

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Proposed Revisions to Tuition Waivers for Veterans and Members of the Washington National GuardBACKGROUND:

The purpose of this information item is to describe a proposed expansion of the tuition waiver framework for selected veterans and members of the Washington National Guard that the Board of Regents has previously implemented under the new legal structure imposed by Substitute House Bill (SHB) 1174. If the Board of Regents agrees with the proposed revisions, an action item implementing the changes will be brought to the March 2007 meeting of the Board.

In the 2005 State legislative session, SHB 1174 passed unanimously by the legislature and was signed by the Governor. SHB 1174 revised provisions in State law related to tuition waivers for veterans and members of the Washington National Guard. The provisions of SHB 1174 became effective on July 24, 2005. In response to this change in State law, in October 2005 the Board of Regents approved a revised tuition waiver structure for veterans and members of the Washington National Guard that was effective starting Autumn Quarter 2005.

Consistent with the structure of tuition waivers for selected veterans that had been in place prior to the passage of SHB 1174, the Board limited the revised tuition waiver to:

veterans and Washington National Guard members who have served in a combat zone;

children and spouses of eligible veterans and Washington National Guard members determined to be prisoners of war or missing in action;

children and spouses of eligible veterans and Washington National Guard members who are killed or become totally disabled while engaged in active military or naval service; and

limited the availability of the tuition waiver to undergraduate students pursuing their first Bachelor's degree; and

set the tuition waiver at an amount equal to 50% of undergraduate resident tuition and fees.

The implementation of these changes to tuition waivers for eligible veterans and members of the Washington National Guard increased the total amount of tuition and fees waived eligible individuals. In the 2004-05 academic year under the previous tuition waiver structure for veterans and members of the National Guard,

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just over \$28,000 in tuition and fees was waived for eligible individuals; in the 2005-06 academic year under the revised tuition waiver structure for veterans and members of the National Guard, just under \$215,000 in tuition and fees was waived for eligible individuals. For the 2006-07 academic year, the Office of Planning and Budgeting estimates that approximately \$400,000 in tuition and fees will be waived; it appears that more of the eligible veterans and members of the Washington National Guard have become aware of the tuition waiver in its second year of availability.

A number of the students at UW who are veterans or members of the Washington National Guard who have served in a combat zone are graduate or professional students rather than undergraduate students. As the revised tuition waiver structure for veterans and members of the National Guard was implemented, these graduate and professional students are not eligible for the tuition waiver.

The administration is proposing that the provisions of the tuition waiver for eligible veterans and members of the Washington National Guard be expanded to offer eligible graduate and professional students a tuition waiver at an amount equivalent to 50% of resident tuition and fees for their applicable tuition category.

Specifically, the administration proposes that the tuition waiver provisions for veterans and members of the National Guard be expanded as follows:

eligible graduate and professional veterans and Washington National Guard members who have served in a combat zone;

children and spouses of eligible graduate and professional veterans or Washington National Guard members determined to be prisoners of war or missing in action;

children and spouses of eligible graduate and professional veterans or Washington National Guard members who became totally disabled or deceased while engaged in active federal military or naval service; and

the tuition waiver for eligible graduate and professional students will be established at a dollar amount equivalent to 50% of their applicable resident tuition and fees. The tuition waiver will only be available to graduate and professional students pursuing their first advanced degree, including degrees transferred from other institutions of higher education. The waiver is also limited to those graduate and professional students attending full time. Additionally the recipient would not be eligible if they have previously received an undergraduate veterans' waiver.

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It is difficult to precisely estimate the cost of this proposed expansion of the tuition waiver for veterans and members of the National Guard as the UW does not have complete data on the number of graduate and professional students who are veterans or members of the Washington National Guard. Based on the limited information that is available, the Office of Planning and Budgeting estimates that approximately 50 graduate and professional students would make use of the revised tuition waiver for veterans and members of the National Guard which on an annual basis would result in approximately \$297,000 in additional tuition being waived than under the current waiver provisions.

Implementation Time Line and Process

The Board of Regents must affirmatively act to implement its waiver authority granted under RCW 28B.15.910. Implementing revisions to existing waivers or the addition of new waivers requires that the university adhere to the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) process. The process requires the University to 1) Formally publicize the proposed rule changes 2) Hold a rule-making hearing at which the university receives public comment regarding adoption of said rule or rules and 3) File the "Rule Making Order" with the Washington State Registrar.

The entire process time can vary due to mandated public comment periods. These comment periods may only be held during the academic year when all students and faculty are present.

If the Board of Regents agrees with the proposed waivers and approves the action item at the March 2007 meeting a WAC revision process will be initiated immediately. The waiver would officially go into effect as early as Autumn quarter 2007 with the Regents final action.