ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE LETTER

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY TUITION WAIVERS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

GENERAL

The current Board policy on Tuition Waivers (Policy 703.1) states: “University tuition waivers and scholarships will be administered so that total financial aid does not exceed a student’s total educational costs.”

In some cases, applicants eligible to receive University tuition waivers and/or scholarships are also eligible to receive benefits from non-University financial aid programs, and the total available aid may exceed a student’s total educational costs.

This letter sets guidelines for administering University established tuition waivers and scholarships so that the total financial aid a student may receive does not exceed a student’s total educational costs based on interpretation of Board Policy and Federal Regulations. Where UMS Policy and Federal Financial Aid Regulations differ, Federal Regulations will prevail.

GUIDELINES

1. University tuition waivers and scholarships will be administered so that total financial aid does not exceed a student’s total educational costs.

2. “Total financial aid” is to be defined as all federal, state and institutional aid, and educational assistance from outside sources, etc.

3. Sequence of reducing excess aid:
   1. Self-help aid, e.g., need-based loan funds or work-study funds
   2. Grants/Scholarships
   3. University Scholarships
   4. University Established Waivers

4. Exception: A University may change the sequence in reducing excess aid if requested by the student in writing and the Aid Director believes the change benefits the student. For example: A student employed may feel the experience gained from employment outweighs the benefit received from obtaining University scholarship funds; thus the student may want the University scholarship reduced instead of having work-study reduced.
The University of Maine System Board of Trustees has established a number of different tuition and fee waiver programs for the benefit of students attending the University. Generally, waivers are like entitlement programs, if a student meets certain criteria, that student is not required to pay all or a portion of the University tuition and in some cases, fees.

The various tuition waivers established by Board policy do not ordinarily apply to non-credit courses. These are courses that are not part of the normal curriculum and are often offered as a public service. The charges for such programs are established locally, and are not covered by tuition set by the Board of Trustees. Two exceptions are for employees and senior citizens, with each university retaining the right to designate those non-credit courses to which tuition waivers will not apply.

All major changes to tuition waivers are to be brought to the Trustees’ attention (as information) prior to implementing the change in this APL.

**UNIVERSITY ESTABLISHED**

**North American Indian**

The University of Maine System has a waiver program for qualified and eligible North American Indians. This program covers tuition and mandatory fees. Program details are available from the North American Indian Coordinator at each University (see Attachment I for Program Agreement and Attachment II for Philosophy Statement).

**Senior Citizens**

For the purpose of administering this waiver, “senior citizens” are defined as Maine residents who are, or will become, 65 years of age during the semester for which they are requesting the waiver.

The Board of Trustees authorizes the waiver of tuition for senior citizens who register for undergraduate courses on a credit basis at any unit of the University of Maine System. Applicants must establish financial need.
The Board of Trustees authorizes the waiver of tuition and Board-approved mandatory fees (Unified Fee, Student Activity Fee, and Communications Fee) for senior citizens who register for undergraduate courses on an audit basis at any unit of the University of Maine System. Applicants do not need to establish financial need.

Enrollment will be subject to space availability.

Trustee Waivers

The Trustee Waiver Program encourages universities of the University of Maine System to award tuition waivers to students whose presence would enhance the University experience for all students. The recipients may be gifted scholars, accomplished artists, outstanding athletes, or from groups significantly under-represented at a university.

The number and amount of Trustee waivers shall not exceed 6% of students enrolled at each university calculated on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis or 6% of gross tuition revenue. Partial waivers are authorized.

USS Maine Commemorative Tuition Waiver Program

Tuition will be waived for eligible members of the USS Maine’s crew, their spouses, and dependent children. Eligible crew members and families will be limited to the initial crew and those assigned to the ship within one year of its commissioning. Universities with over 1,000 students will be expected to carry up to two tuition waivers, and those under 1,000 students to carry up to one tuition waiver. Each waiver will be for $2,500 or the cost of tuition, if less.

High School Aspirations Incentive Program

To raise educational aspirations, students currently attending Maine High Schools, whether private or public (or being home schooled in Maine homes), and adult education diploma candidates who are within one calendar year of diploma completion are eligible for the High School Aspirations Incentive Program. The in-state student waiver is one half the in-state tuition rate and the waiver for out-of-state students attending Maine High Schools is one half the out-of-state tuition rate.
Traditional high school students must have school approval, parental approval, a minimum high school grade point average (GPA) of B or better and junior or senior standing. Adult education students must have approval from the adult education director and/or counselor and must have maintained a B or above average in their adult education course work.

