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MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs

FROM: Juan M. Sanchez
Vice President for Research 

DATE: September 5, 2001

RE: TUITION REMISSION FOR GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

On March 19, 2001, the Faculty Council approved a motion from the Research Policy Committee regarding tuition remission for graduate research assistants (GRAs). Effective October 1, 2001, tuition remission for graduate research assistants will be required on all grant proposals and contracts, unless the sponsor does not allow tuition remission.

Attached is a copy of the approved motion, which provides background information and details on implementation. Please distribute this policy to your faculty/researchers. In addition, the motion is posted on the Faculty Council website at: <http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2000-2001/legislation/rpc.html>.

If you have any questions about the policy or its implementation, please contact Wayne Kuenstler, Director, Office of Sponsored Projects at: wkuenstler@mail.utexas.edu.

TUITION REMISSION FOR GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Motion

Regarding tuition remission for graduate research assistants [(RAs)] GRAs,¹ the Research Policy Committee (RPC) moves and recommends the following:

The University shall adopt a policy requiring that tuition remission be included in grant applications on grant proposals that employ students as research assistants, unless tuition remission is not allowed by the granting agency.¹

If tuition remission is not written into an application, and if the granting agency does allow tuition remission, a written justification signed by the applicant's dean must be provided by the principal investigator to Office of Sponsored Projects.

Rationale

1. It Works. This policy has already been implemented successfully in the UT College of Engineering.
2. Increased Awareness. According to information gathered by Graduate Student Assembly representatives from every UT department: (1) the most frequent reason why an [RA] GRA¹ is not receiving tuition remission is that the research grant's principal investigator did not realize that tuition remission could be included in a grant; (2) the second most frequent reason is that the [RA] GRA¹ is afraid to ask the principal investigator for tuition remission. Adoption of this motion would remove both of these problems.
3. Equity. About 1400 [RA] GRA¹ graduate students currently receive tuition remission from contracts and grants (about 70%); about 600 more are without tuition remission (about 30%). The majority of principal investigators heading up research grants already do write tuition remission into grant applications. Correcting this clear imbalance, whereby a sizable minority of 600 working [(RAs)] GRAs,¹ are left without a tuition waiver, is clearly the right thing to do.
4. Competitiveness. As things stand, UT is demonstrably at a disadvantage, and losing competitiveness, in the absence of such a tuition remission policy.
5. Recruitment. Conversely, once this policy is in place, it would provide a powerful and attractive benefit for being part of UT's research community.
6. Pragmatism. Recruitment of the best graduate students is a priority issue for the University, for the graduate school, and for many faculty members whose research depends on graduate students [(RAs)] GRAs¹. Graduate students' [(RAs')] GRAs¹ needs must be adequately addressed. Tuition remission in grant proposals is an issue on which we can become fully competitive, largely at the expense of the agencies and foundations that make grants. Proposals that do not ask for tuition remission are often leaving money on the table.

7. Industry standard. A similar policy on tuition remission in grant applications is common practice at the majority of U.S. universities comparable to UT.

¹ Amended by the Faculty Council on April 16, 2001.