Memorandum to Presidents

Date: March 14, 1995

From: Offices of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and Management

Subject: Modifications in the Supervising/Critic Teacher Tuition Waiver Program

To: Presidents, State-operated Campuses

Modifications in the administration of the Supervising/Critic Teacher Tuition Waiver Program were approved in October 1994 by the Academic Planning Committee of the State University Board of Trustees. These modifications, consistent with the regulations of the Trustees, were supported in the interest of eliminating the financial problems in the program, while at the same time expanding the choice of benefits to the master teachers who contribute to the future of their profession and the University by supervising SUNY student teachers.

The purpose of this memorandum is to review the modifications in the program and the resulting changes in interrelated administrative and financial procedures, effective spring 1995. These changes, described in the attached document, include the option of a stipend or a waiver, a redefinition of the supervisory service warranting a stipend/waiver, and a revised methodology for allocating critic teacher funds to campuses. While these policies and procedures affect primarily the campuses with teacher education programs, the tuition waivers will continue to be redeemable at any State-operated campus, thus affecting the System.

Background

State University campuses, according to regulations of the Board of Trustees, may issue tuition waivers to recognize the service of supervising University students by a "critic or supervising teacher cooperating in an education or teacher preparation curriculum" and "an agency supervisor of field work for students enrolled in a social work curriculum." (New York Codes, Rules & Regulations, Chapter V, Title 8, §302.7d.) The recognition of cooperating teachers dates back to the origins of the State University system, when prior to the institution of tuition in 1963, "classroom teachers who assisted the teachers colleges" were exempted from fees for summer session and extension courses.

Waivers, for supervisors of student teaching in teacher preparation or field work experiences in social work, are funded through the Supervising/Critic Teacher Tuition Waiver program, which is a part of the University-wide Program for Tuition Reimbursement. At the campus, waivers are issued to critic teachers in the schools. If the critic teacher relinquishes the waiver, regulation permits the chief administrative officer of
the school system to reallocate the waiver to a member of the professional staff of the school system. Critic teacher waivers, valid for 25 months, could be redeemed under the prior system for as much as a three-credit graduate course at the in-State tuition rate at any State-operated campus.

Since 1992, it has been apparent that a deficit was accumulating in the Supervising/Critic Teacher Waiver program at an increasing number of campuses. Several related factors were identified:

1) Funding and debt: The level of funding for supervising/critic teachers has been inadequate to meet campus waiver issuances for at least a decade. Since 1986-87 an overall System shortfall has been building with a number of campuses running deficits. In some cases, campuses postponed the repayment to other institutions and utilized the subsequent year allocation to pay off their debt; in other instances, campus funds originally planned for other purposes had to be diverted to settle these balances. The total cumulative debt for FY 1992-93 exceeded $2 million, according to a University study in 1994, with an estimated growth in debt of about $1 million a year unless action was taken. Furthermore, without an effort to control spending in the program, anticipated tuition increases forced by the 1995-96 budget would have exacerbated the rate of increase in this deficit.

2) Enrollment and academic programs: Several factors combine to produce a dramatic increase in the campus demand for critic teacher waivers.

- Enrollment growth in teacher preparation programs has been significant and sustained since 1986. The best index for this growth is the number of provisional teacher certificates recommended by SUNY campuses to the State Education Department: provisional certificates recommended by SUNY campuses increased by 37% from 1989-90 to 1992-93.

- New State certification regulations have increased the number of required teaching experiences, thus requiring more supervisory activity.

- In recent years, new teacher preparation programs providing multiple entry points and alternative approaches to formerly underserved populations have been developed, e.g., MAT and MST curricula and joint programs with community colleges, all of which generate additional supervisory activity.

3) Allocation of funds to campuses: Program funds have been allocated to campuses in proportion to the campus contribution to the total number of provisional teaching certificates recommended. This methodology did not adequately recognize the work of the campuses in preparing novice teachers, the changes in campus program size, and the increased utilization of supervisors.
In February 1994, an ad hoc Presidents' Commission was appointed to determine whether the program met campus and System needs and to recommend changes for implementation in 1994-95 to bring the program into fiscal balance. The fundamental change in the program -- the option of direct payment of a stipend to the supervising teacher to recognize the service to the University -- originates in the Commission's recommendations and was the subject of wide consultation with colleagues in the schools, both teachers and administrators; presidents of affected campuses; and deans of professional studies. Across the state, many teachers expressed a preference for the cash stipend. Other changes in the program reflect the intent of the Commission's recommendations and the compromises reached in the consultative process.