Students can take any academic course for which they have met the course prerequisites as long as there is space available. Traditional high school students may enroll in a maximum of two courses or six credit hours (whichever is greater) per semester during their junior and senior years. Adult education students may enroll in up to two courses or six credit hours (whichever is greater) per semester for a maximum of two semesters (i.e., a maximum of four courses or twelve credit hours total, whichever is greater). The program is limited to regular university courses taught by University faculty through direct, on-site instruction at a University of Maine System university or center during the regular academic year (fall and spring semesters only).

**STATE MANDATED (ADJUSTABLE)**

Veteran’s Dependent Waiver

Per Maine law, tuition and mandatory fees and lab fees will be waived for eligible orphans, widows & widowers of veterans as well as spouses and children of veterans who are disabled, missing in action, etc. Initial eligibility is determined by the Veterans Affairs Office of the State of Maine. Students must be enrolled in an associate’s, bachelor’s or master’s degree program. The waiver will be administered so that total financial aid does not exceed a student’s total education cost. MRSA, Title 37-B, Section 505, as amended 2002, P.L. c.662.

**STATE MANDATED (NON-ADJUSTABLE)**

National Guard Education Assistance Pilot Program

Legislative Document 2585 signed by the Governor on May 5, 2000 provides that regardless of the state of residence, a member of the Maine National Guard who has met the requirements of the law and is attending a state postsecondary education institution, qualifies for in-state tuition rates.
Tuition Waiver for Children of Firefighters and Law Enforcement Officers Killed in the Line of Duty

Per Maine law, tuition will be waived for eligible students but will be limited to undergraduate degree programs and shall be limited to the earlier of not more than five years of full-time enrollment or its equivalent, or receipt of a Baccalaureate Degree. A person desiring a tuition waiver should apply to the Department of Education for determination of eligibility. MRSA, Title 20-A, Section 12551, as enacted 1985, P.L. c.472.

Tuition Waiver for Persons in Foster Care, subsidized adoptive care, or minor wards of a subsidized permanency guardian upon graduating from high school or successfully completing a GED examination

Tuition will be waived for eligible Maine students who have applied for federal student financial aid. These students must be enrolled in an undergraduate or certificate program of at least one year and not been enrolled full-time for more than five years or the equivalent. A person desiring a tuition waiver should apply to the Finance Authority of Maine for determination of eligibility. No more than 28 new waivers will be awarded in each year. MRSA, Title 20-A, Section 12573, as enacted 1999, P.L. c.216 and amended in 2003.

**CONTRACTUALLY MANDATED (NON-ADJUSTABLE)**

Employee Tuition Benefit

The Board of Trustees encourages employee participation in educational programs by authorizing a waiver of tuition charges. Generally, employees may be eligible to take up to two (2) courses per semester not to exceed four (4) credit hours per course. Such courses shall be contingent on the availability of space. Also, each university shall designate those non-credit courses to which waivers will not apply. Permission from the employee’s supervisor is required for any course scheduled during normal working hours; such absences must be made up.
Dependent Tuition Waiver

Dependents of full-time regular University employees not represented by a bargaining agent, or as provided in a collective bargaining agreement qualify for a 50% tuition waiver. In order to qualify, spouses or dependent children must be enrolled at the University of Maine System on a full-time basis.

Exchange Programs

There are numerous exchange programs whereby students typically can attend another institution for one year or less and normally pay the host institution resident tuition rate or a rate consistent with the terms of the program. A complete listing and detailed description of the exchange programs is provided in the Annual Report of Student Financial Aid.

Graduate Assistant Tuition Program

In recognition of the desirability of attracting outstanding graduate students (in-state and out-of-state) to the University of Maine System, the University System has a graduate assistant tuition assistance program whereby selected graduate students are provided free tuition. The in-state portion of the tuition charge is paid by the appropriate academic departments as a tuition scholarship. For out-of-state graduate students, the difference between the in-state and out-of-state tuition is waived.

For a complete listing and detailed description of the waivers available, see the Annual Report of Student Financial Aid produced by the Office of Finance and Treasurer.
ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE LETTER

SUBJECT: UNIVERSITY TUITION WAIVERS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Waiver Accounting Guidelines

1. Student tuition and fees should be recorded and reported as revenue at the full amount in the appropriate accounts (even though it might be known that a waiver will offset the charges).

2. The amount of the waivers should be offset against tuition by charging the account specifically provided for that purpose.

Approved

Joanne L. Yestramski
Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN WAIVER AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AGREEMENT  
Effective Date: September 2003

Purpose

The purpose of the North American Indian Waiver and Scholarship is to encourage North American Indian students to participate in public higher education in Maine. Our goal is to provide sustained support for all UMS North American Indian students who wish to pursue post-secondary study and, in particular, those who wish to obtain a certificate and/or an associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree or some other appropriate credential that will serve them personally and professionally as they plan for the future.

