



State University of New York

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Council of Pres.
Memos to Pres 6/59
Tuition waiver

Memorandum to Presidents

Date: August 7, 1973

Vol. 73 No. 39

From: Office of the Vice Chancellor
for Finance and Business

Subject: Tuition Waivers

On June 29, 1973, Chancellor Boyer sent you guidelines governing issuance of tuition waivers for 1973-74 along with campus allocations. Since then, most Presidents have communicated with me, expressing serious concern about the adequacy of the campus allocation and requesting additional allowances. Many specific questions concerning the administration of waivers have also been raised.

I'll try to answer these many questions in this memorandum since most of the issues raised have general application throughout the University. I hope this will provide some assistance for you in dealing with what is probably the most difficult area of administration which we face in the University this year.

There are, first, some facts which cannot change.

1. The legislative limitation of \$11 million has the full force of law, just as an appropriation, and we'll ultimately be held accountable for meeting it.
2. This entire amount has been allocated, so changes in campus allocations can only come through reallocation and movement from one campus to another.
3. In order to operate within this ceiling, significant reductions are required in all waiver categories including denial of waivers which previously would have been granted.
4. If too large a proportion of waivers is granted in the first semester, a distinct possibility would be withdrawal of some waivers for the second semester.
5. If there is absolutely no way to avoid exceeding the waiver allocation, the only possible means of making up the excess would be by making cash payments for services which would have to be charged directly to campus operating budgets as direct program costs. This could not be done, however, without Division of Budget approval.

6. The entire program must be reviewed and revisions considered for 1974-75. It is possible that many waivers will be abolished and replaced as necessary as direct program costs.

Secondly, we also know that the program is subject to many uncertainties, and in some instances is beyond our control: eligibility for tuition assistance awards, amount recaptured from Scholar Incentive payments, and veterans benefits, for example. Further, many of these amounts will not be finally known even at the close of the fiscal year. We must, therefore, manage in good faith doing our best to achieve the Legislative mandate. As a beginning, we must have a good reporting system so we'll know where we stand well in advance of the beginning of the second semester.

Therefore, no later than October 31, 1973 we must have an accurate report from every campus of summer session and fall term waivers by category including the number of waivers granted and their value. In some instances, these may have to be estimates. For example, it will probably be necessary to use prior years' experience to estimate recovery from Scholar Incentive payments. I've had opportunity to test the feasibility of that report date with a group of Business Officers and Presidents and I'm told the deadline can be met. I would like to reemphasize the urgency of this report for, if it does identify great difficulty, we'll be able to resolve the serious problems.

We've spent some time reviewing the pattern of waivers by semesters and suggest a rule of thumb which may serve as a good guide. Fall semester waivers should not exceed 53 to 55% of the waiver allocation for the academic year after deduction of summer waivers. Anything above this suggests great difficulty for the second semester. A reporting form will be sent to you shortly.

Finally, I would like to comment on several general questions raised by a number of campuses.

1. Foreign Students

There is no automatic waiver for returning students and only documented needs of these students are to be met. New students are to receive waivers only under extraordinary circumstances approved by the Office of International Programs.

2. Disadvantaged Students

Waivers are to be considered only after all other sources of support are used. Waivers are not automatic and some reductions are probably inevitable. Application for Scholar Incentive awards should be required as appropriate.

3. Employee Waivers

Waivers for employees of State agencies should be discontinued. We

should honor legitimate waivers issued within the University, but if they exceed allocations we'll have to compensate from the operating budget of those campuses authorizing the waivers. The allocation in this category was initially based on the value of waivers cashed at each campus. It should be shifted to an issuance basis. We'll study this for reallocation after the fall reports are in. Control will then be at the point of appropriate responsibility.

4. Graduate Students

An additional factor affecting waivers for research assistants and graduate assistants is whether they are funded from outside sources. We'll probably have to seek other sources of support for the value of some of those waivers in order to meet the commitments.

Residency and full time/part time criteria need to be reviewed carefully and Scholar Incentive application required where appropriate.

5. Critic Teachers

It appears that there is an increase in transfers of critic teacher waivers. This further complicates our problem. Since these waivers are issued for services previously rendered, we'll have to honor them this fall, but we'll have to reevaluate our position for the second semester and for the future. The initial allocation was made based on waivers cashed in 1972-73. This too should be shifted to an issuance basis and will be reviewed as part of the fall review. It also provides a better base for determining excess charge if necessary.

6. Outside Funded Programs

Where sponsored programs are truly self-supporting, we'll have to arrange some of the support in lieu of tuition waivers and, therefore, not count the support against tuition waiver quotas.

7. Out-of-State Students

No additional waiver allowances were made for larger components of out-of-state students whose tuition is higher and who are ineligible for Scholar Incentive awards. This additional burden will have to be absorbed within campus allocations.


It has been suggested that we consider a restriction that no tuition waiver could exceed in-state tuition. The balance would then be chargeable to the individual student or as a direct operating expense. Any move in this direction would of necessity have to be a University-wide move.

We'd like your comments on this possibility, so please let me know as soon as possible what you'd recommend.

8. Scholar Incentive Awards

All categories of students who may be eligible should be required to apply for Scholar Incentive awards. You should strongly consider an automatic denial of waiver unless satisfactory evidence is presented that the student is making an appropriate effort to claim his award.

We'll provide additional information as further questions arise, and plan to share problems and possible solutions throughout the University as quickly as possible.


Harry K. Spindler

cc: Chancellor Boyer

This memorandum addressed to:

Presidents, State-operated Campuses
Deans, Statutory Colleges

Copies for information only sent to:

President Miles
Vice Provost Risley
Presidents, Community Colleges
Chancellor Kibbee (8 copies)
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