

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 25-15 (Voting Units: Full Senate)

“Proposal to Equalize the Tuition Waiver Benefit for all Full-time Employees”

I. Introduction

Michigan Technological University provides a tuition and fee waiver for full-time employees under the “Employee Education Policy” (<http://www.mtu.edu/hr/current/benefits/additional/>).

In 2014, the plan provided the following benefits:

- A regular, full-time, exempt employee receives two classes per semester
- A regular full-time, non-exempt employee receives two classes per semester
- UAW members receive 9 credits per semester
- AFSCME members receive 6 credits per semester

According to the program, employees must receive approval from their supervisors for registration and any scheduling changes to the employee’s work duties. Employees must comply with all student and employee responsibilities and duties for study and work.

II. Proposed Change to the Employee Education Program

- **Proposal:** The University Senate proposes increasing the two-class per semester tuition and fee waiver for full-time, exempt employees to a 9 credit per semester tuition and fee waiver. The Senate also recommends streamlining approval process to eliminate the current paper-based system and allow supervisors to approve schedules by e-mail or other paperless systems. The Senate also recommends that Benefit Services and the Office of the Registrar be charged to do a Lean Kaizen with the Office of Process Improvement.
- **Rationale:** Michigan Tech should encourage employees to take advantage of the lower-cost, high-quality professional development opportunities available on campus, which are less disruptive of work schedules and cost less than sending employees to off-campus providers for professional development.

The two-class-per-semester limit lengthens an already long professional development plan when the graduate and undergraduate programs include several 1.0 credit and 0.5 credit classes required for graduation (e.g., physical education classes and graduate-research-conduct classes). In some semesters, an employee-student may be limited to a 1.0 credit

load for two physical education (PE) classes in one semester, potentially extending pursuit of a degree by several years.

III. Additional Information

- The current, two-class-per-semester limit does not impose a credit-hour limit; hence, it could allow an employee-student to take a ten-credit load in one semester.
- Employees must already receive approval from their supervisors for professional development activities, including scheduling of classes during a typical workday, and Michigan Tech already allows for flexible scheduling under the Flexible Work Options policies (<http://www.mtu.edu/worklife/work-connections/work-options/faq/>). Furthermore, many classes are scheduled outside of normal work hours, limiting or eliminating disruption of employees' work schedules.