Eligibility

This program covers tuition, mandatory fees, and room and board charges for:

a. Individuals whose names are included on the current tribal census or who have at least one parent or grandparent who are included on the current tribal census of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet, the Aroostook Band of Micmac, or

b. Individuals who have lived in Maine for at least twelve months immediately prior to application and who are included on a current tribal census or who have at least one parent or grandparent who were included on the census of a state, federal, or provincial North American Indian Tribe or held a band number of the Maliseet or Micmac Tribes.

To maintain the waiver, students must remain eligible to register for classes. To maintain the room and board scholarship, students must show satisfactory academic progress as defined by federal guidelines. Additionally, students must apply for financial aid by October 15 to receive the scholarship for the fall semester and/or academic year or March 1 to receive the scholarship for spring semester.

Students who change University of Maine System campuses must sign a new agreement for the Waiver and Scholarship Program with the North American Indian Scholarship Coordinator/Director on their new campus.

Tuition and Mandatory Fees Waiver

Tuition and mandatory fees (required fees charged of all students enrolled at the institution and automatically assessed at the time of registration exclusive of travel and accommodation fees related to travel courses) will be waived for qualified students, both matriculated and non-matriculated, who are enrolled in academic, credit-bearing courses at the undergraduate, graduate, or continuing education level at the campuses of the University of Maine System.

Room and Board Scholarship

1. To qualify for the room and board scholarship, applicants must be matriculated students in an undergraduate or graduate degree program within the University of Maine system, enrolled in a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours for undergraduates or nine (9) credit hours for graduate students at USM, or six (6) credits hours for graduate students at UM at the end of add/drop, and living in a residence hall on one of the campuses of a University of Maine System institution. Room and board charges will be covered ONLY during the time period when the student is actively enrolled.

2. To be eligible for the North American Indian Scholarship, matriculated students must first apply for financial aid through the process outlined at their institution.
3. An eligible North American Indian student’s university bill will be credited with a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees and/or room and board scholarship after initial authorization from the campus staff member serving as Coordinator/Director of the North American Indian Waiver and Scholarship Program and the financial aid office.

4. The total amount a student receives from the North American Indian Waiver and Scholarship Program and from all other sources of financial support from outside agencies for the same purpose may not exceed the total cost of attendance.

5. Room charges will be subsidized at the double occupancy rate for the student’s residence. Charges for single, double single, or computer or telephone devices, for which there is a separate charge, will be the responsibility of the student tenant.

6. Standard meal plan not to exceed the cost of the maximum meal plan.

7. Students who maintain a permanent private residence, other than the parent’s home, within commuting distance of the university are NOT eligible for room and board scholarships.

8. Persons employed by the University of Maine System on a half-time or greater basis and who are carried on the University employee payroll are NOT eligible for the room and board scholarship.

9. Students enrolled in course work during short sessions outside the regular fall and spring semesters may be considered for a room and board scholarship while carrying fewer than the minimum credit hours specified above. The scholarship covers room and board charges only during that time period when the student is regularly enrolled and attending classes.

10. A student who disagrees with a decision made under this program agreement may appeal through the appropriate campus appeals process.

I have read and agree to the above terms of this program. I understand that the Coordinator/Director has the authority to deny the North American Indian Waiver and/or Room and Board Scholarship based on academic or disciplinary action by the campus.

____________________________________
Student (Print Name)

____________________________________  SSN  Date
Student (Signature)  

____________________________________  Date
Coordinator/Director, North American Indian Waiver & Scholarship Program

Form Revision 4/25/03
Purpose

The purpose of the North American Indian Waiver and Scholarship Program is to encourage North American Indian students to participate in public higher education in Maine. Our goal is to provide sustained support for all UMS North American Indian students who wish to pursue post-secondary study and, in particular, those who wish to obtain a certificate and/or an associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree or some other appropriate credential that will serve them personally and professionally as they plan for the future.

The participation of North American Indian students in academic programs and in campus life at our institutions will not only enrich the lives of those students and prepare them for a wider variety of personal and professional opportunities, it will enrich our campus communities as well by providing an opportunity for members of the campus community to become acquainted with these students individually and, through those relationships, to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of native people, their history and cultural heritage, and their rich contributions to our state and nation.