Program Modifications

In summary, the changes in the program, which are explained in more detail in the attached document, include:

1) the option of either a $200 cash stipend or a $250 tuition waiver for eligible critic teachers;

2) a revised definition of the supervisory experience warranting a stipend/waiver;

3) the elimination of tuition waivers of varying values (one, two or three credits);

4) a revised methodology for allocating stipend/waiver funds to campuses;

5) a revised accounting methodology for campuses.

The attached document also addresses important related matters:

- recognition of the role of the school community in teacher preparation;
- settlement of past debt within the program.

At this time, there are no corresponding changes in the administration of the Social Work Field Supervisor Waiver component of the Supervising/Critic Teacher program.
In relation to this revised policy, questions regarding teacher preparation programs, critic teacher service, or the allocation methodology should be directed to the Provost’s office; questions regarding transition period funding, the accounting methodology, and past debt should be directed to the Office of the University Controller.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Attachment

c: Academic Vice Presidents, State-operated Campuses
   Deans/Directors of Education, State-operated Campuses
   Business Officers, State-operated Campuses

This memorandum for information to:
   Presidents, Community Colleges
   Deans, Statutory Colleges
   President Coll
   Provost Nesheim
State University of New York

Supervising/Critic Teacher Stipend/Waiver Program

Changes in the Administration of the Program

For the service of supervising University students in a teacher preparation curriculum in the spring of 1995 (and thereafter), campuses may offer to the cooperating teacher either a stipend or a tuition waiver. The stipend will be $200 and paid directly to the teacher; the tuition waiver is valued at $250.

The policy definition for the period of service to the University remains the same: the college will issue one critic teacher stipend/waiver certificate to a cooperating teacher "for each half-semester or comparable period of service as a full-time sponsor teacher." (SUNY Procedures Manual, Administrative Policies, Item 059.5, 1979.) Additionally, it is required that a stipend/waiver certificate be issued only for supervision of a State University student in a practice teaching course which is required for teacher certification by the State of New York and is a part of a registered program for academic credit. Given the limited funding for the program, award of a stipend/waiver must be restricted to the essential student teaching experience.

As with the critic teacher tuition waiver for supervision in fall 1994 and before, the $250 tuition waiver is redeemable at State-operated campuses, valid for a period of up to 25 months, and relinquishable by the cooperating teacher to the school system. Up to eight semester credit hours per term may be waived using valid accumulated tuition waivers, issued for supervision in fall 1994 (and prior) and spring 1995 (and thereafter). Critic teacher tuition waivers for service in fall 1994 (and prior) may not be redeemed for the cash stipend.

State University of New York administrative policies, contained in the SUNY Procedures Manual, are being revised to reflect the above changes and should be consulted for definitions and details on issuing the stipend/waiver, and on transferring and honoring the $250 tuition waiver. These policies include the following:

Item 057.8: Refund Policy for Tuition Waiver Certificates for Critic/Supervising Teachers

Item 059.5: Waiver of Tuition for Critic or Supervising Teachers

Item 059.5.2: Instructions for Processing Tuition Waiver Certificates

Item 170: Payments to University Income Fund for Tuition Waivers

Item 170.1: * Payments to University Income Fund for Critic Teacher Stipend/Tuition Waivers
The asterisked item is new as of March 1995. These policies will be made available shortly on the SUNY-Wide Information Service (SWIS), which can be accessed at SWIS.SUNYCENTRAL.EDU. under the menu item, "SUNY Internal Administrative and Technical Information."

Recognizing the Role of the School Community in Teacher Preparation

It is important for both the academic and fiscal success of this program that the issuance of stipend/waivers be for equitable supervisory work across the University. As previously noted, University policy states that a stipend/waiver will be issued for each half-semester or comparable period of service as a full-time sponsor teacher of a student enrolled in a course required for New York State teacher certification. By definition, therefore, a stipend/waiver will not be issued for supervisory service for less than a half-semester or less than full-time supervision or for other than the required student teaching course in the formal program. Some colleges have incorporated pre-practicum experiences in the schools into teacher preparation curricula, and some have engaged in the practice of issuing tuition waivers to the teachers cooperating in these experiences. Under the stipend/waiver system, there will be no partial stipend or apportioned waiver.

