

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES**A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee**

In joint session with

B. Finance, Audit and Facilities Committee**Graduate School Leave Policy and Waiver of Non-Resident Tuition – Information Only****INFORMATION:**

The Graduate School will provide an information presentation to the Regents this month, and will return in November to request action on three items:

1. Waiver of non-resident tuition (for some graduate and professional students)
2. Graduate student leave policy
3. Re-application fee for graduate students who drop all UW registration or leave status.

1. NON-RESIDENT TUITION REDUCTION:**Background**

In July 2005, the University of Washington Regents approved a special tuition reduction for non-resident graduate and professional students. This reduction provided an annual waiver of the differential tuition between resident and non-resident tuition for non-resident graduate and professional students who have lived in the state for one year, but who do not qualify for state residency (e.g., non-residents could pay in-state rather than out-of-state tuition after one year at UW).

Rationale for the Reduction

In 2005, the Regents' briefing document provided these details:

1. The tuition reduction would help the UW compete for "top quality graduate and professional students," with a notation that "most other public universities allow non-resident graduate and professional students to be reclassified as residents for tuition and fee paying purposes basely solely on living in the state for one year."
2. The estimated cost of the tuition reduction was \$1m in foregone tuition revenue (for about 100 graduate and professional students per year).

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Rationale for Repeal Request

We request that the Regents approve our request for a repeal of the tuition reduction for non-resident graduate and professional students for several reasons:

1. The cost has far exceeded original estimates, depriving the University of valuable tuition revenues. In FY 2009, 291 non-resident graduate and professional students received these waivers, totaling \$3.18m. In FY 2010, the foregone revenue was \$3.8m.
2. The UW Board of Deans has recommended repeal of the tuition reduction; the deans thought that this reduction did not give UW a significant competitive edge.
3. Under the UW's new Activity Based Budgeting model, colleges and schools will receive most of the revenue generated by tuition; the tuition reduction can reduce their revenues sharply (e.g., in 2008-9 foregone tuition for top schools and colleges include: Law \$513k, Pharmacy \$438k, Medicine \$373k, Built Environments \$322k, Dentistry \$275k, Business \$171k).
4. Public universities in several other states (Oregon, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin) do not provide a tuition waiver for non-resident students. Getting residency in each state is dependent upon moving to that state for reasons other than education.

Effective Date

We request that the repeal of the tuition reduction take effect for new students who begin their UW graduate/professional students after July 1, 2012 – so that no current students or prospective students (who are applying now) would be penalized by repeal.

Other Details

- The tuition reduction applies only to non-resident graduate and professional students who have no other formal UW support; as such, it does not pertain to non-residents who work as Research Assistants,

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Teaching assistants, or other graduate assistants. Most fellowships also provide an automatic reduction of non-resident tuition. In practice, the tuition reduction benefit thus applies only to non-resident graduate and professional students who are paying their own tuition.

- The tuition reduction does not apply to international graduate or professional students at all, but just to non-resident US graduate or professional students.

2. LEAVES OF ABSENCE FOR UW GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

We request that the Regents approve a change in the policy on leaves of absence for graduate and professional students. This is not intended as a revenue-raising measure, but is focused entirely on encouraging graduate and professional students to be actively focused on their academic careers.

Current Policy, Practice

1. A graduate or professional student may request a leave of absence for a period from one quarter to one full year.
2. A \$35 fee is required.
3. At any given time, about 7-8 percent of UW graduate or professional students are on leave (~840 to 950).

We Ask the Regents' Support for a New Policy

1. A graduate or professional student may request a leave of absence for a period of one quarter; additional quarters of leave would require an additional application.
2. Each application would cost \$25 (e.g., the student would be required to pay a fee of \$25 for the initial quarter and for each subsequent quarter in which the leave is renewed).

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Rationale for Proposal

1. Shortening degree completion times. National studies show that successful degree completion is mostly closely tied to continuous enrollment/registration (rather than leaves of absence or other interruptions of studies.). Degree completion rates are increasingly important (both in terms of national rankings and for local effectiveness and efficiency). A quarterly leave policy asks graduate and professional students to re-assess their academic plans on a regular basis, and thus should facilitate degree completion. A quarterly leave policy, in contrast to the current year-long option, will make it more difficult for students to drift along without substantive academic planning).
2. Peer practices. Our peers allow leaves of one term (usually a semester); year long leaves are very rare (indeed, we cannot find evidence of any year-long leaves among comparable public institutions).
3. Nominal fee. The \$25 fee is a nominal one; it will defray the costs incurred to the University in processing the leave, and should not create a financial hardship for students going on leave. (Over the course of one year, the current leave fee is \$35; for a similar period of time under the new policy, the total cost would be \$75 – with no charge for summer quarter, which is consistent with general university policy).

Process/Implementation:

We will need several months to communicate the change in leave policy, and to set up procedures for processing the leaves. Consequently, this new leave policy would go into effect May 1, 2011.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF A “RE-APPLICATION” FEE FOR GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS WHO DROP ALL UW REGISTRATION/LEAVE STATUS.

We ask the Regents to approve a Graduate School recommendation that we implement a “re-application” fee for students who drop all UW registration/leave status.

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Current Practice

1. If a UW graduate or professional student drops out (e.g., fails to register, does not go on a leave of absence), s/he must reapply for admission to UW and to a particular graduate or professional program.
2. The current application fee is \$75.

Proposed Change

Graduate and professional students who have dropped out will pay a “re-application” fee of \$250.

Rationale for Change

1. Some students drop out to avoid costs. Even with the current very liberal leave policy, ~250 graduate/professional students have dropped out of UW to avoid paying tuition or the current leave fee, and *will seek re-admission when they are ready to defend a thesis or dissertation.* We do not want to create an incentive for even more students to drop out (if the new leave policy is adopted). Note: many of these students, contrary to UW policy, continue to consult with faculty advisers even though they are not enrolled or on leave.
2. Departmental support. Some departments advise students to drop out to avoid tuition or fees; these departments assure students that re-entry will be easy. We want to discourage this practice.