

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Deans, Chairs, Directors of Graduate Studies, Tuition Benefit Coordinators

**FROM:** David S. Chapman, Dean, The Graduate School  
Paul Brinkman, Assoc. V.P., Budget and Planning

**DATE:** April 20, 2006

**RE:** Research Assistant (RA) graduate tuition benefit plan (TBP) modifications.

After fruitful discussions with graduate students, directors of graduate studies, and department chairs regarding the March 30, 2006 memo on changes to the graduate student Tuition Benefit Program (TBP), and a re-examination of our forecasting model, we believe that we can achieve savings of ~\$1.5 million in the RA portion of the Tuition Benefit Program (TBP) while retaining a minimal summer tuition benefit and therefore summer registration for RAs.

The Graduate School will implement changes to the RA part of the TBP on a trial basis starting summer 2006 with the following conditions:

- 1) RA tuition benefit for 3 credit hours in summer semesters.
- 2) RA tuition benefit for a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 11 credit hours in Fall and Spring semesters for all students with full or partial RA assignment.
- 3) New policy that resident (in-state) tuition only is included in the TBP for RAs once the accumulated credit hours as a graduate student exceed 84. This condition will be implemented in the semester that cumulative registration exceeds 84 CH as a University of Utah graduate student.
- 4) Comprehensive and aggressive action by departments to ensure that U.S. citizens apply for Utah residency once 40 graduate credit hours are reached.

This modification to the existing TBP accomplishes the following: (1) creates cost savings by reducing overall the annual tuition benefit for RAs to 25 CH; (2) encourages US citizens to obtain Utah resident status when eligible, and encourages all RAs to qualify for in-state tuition after accumulating 84 CH by registering for dissertation hours only; (3) qualifies RAs for summer FICA exemption; (4) allows RAs to take qualifying exams or defend theses/dissertations during the summer without tuition burden; (5) avoids international RAs having to take a formal "vacation semester" to maintain visa status; and (6) qualifies RAs for summer use of campus recreation facilities without paying the recreation/activity fee.

As is currently the case, non-resident students who qualify for the TBP can take additional credit hours above the TBP limit at in-state rates. This may be helpful for some students who are disadvantaged by the new, 11 credit-hour limit in the fall and spring.

The Graduate School will monitor the savings to the RA portion of the TBP during AY 2006-07 to determine whether or not the targeted savings are reached. If they are not, we may have to revert to the initial proposed modifications (see March 30, 2006 memo) of no summer RA tuition benefit, or take some other corrective measures.