Action:**

In order to provide clarity, the University recommends the Board of Trustees approve changes to the Board of Trustees Regulations Section II.D.9.a and Section III.C.7.a as follows:

### **Section II: Faculty and Administrative**

#### **9. Educational Benefits**

Special condition: Provisions accommodating employees and retirees to implement Public Act 89-4 shall continue until the applicability of such provisions expire.

##### **a. Employees**

Faculty and administrative employees and retirees of Northern Illinois University may enroll for credit in Northern Illinois University with exemption from tuition (including differential tuition costs) and other eligible registration fees (as defined in Section V.K. of these Regulations), except for (1) the interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Health Sciences, which shall operate under a Tuition Remittance Program wherein partial or full tuition waivers will be provided only with the employee's commitment to work at Northern Illinois University for a specified period of time post-graduation, and (2) those fees (such as the student health insurance fee) where eligibility is determined by fee submission to an outside agency or vendor, in accord with university rules. To be eligible for this benefit the employee or retiree needs to meet admissions standards, and the initial date of employment must be on or before the 30th calendar day following the scheduled beginning of the academic term involved, or the last day of registration, whichever is earlier. , ~~provided that the employee or retiree has the required prerequisites, meets any other admissions~~

~~standards, and the initial date of employment is on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> calendar day following the scheduled beginning of the academic term involved, or the last day of registration, whichever is earlier.~~ The Board delegates appropriate authority to the Office of the Provost to establish and publicly post the terms and conditions of the Tuition Remittance Program for the interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Health Sciences.

The waiver granted in any one academic year semester shall be subject to the following maxima:

- Retirees and full-time employees – 8 up to 20 hours
- 3/4-time employees – 6 up to 15 hours
- 1/2-time employees – 4 up to 10 hours

~~For summer session, the waiver shall be subject to the following maxima:~~

- ~~• Retirees and full-time employees — 4 hours~~
- ~~• 3/4-time employees — 3 hours~~
- ~~• 1/2-time employees — 2 hours~~

\*The limits listed above indicate the maximum amount of tuition and fee waivers that an employee could qualify for over an entire academic year (i.e., fall, summer, and spring sessions). Employees are not required to attend an entire academic year in order to qualify for a waiver.

For employees not working full-time during the summer, the waiver maximum may be determined by the employment rate of either the summer or of the semester immediately preceding the summer, whichever would yield the highest waiver.

~~For purposes of this Regulation, the summer session shall be considered to include all sessions, regardless of title (summer session, presession, postsession, intersession, etc.) between the close of the second (spring) semester of one academic year and the beginning of the first (fall) semester of the succeeding academic year.~~

A full-time employee may not register for credit in excess of the limits set forth above unless recommended by appropriate supervisory authority. ~~For full-time employees, t~~ The total number of registered credit hours may not normally exceed a credit-hour load associated with two courses. If a retiree or part-time employee registers for more than the maximum number of hours for which tuition and fees may be waived, the charge to the employee shall be the difference between the total tuition and fees which would normally be charged for the number of credit hours taken and the amount of tuition and registration fees which may be waived. The tuition and other registration fees to be waived shall be those usually charged undergraduate or graduate students. ~~For employees registering in programs or courses with higher tuition and/or registration fees, the waiver shall be limited to the usual tuition and registration fee charge, with the employee paying any differential. Fees directly related to a particular course will not be waived.~~

Each faculty or administrative employee who wishes to enroll for credit must file with the department head, program coordinator, or other immediate supervisor a statement outlining the extent and goals of the proposed program of studies. That individual will forward the statement with recommendations to the appropriate dean or director for final approval. Approval by the employee's dean or director is a prerequisite for enrollment in any course.

Faculty who hold the rank of assistant professor or higher may take graduate courses but may not be admitted to or enrolled in a program leading to a graduate degree in the same program area or department in which they instruct.

## Section III: Civil Service Employees

### 7. Educational Benefits

Special condition: Provisions accommodating employees and retirees to implement Public Act 89-4 shall continue until the applicability of such provisions expire.

#### a. Employees

Tuition and fee waiver (including differential tuition costs) shall be granted to any Northern Illinois University retiree or any employee in a status position under the State University Civil Service System, if admissions standards are met and if the initial date of employment is on or before the 30th calendar day following the scheduled beginning of the academic term involved, or the last day of registration, whichever is earlier. This provision does not apply to ,except for the interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Health Sciences, which shall operate under a Tuition Remittance Program wherein partial or full tuition waivers will be provided only with the employee's commitment to work at Northern Illinois University for a specified period of time post-graduation. The Board delegates appropriate authority to the Office of the Provost to establish and publicly post the terms and conditions of the Tuition Remittance Program for the interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Health Sciences.

The waiver granted in any one ~~semester~~ academic year shall be to the following maxima:

- Retirees and full-time employees – ~~9 hours (or minimum number of hours required by the program, whichever is greater)~~ up to 20 hours
- 3/4-time employees – ~~6~~ up to 15 hours
- 1/2-time employees – ~~4~~ up to 10 hours

\*The limits listed above indicate the maximum amount of tuition and fee waivers that an employee could qualify for over an entire academic year (i.e., fall, summer, and spring sessions). Employees are not required to attend an entire academic year in order to qualify for a waiver.

A full-time employee may not register for credit in excess of the number of hours for which tuition and fees may be waived as listed above unless recommended by appropriate supervisory authority. ~~For full-time employees, t~~ The total number of registered credit hours may not normally exceed a credit-hour load associated with two courses. These maxima are employee benefit limitations and do not apply to enrollments in approved work-related training programs, the purpose of which is to improve university services.

~~For summer session, the waiver shall be subject to the following maxima:~~

- ~~• Retirees and full-time employees — 6 hours (or minimum number of hours required by the program, whichever is greater)~~
- ~~• 3/4-time employees — 3 hours~~
- ~~• 1/2-time employees — 2 hours~~

For employees not working full-time during the summer (including those on seasonal layoff), the waiver maximum may be determined by the employment rate of either the summer or of the semester immediately preceding the summer, whichever would yield the highest waiver.

~~For the purposes of this Regulation, the summer session shall be considered to include all sessions, regardless of title (summer session, presession, postsession, intersession, etc.) between the close of the second (spring) semester of one academic year and the beginning of the first (fall) semester of the succeeding academic year.~~

**Recommendation:** Given that these proposed changes pose no harm to the University and benefits employees, the University requests Board of Trustees approval of the Proposed Amendments to the Board Regulations Related to Educational Benefits of Faculty and Staff.