

# The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

## Proposal 2-16

(Voting Units: Full Senate)

### “Proposal to Amend the Employee Education Policy”

#### I. Introduction

In an effort to increase the benefits offered to full-time employees, we propose the following benefit enhancement, which we believe will be cost neutral.

As currently designed, Michigan Tech’s [Employee Education Policy](#) provides a tuition-and-fee waiver for two classes per semester for most regular, full-time employees, both exempt and non-exempt.

In some cases, this feature of the Employee Education Policy presents a problem, as, for example, when degree-seeking students are required to take one or more one-credit courses, such as physical education classes and graduate-research-conduct classes. In such cases, employee-students may be restricted to taking only two credits in a given semester, which can significantly extend their time to completion. (On the other hand, the current policy might allow some students to take two 5-credit courses, for a total of 10 credits in a given semester.)

Two of Michigan Tech’s unions have resolved this problem by defining the tuition-and-fee-waiver benefit in terms of credit hours taken rather than in terms of classes taken. Consequently, members of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) receive tuition-and-fee waivers of 6 credits per semester; and members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) receive tuition-and-fee waivers of 9 credits per semester.

#### II. Proposed Changes in the Employee Education Policy

The University Senate proposes that the current policies on tuition-and-fee waivers remain the same for off-campus courses. However, for on-campus courses, we propose that all non-represented employees receive tuition-and-fee waivers for up to two courses or six credit hours, whichever is greater. (Hence, for example, an eligible employee wanting to take two 5-credit courses could do so, and an eligible employee wanting to take three 1-credit courses and one 3-credit course could also do so.)

#### III. Additional Considerations

- a. This policy change would encourage Michigan Tech employees to take advantage of the lower-cost, high-quality professional development opportunities available on campus, which are also less disruptive of work schedules.
- b. The proposal will not interfere with work obligations because employees must already receive approval from their supervisors for professional development activities, including scheduling of classes. Michigan Tech already allows for flexible scheduling under the [Flexible Work Options policies](#). Furthermore, many classes are scheduled outside of normal work hours, limiting or eliminating disruption of employees’ work schedules.
- c. Savings in this program might be realized by streamlining the approval process to eliminate the current, paper-based system and allow supervisors to approve schedules by e-mail or through other paperless systems.
- d. Savings in this program might also be realized by conducting a Lean Kaizen review of the program with the goal of identifying other possible improvements.