

**DRAFT 03-23-2012**

To: Provost Michael R. Halleran  
From: Professionals and Professional Faculty Assembly  
Subject: Proposal for Part-Time Employee Tuition Waiver  
Date: *TBD*

The Professionals and Professional Faculty Assembly (PPFA) respectfully submits a proposal to extend existing tuition waiver benefits to qualified part-time employees, as described below.

This proposal provides the text of the current policy, justifications for extending the waiver to part-time employees, data about the numbers of those employees, use of the current policy (in numbers of employees and credit hours), and similar policies at other institutions.

This proposal has been reviewed by the Faculty Assembly and Staff Assembly, and those organizations *have endorsed/attached comments? Please see Attachments 1 and 2.*

**Proposal: Extend equivalent Tuition Waiver benefits to part-time employees (PTE) who meet the minimum criteria for qualification, as shown in section III below.**

**I. Current Tuition Waiver Policy:** William & Mary's current tuition waiver policy applies only to full-time staff.

### **Tuition Waiver Program (*Current*)**

The College of William & Mary offers a tuition waiver program that permits eligible employees to take advantage of course offerings at the university.

You may take up to 4 credit hours per session (fall, spring, and 2-summer sessions). W&M pays the tuition. The benefit is for employees who are legal residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia, pursuant to the Code of Virginia which states that legal residency is obtained when an individual has lived in Virginia for at least twelve months.

#### **Who is Eligible to Participate?**

- Full-time faculty and classified employees
- Spouses of full-time faculty (may audit course only)
- Language House tutors
- Full-time employees of the Alumni Society
- Full-time employees of the Sarah Ives Gore Child Care Center
- Others as specifically approved by the Provost or designee

### **How Does the Program Work?**

Tuition may be waived for one class (up to 4 credit hours and excluding labs) in the fall semester, one class in the spring semester, and two classes in the summer term.

Employees participating in the program are subject to the university's normal admission requirements and other applicable policies and procedures.

Classified employees may, with supervisor permission, take a class during normal work hours, but the employee will be required to make up any time spent away from work. The employee can, as an alternative and with supervisor approval, charge the time to an appropriate leave balance.

### **What Must I Do to Participate?**

- Decide what class you want to take.
- Fill out a [Tuition Waiver Form](#) (pdf) and have your supervisor sign it.
- Send or bring the form to the Office of Human Resources for verification of eligibility to participate in the program and signature.
- Send or take the form to the Registrar's Office.
- Enjoy your class!

If you have questions about the Tuition Waiver Program, please call the Office of Human Resources at 221-3169.

<http://www.wm.edu/offices/hr/benefits-all/other/tuitionwaiver/index.php>

## **II. Proposed Changes to the Current Tuition Waiver Policy:**

- Include part-time employees as defined in section III below.
- Part-time employees would be permitted to have tuition waived for up to 16-credit hours per year, as full-time employees currently do.
- Correct the definition of eligible types of employees to include instructional faculty, professionals and professional faculty, and operational/classified/hourly staff. The policy currently does apply to all of these, but the wording of the policy needs to be updated.
- Eligible employees would be permitted to have tuition waived for up to two (2) courses per semester or summer term, rather than just one. But the 16-credit hours per year would still be the limit.
- Courses for which tuition is waived would not have to be job-related.
- Employees must receive passing grade in the tuition-waived courses.

### **III. Criteria for Part-Time Employee (PTE) eligibility:**

- The employee's position is established by the College to be at a minimum of 50% Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). This includes:
  - Part-time salaried employees and Part-time classified/operational employees, both of whom are immediately eligible upon hire.
  - Hourly employees who are eligible for the existing leave policy (have worked a minimum of 1000 hours in the year prior)

### **IV. Protocol for approval (same as for current policy)**

- Supervisor approval.
- Employee is the last to register for the class -- ensures all degree-seeking students have first priority.
- Enrollment is on a "first-come, first-served basis." *Note: The Staff Assembly has expressed a desire that full-time employees be given priority for vacant seats. Registrar's Office staff has indicated that this could be done manually, but that there's not a high likelihood of instances in which there are more employees applying for vacant seats than there are available seats. We recommend that this situation be monitored and assessed.*
- Employee must file an Application for Virginia In-State Tuition Privileges (employees who fail to establish in-state domicile will have their tuition calculated at the out of state tuition rate, which will result in a higher taxable benefit).

### **V. Advantages of Proposed Policy Changes:**

- Increases ability to attract and retain quality PTE.
  - 75% of State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) institutions offer some kind of tuition benefits to PTE. Attachment 4 provides details; also attached are example policies from several other Virginia universities.
  - Raises competitive market value of positions that are likely at the lower end of the W&M pay scale (e.g., Assistant Coaches)
- Enhances and encourages professional development.
- May increase success and effectiveness of PTE in the workplace.
- Raises PTE morale and sense of well-being.
- Recognizes the value of PTE service to the College.
- Could eliminate or reduce petitions to the Provost for individual exceptions to the current policy.
- Does not displace degree-seeking students.
- May increase diversity in the classroom.
- May result in an increased number of degree-seeking students.
- There is no dollar cost to the College.

## **VI. Impact considerations:**

### **Instructional Faculty:**

- Consistent with the current policy, eligible employees will be the last to register and can enroll only if there are open seats in the class.
- Most faculty have the ability to set class size. Faculty members would also reserve the right to over-enroll the class.
- It's acknowledged that additional students in a class results in additional workload outside the classroom (for meetings with individual students; grading papers; etc.), and therefore has an impact on faculty members' time for research, governance, and other work responsibilities.

### **Staff:**

- We anticipate minimal impact on the jobs of staff in professional, professional faculty, operational, classified, and hourly positions. The Registrar's Office and equivalent staff at the schools would handle most of the transactions and questions, while Human Resources would presumably handle some aspects related to the administration and interpretation of the policy.

## **VII. History/Exposure:**

Over the past two-and-a-half years, an average of 60 tuition waivers has been granted in the fall and spring semesters to full-time employees. The number of credit hours taken during those semesters has ranged from 206 to 245, with the School of Education's graduate program handling 50% to 60% of those credit hours. Attachment 3 provides details.

### **Number of Part-time Employees eligible (50% FTE) under the proposed guidelines, as defined and provided by Human Resources:**

- Hourly employees who qualify for leave benefits: 45 to 50
- Operational and Classified staff: 15
- Executive/Professional and Professional Faculty staff: 29
- Instructional faculty/Adjunct faculty: 246

Based on these figures, we suggest that the proposed expansion of the tuition waiver to PTEs is manageable. Although PTE, who have more flexible schedules than full-time employees, might take advantage of this benefit at a higher rate than full-time employees, it is anticipated that they will do so in numbers that will have a minimal impact.

### **VIII. Conclusion/Recommendation:**

As noted above, the advantages of expanding the tuition waiver program to part-time employees far outweigh any anticipated impact to the College. This benefit would demonstrate a strong commitment and acknowledgement to W&M's PTE as well as encourage staff to enhance their knowledge and skills.

### **IX. List of Attachments:**

- Attachment 1: Staff Assembly endorsement memo?
- Attachment 2: Faculty Assembly endorsement memo?
- Attachment 3: Tuition Waiver Data for W&M
- Attachment 4: Tuition Benefits at SCHEV Peers and CAA Peers