The policy and guidelines governing the North American Indian Waiver and Scholarship Program were designed to maximize successful participation by North American Indian students, to ensure fair and equitable administration of the waiver and scholarship program at all UMS institutions, to guide these students to financial aid resources beyond our institutions, to ensure them access to the full range of support services available on our campuses, and to foster mutual accountability on the part of the student and the institution in pursuing our shared goal of continuing education and/or successful post-secondary degree completion for as many North American Indian students as possible.

Documentation to Verify Tribal Membership/Descent

Verification of tribal membership/descendancy is performed by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs at the University of Southern Maine for students attending that institution and by the Wabanaki Center at the University of Maine for students attending all other campuses of the University of Maine System.
Students provide original letters and documents in the verification process. These are photocopied and the photocopies are kept on file at the Wabanaki Center. A letter from a tribal official or a band official on appropriate letterhead usually constitutes acceptable documentation. A Canadian Indian Northern Affairs status card is also acceptable. Only documentation from groups that are state, provincially, or federally recognized is acceptable.

Eligible students will be coded in the administrative software system, either Financier or PeopleSoft, so that all campuses are aware of their status. This will eliminate the need for the student to re-apply or re-submit their evidence of eligibility when they change institutions.

Once a student has met the eligibility criteria and provided appropriate documentation, that student can retain the waiver and scholarship at any campus for as long as they adhere to the guidelines. If a tribe or band loses its status with either the state, province, or federal government, continuing students will retain the waiver and scholarship, but new, incoming students from that tribe/band will not be eligible. If the state, province, or federal government recognizes the status of a new band or tribe, students from that band/tribe will become eligible for the program from that point onward, but not retroactively. Eligibility is subject to periodic recertification by the University of Maine System.

**Documentation of Residency**

Individuals who have lived in Maine for at least twelve consecutive months immediately prior to the application and who are included on a current tribal census or who have at least one parent or grandparent who are included on the census of a state, federal, or provincial North American Indian Tribe or hold a band number of the Maliseet or Micmac Tribes are eligible for both the North American Indian Waiver and Scholarship.

Documentation of residency will be determined by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs at USM for students attending that institution and by the Wabanaki Center at UM for students attending all other campuses of the University of Maine System. Eligible students will be coded in the administrative software system, Financier or PeopleSoft.

**The Waiver and Scholarship Agreement**

All campuses will utilize the standardized University of Maine System Program Agreement. It is essential that every waiver/scholarship student read, understand and sign the agreement before beginning study at the university. The administrative software system, Financier or PeopleSoft, will be used to confirm that students have read and signed the document. To maintain the waiver, students must remain eligible to register for classes. To maintain the room and board scholarship, students must show satisfactory academic progress as defined by federal guidelines. Students who attend more than one University of Maine System campus must sign a new agreement at each campus.
Room and Board Scholarship

To qualify for the room and board scholarship, applicants must be matriculated students who live in on-campus housing and who are enrolled full-time, at the end of the drop/add period each semester (at least 12 credit hours for undergraduates, 9 credit hours for graduate students at USM, 6 credit hours for graduate students at UM). Students must apply for financial aid annually in order to receive and retain the scholarship. Room and board charges are covered only during the period of active enrollment. (See Program Agreement for additional details.)

The total amount a student receives from the North American Indian Waiver and Scholarship Program and from all other sources of financial support for the same purpose, whether from the institution or from outside agencies, may not exceed the total cost of attendance. The receipt of other aid may, in some cases, reduce or eliminate the receipt of the room and board scholarship and/or the tuition waiver.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

In order to receive the room and board scholarship, North American Indian students are required to apply for financial aid each year using the FAFSA form. This allows for the identification of North American Indian students up front, to enable the Program Coordinator/Director to begin monitoring their academic progress, and to put them in touch with additional funds that are available to them. Each campus will try to ensure that students complete the FAFSA by requiring, with possible sanctions, FAFSA completion by October 15 to receive the scholarship for the fall semester and/or academic year or March 1 to receive the scholarship for the spring semester.

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for Matriculated and Non-Matriculated Students

All students, matriculated and non-matriculated, are entered into the administrative software system, either Financier or PeopleSoft, once they are certified as eligible. They are then monitored for satisfactory academic progress through the campus Financial Aid office. The purpose of monitoring SAP is to identify students who are in academic difficulty and to provide appropriate support to ensure their success.

Financial Aid SAP is based on federal guidelines. Running Financial Aid SAP on all students lets the Coordinators/Directors know whether or not current students qualify for the room and board scholarship should they decide to live on campus in the future. When a student fails to make Financial Aid SAP, the student loses the room and board scholarship but not the waiver. Only when a student is academically suspended or dismissed does the student lose the waiver.
Academic SAP and Financial Aid SAP are run annually (but may be run continuously) on all matriculated students and letters are sent if the student is on probation, suspended, dismissed, or not making satisfactory academic progress. These letters also inform students of the appeals processes available to them. Even students who are academically dismissed/suspended may be given one or two semesters of tuition waiver as a non-matriculated student to re-establish their academic eligibility but not on the same campus.

