



**UNM Staff Council 2019 Resolution #4**

**Name:** Tuition Remission

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**Adopted by Staff Council on:** September 17, 2019

1. WHEREAS “The University of New Mexico recognizes the importance of an educated and competent work force” (UNM Policy Office); and
2. WHEREAS research indicates that employees with tuition remission or assistance “stay on the job longer, at least in part to keep making use of that benefit” (Cappelli, 2004, p. 213); and
3. WHEREAS research indicates that employees who stay longer “are more likely to perform better and provide better quality experiences” (Whitten, 2018, n.p.); and
4. WHEREAS research indicates that employers who offer tuition remission benefits “may have more employees who are easily promotable, saving them money on recruiting new employees” (Breed, n.d., n.p.); and
5. WHEREAS “To meet the demands of the changing workforce and the desire of employees to grow academically and professionally, UNM offers various voluntary education benefits” (UNM Policy Office); and
6. WHEREAS “UNM supports and encourages employees to develop themselves through academic, professional, health, fitness, and personal enrichment courses” (UNM Policy Office); and
7. WHEREAS all “regular staff employees who are full-time or part-time and have an appointment percent of 50% or greater” as well as “term or contract staff employees who are full-time or part-time, have an appointment percent of 50% or greater, and have a minimum three (3) month term appointment or contract” are eligible for the employee tuition remission benefit at UNM (UNM Policy Office); and
8. WHEREAS “one of the greatest benefits for staff is the ability to pursue education through Tuition Remission or through professional development activities” (UNM Staff Council); and
9. WHEREAS “this benefit has a huge impact on employee morale and is critical to UNM’s efforts to improve the quality of staff working at UNM” (UNM Staff Council); and
10. WHEREAS hundreds of UNM Staff members take academic courses each semester as demonstrated by participation in the bi-annual “Staff as Students” events hosted by the Student Success Committee of Staff Council; and
11. WHEREAS the majority of UNM academic courses are offered during the traditional workday; and
12. WHEREAS “supervisors may allow an employee to take up to one (1) course per semester using time off with pay” (UNM Policy Office); and

13. WHEREAS many UNM supervisors are supportive of tuition remission and the approving of time off with pay so that employees may take one academic/professional development course per semester during business hours, but not all UNM supervisors allow equal access to this benefit. This is supported by a poll conducted of Staff Councilors in August 2019 across Main, North, and South Campuses showing that about 70% of staff Councilors reported that their supervisors are generally supportive of allowing time off with pay for one course per semester, 16% require flex time or leave to be used and 7% of respondents report that the nature of their job is not conducive to allow taking a course scheduled hours. However, 7% do not permit their staff to take even one course during scheduled hours;
14. THEREFORE, be it resolved that the UNM Staff Council requests:
- a. the amendment of Policy 3700 to state: "Supervisors must allow an employee to take one (1) course per semester using time off with pay as long as the course is taken for academic credit toward a degree program or for professional development and/or is related to the employee's job or a UNM job to which the employee can reasonably aspire. The business needs of the department are top priority, and if time off with pay is not practical the supervisor must justify in detailed writing the reason why." Non-traditional courses, including those that vary in time commitment from a typical academic offering, should also be given fair consideration by the supervisor.
  - b. training pertaining to this policy be included in the newly redesigned "Employee Life Cycle Management Workshop" which is already currently required for newly hired/newly promoted leaders in the University system "to reflect a more accurate employee experience" (UNM Human Resources).

Copies of this resolution will be sent to the UNM Board of Regents; Garnett Stokes, PhD, President of the University; Paul Roth, MD, MS, Chancellor for Health Sciences and Dean of the School of Medicine; James Paul Holloway, PhD, Provost and EVP for Academic Affairs; Dorothy T. Anderson, Vice President for Human Resources; and UNM Policy Office.

## Citations

- Breed, M. (n.d.). The many benefits of an employer tuition reimbursement program & policy. Money Crashers. Retrieved from <https://www.moneycrashers.com/benefits-employer-tuition-reimbursement-program-policy/>
- Cappelli, P. (2004). Why do employers pay for college? *Journal of Econometrics*, (1–2), 213. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeconom.2003.10.014>
- UNM Human Resources (2019). Employee Life Cycle Management Workshop Redesign. Retrieved from: <https://hr.unm.edu/articles/newsletter/employee-life-cycle-management-workshop-redesign>
- UNM Policy Office (2018). Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual - Policy 3700: Education Benefits. Retrieved from <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/3000/3700.html>
- UNM Staff Council (n.d.). Staff as Students. Retrieved from <http://staffcouncil.unm.edu/staff-as-students.html>
- Whitten, S. (2018). Starbucks, Chipotle and others are offering up a new employee perk: Paying for their education. CNBC. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/04/13/restaurants-use-college-tuition-programs-to-combat-high-turnover.html>