

Date: Fri, 08 Jan 1999 14:08:00 -0800
From: Steven Barnhart <barnhart@usc.edu>
Subject: Tuition Assistance Update

Dear Colleagues,

At yesterday's Staff Assembly meeting we received information regarding a modification to the Tuition Assistance Benefit policy changes implemented last July which I'd like to share with you.

Debra Fabanish, Manager of Benefits Administration, and Janis McEldowney, Associate Vice President for Administrative Operations, informed the Assembly that the administration would favorably consider requests for exceptions to the current policy on a case by case basis for work-related course work under the following guidelines:

1. The request for exception must be made under the signature of the employee's Dean or Vice President.
2. The request for exception must contain a clear and thorough description of how the course is work-related. Single sentence explanations are not sufficient to substantiate the request.
3. The course may not be taken for Pass/No-pass or Audit.
4. The course may not substantially duplicate courses offered through, or soon to be offered through, the Professional Development Program (formerly the Staff Development Program). As an example, one of the Microsoft Word or Excel courses offered by ITP would not be approved as the Professional Development Program has offerings in those areas, whereas a course such as EE-554 (Real Time Computer Systems) could be approved.

While these requests are not guaranteed approval, the administration will look favorably on requests meeting the above conditions. Tuition revenue will be distributed to the academic unit offering the class so there will no longer exist the disincentive for the department to allow such registration. All requests for these type of exception should be addressed to Maria Chacon, Manager of Policy and Procedures, Personnel Services, STO 226, MC 1142.

This modification of the policy goes a long way in addressing one of the Assembly's concerns about such work-related course work which would never achieve sufficient "critical mass" to be offered through the Professional Development Program. As Martha Stewart would say, "It's a good thing!"

-Steven Barnhart
President, 1999 Staff Assembly
Director, Student Information Systems