If a student, either matriculated or non-matriculated, has not successfully completed at least half of the credits attempted during a two-semester period, the North American Indian Coordinator/Director must initiate a meeting with that student to ensure contact with the Coordinator/Director, appropriate intervention, notification to the student of unsatisfactory progress, and appropriate advising/support. Both matriculated and non-matriculated students are held to the same academic dismissal and suspension standards.

Non-matriculated students who do not already hold a degree and who successfully continue coursework for a number of semesters should be counseled, supported, and encouraged to become matriculated and to complete a degree program if appropriate.

**Appeals Process**

A student dissatisfied with a decision regarding the waiver and/or scholarship may, within six months of the date of the decision, ask the Coordinator/Director for a statement of reasons for the denial. The applicant may then respond to what s/he contends are the factual or legal errors in the statement of reasons. If the Coordinator/Director does not change the decision regarding the applicant based on the applicant's response, the applicant may submit all materials to the Provost for final review. The Provost may change the decision only upon a showing of clear factual error or a misapplication of the governing Program Agreement. For other appeals (e.g., academic issues, financial aid, housing, billing, etc.), North American Indian students will use the appropriate campus appeals processes.

**Monitoring System and Report**

The campus monitoring system and resulting system-wide report is designed to monitor students who are receiving the waiver and/or the room and board scholarship to determine how many students are being served, what the retention rate and degree completion rates are, and to what degree FAFSA filing is helping students attract outside funding support. Information for the report regarding tribal affiliation, status as a tribal member/descendant, and satisfactory academic progress must be provided by the Coordinators/Directors.
The Role of the North American Indian Coordinator/Director

The North American Indian Waiver/Scholarship Program Coordinator/Director will be someone who knows how to be an appropriate student advocate, holding both the institution and the individual accountable. The Coordinator/Director will establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with appropriate colleagues on campus and system-wide in order to carry out his/her responsibilities. The Coordinator/Director will be notified of actions taken regarding North American Indian students. The Coordinator/Director should not be the chief financial aid officer of the institution as this may lead to conflict of purpose.

The North American Indian Waiver/Scholarship Program Coordinator/Director has the following responsibilities which should be reflected in his/her job description:

- Review and approve applications;
- Facilitate the entry of qualified students into the university by working with the admissions office, the financial aid office, the registrar, academic advisors, and other appropriate parties;
- Communicate/counsel with students about the guidelines, academic policies and expectations (particularly regarding financial aid and withdrawal from courses), support services available, etc.;
- Serve as a student advocate in appeals processes and other venues;
- Monitor student progress and identifying and meeting with students in difficulty;
- Network with other campus programs, personnel, and services to provide appropriate support to students as needed;
- Coordinate the collection and reporting of data regarding North American Indian students;
- Serve as a member of the North American Indian Waiver/Scholarship Advisory Group;
- Other tasks associated with the program.

To the degree possible, the Coordinator/Director will meet with every new North American Indian student on his/her campus. The best way to ensure a student’s success is to meet face to face and to establish and maintain a good relationship. A Coordinator/Director should be concerned with every student, not just those who may be having academic difficulties.

Finally, it is essential that the people serving in this role receive appropriate training, preparation, and support. Even if the policy is fair and well articulated, varying cultural interpretations may arise. A Coordinator/Director must have a deep understanding of North American Indian students and culture if s/he is to interact effectively with these students. As a system, we need to provide ongoing training and support to this group.
The North American Indian Waiver and Scholarship Advisory Group

We have tried to develop a “team” approach on each campus that couples a North American Indian Coordinator/Director with a financial aid person to help implement the guidelines and provide support to students. Both of these people are members of the Advisory Group as are representatives from the Business Office at USM and the System Office.

North American Indian Waiver/Scholarship Advisory Group

System Office:
Miriam White
Joanne Yestramski

UM
Peggy Crawford
John Bear Mitchell
Mila Tappan

UMA
Lisa Bongiovanni
Kate Kevil
Don Osier

UMF
Ron Milliken
Claire Nelson

UMFK
Ellen Cost
Marielle Squire

UMM
Stephanie Larrabee
Jean Schild

UMPI
Barbara Bridges
Lorelei Locke

USM
Marty Berry
Keith Dubois
Rebecca Sockbeson