We recognize, however, the importance of campus flexibility in acknowledging the work of school communities and participating teachers who assist in the training of novice teachers, but who do not technically qualify for a stipend/waiver. Campuses have suggested a number of means to recognize the role of participating individuals, e.g., honorary titles; access to the library, athletic facilities, and the Internet; and admission to sporting and cultural events. The critic teacher stipend/waiver policy does not preclude a campus from paying an honorarium to a teacher who participates in a less than full-time, non-student teaching practicum, provided that such honorarium be paid from campus operating funds, not from the college’s critic teacher stipend/waiver allocation.

It has also been suggested that recognition of participating individuals and school districts might be given by the offering of a contract course to in-service teachers at a student rate no higher than total costs incurred. While this flexibility would allow campuses to provide special courses at cost to cooperating districts, there are enrollment and revenue implications. For more information, campuses should consult Senior Vice Chancellor Anslow’s August 1, 1994 memorandum to presidents, entitled "SUTRA," especially Attachment I, item C.3, on "Special Policy Guidelines Governing the Use of the State University Tuition Reimbursable Account."

Campus Allocation Methodology

The methodology for allocating critic teacher waiver funds to campuses has changed over the years. Since 1989-90, campus allocations have been made proportional to the campus contribution to the total number of provisional teaching certificates recommended by SUNY to the State Education Department.
The Presidents' Commission, appointed to review the program, recommended that the central allocation for critic teacher stipend/waivers be divided annually among campuses based on the average number of stipend/waivers issued over the preceding three years. It was agreed that a three-year rolling average would allow allocation adjustments to be made gradually, requiring a campus in expansion (i.e., new programs, enrollment growth, or varying administrative practices) to cover initial year or sudden costs from funds outside the allocation. In 1994-95, campus allocations for critic teacher waivers were based on such an average, using the results of an April 1994 survey by campus business officers. The number of waivers issued, however, included many partial waivers and waivers for pre-practicum experiences, allowable under the prior system but not under the revised program.

Future campus allocations should accurately recognize the work of campuses in preparing novice teachers, be consistent with the University's definition of the supervisory experience warranting a stipend/waiver, and ideally be based upon available empirical information. Beginning in 1995-96, campus allocations for critic teacher stipend/waivers will be made annually, based on a three-year rolling average of reported annual enrollment in required student teaching courses which have been identified by campuses' enrollment officers and deans of education.

**Accounting Methodology**

Essentially, the change in program began in January 1995, thus dividing 1994-95 into two systems of recognition for supervisory service: full-time supervision in the fall of 1994 and prior will have been recognized by a tuition waiver (redeemable for as much as a three-credit graduate course at the in-State rate, currently $504); full-time supervision in the spring of 1995 and thereafter will be recognized either by a $200 stipend to the teacher or a $250 tuition waiver.

To accommodate the new system of stipends and waivers, the System Administration University Controller's Office will establish general income fund reimbursable (IFR) accounts each fiscal year. These accounts will be used for the payment of stipend/waiver certificates issued during that particular fiscal year. To implement the payment of a stipend (rather than a waiver), the campus will need to utilize the Office of the State Comptroller's Quick Pay vouchering process. The reimbursement of the State University income fund for the value of tuition waived as a result of honoring a critic teacher waiver certificate will be accomplished through the use of a revenue/expense journal processed by the honoring campus against the allocation credited to the IFR account of the issuing campus.

Each campus will be required to meet the cost of the stipend/waivers issued from its IFR account. Any costs above the IFR allocation will need to be met from other campus funds. At no point should there be any outstanding accounts receivable from waivers issued under the revised program.
Past Debt Settlement

The University Controller’s Office has collected information from each campus as of December 31, 1994 and calculated the amounts of outstanding receivables and payables owed to other campuses, as well as amounts owed to themselves.

Critic teacher waiver receivables owed by a campus to itself may be paid from other funds by writing off the receivable against available state purpose allocation or by reducing current year tuition or other revenue. Obviously, the latter process has the effect of reducing revenue available to meet the current year revenue target. The appropriate accounting entries will be provided to each campus by the University Controller’s Office upon receipt of a write-off plan.

For critic teacher waiver receivables/payables between campuses, a plan that describes the method of repayment by the campus, must be developed and agreed to by the campuses involved, and submitted to the University Controller’s Office for review and approval.

SUNY System Administration
March 14, 1995