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TO: Dr. Monty Sullivan
LCTCS President
THROUGH: Joseph F. Marin
Chief Operations Officer

FROM: Gena Doucet
Chief Human Resources and Development Officer

SUBJECT: Policy #6.037 - Educational Assistance

DATE: October 26, 2020

APPROVED
12/9/20
LCTCS BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FOR BOARD ACTION

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Board approve the attached Policy #6.037, "Educational Assistance."

Background: The LCTCS currently has three separate policies regarding educational assistance provided as a benefit to employees. Tuition and Fee Exemption for all Full Time Employees (Policy #6.037), Tuition Assistance for Full Time Employees (Policy #6.038), and Employee (Active or Retired), Child or Dependent, and Spouse Tuition Reduction (Policy #6.039). Our intent is to consolidate the three policies and eliminate conflicting items between the polices. The new policy provides all of the same benefits with clear explanations of each while eliminating conflicting or confusing language.

History of Prior Actions: The three previous policies were created for specific educational assistance as needed. Policy #6.037, Tuition and Fee Exemption for Full Time Employees was originally adopted June 13, 2001 and was last updated on January 15, 2016. Policy #6.038, Tuition Assistance for Full Time Employees was adopted December 10, 2014 and has never been revised. Policy #6.039, Employee (Active or Retired), Child or Dependent, and Spouse Tuition Reduction was adopted December 10, 2014 and revised April 1, 2017.

Benefits to System: The proposed policy ensures that all educational assistance programs are listed in one policy without conflicting language. This is benefit for our employees and encourage them to further their education.

Monty Sullivan signature

Approved for Distribution to the Board
Dr. Monty Sullivan, President

12-9-20
Date

LOUISIANA COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM
Policy # 6.037

Title: EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Authority: Board Action

Original Adoption: 06/13/2001

Effective Date of Current Policy: 10/14/2020

Last Revision: 10/14/2020

The Louisiana Community and Technical College Board of Supervisors is committed to employing highly qualified and educated faculty and staff. This policy is intended to guide LCTCS colleges in the development of college policy designed to provide educational assistance. The college policy will determine allowances based on the Chancellor's or System President's discretion factoring in the financial circumstances of the college.

This policy includes three separate educational assistance programs available.

Definition of Full-time Employee: An employee working 40 hours a week or 80 hours in a pay period; or faculty placed under contract to a permanent position for a period encompassing most or all of the entire academic year (i.e. faculty contracts or appointments of not less than 9-months).

I. TUITION WAIVER – For an LCTCS Institution

- A. Eligibility:** Full-time employee that has worked at least one-year in a full time, permanent position for a period full year or the entire academic year. (i.e. Faculty = 9 months)
- B. Institutions Covered:** LCTCS Board Office and all LCTCS Colleges, per established Board or college policies
- C. Approval Requirement:** The employee's supervisor and the college Chancellor, or the LCTCS President as applicable or their designee. Approval is required prior to the start of class. The LCTCS President or Chancellor may waive the one-year employment requirement due to documented special circumstances deemed appropriate. Exceptions shall be justified, documented, and kept on file at the college or Board Office.
- D. Benefit:** Waiver of tuition for job-related undergraduate courses.
- E. Fees (Non-Tuition):** All LCTCS system-mandated fees and fees required to be paid by statute shall be paid by the employee. These required fees include, but are not limited to, Academic Excellence, Technology, Operational, Building Use and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) fees, or any new fee(s) added to a college's fee schedule that is mandated to be paid by the student.
- F. Enrollment Limit:** Employees may take up to six (6) credit hours per semester (or the equivalent under the quarter system).

G. Enrollment Requirement: Enrollment in the tuition waiver program may occur only after the selected class has officially made and only if there is an available slot in the class. The employee must meet any prerequisite course requirements. An approved administrator at each institution shall certify space availability and that the class has made after the institution's deadline for student schedule changes.

H. Continuation Requirement: Continued participation in this tuition waiver program will be based upon making satisfactory progress as determined by the employee's supervisor. Satisfactory progress includes, but is not limited to, completion of the course with a passing grade.

I. Exclusions: Please note that the provisions of the tuition waiver program do not apply to self-supported programs.

II. TUITION REDUCTION – For LCTCS Institutions

A. Eligibility: Full-time LCTCS employees (active or retired) and children, dependents, and spouses of employees (active or retired), or the children, dependents, and spouses of employees who have died while in the service of the LCTCS.

NOTE: The intent is to allow even new employees a reduction benefit while waiting to be eligible for the two other options available to full time employees.

1. The following conditions apply for a child, dependent, or spouse to qualify:
 - a. **ACTIVE WORKING EMPLOYEE:** The employee must be employed in a full-time, permanent position at a LCTCS institution or System Office.
 - b. **DECEASED EMPLOYEE:** The employee must have been employed in a full-time permanent position at an LCTCS institution or System Office at the time of employee's death.
 - c. **RETIRED EMPLOYEE:** The employee must have been consecutively employed in a full-time permanent position at least five years at an LCTCS institution or System Office upon the employee's retirement.
2. The following conditions apply to a full-time employee (active or retired) or full-time employee's (active or retired) child, dependent, and spouse:
 - a. Persons who qualify as the employee's (active or retired) dependent or spouse will be limited to those who are eligible according to the Internal Revenue Tax Code. Sources of verification that may be considered include, but are not limited to, marriage license, birth certificates, and the Federal Student Aid Application.
 - b. For purposes of this policy, an eligible child is a child of a qualifying employee (active or retired) who is under the age of 26, whether or not they qualify as a dependent under the IRS Tax Code.
 - c. Employees (active or retired) and children, dependents, and spouses of employees (active or retired) must meet all admission and prerequisite course requirements. The reduced tuition shall not be less than \$25.00 per credit hour.
 - d. Employees (active or retired) and children, dependents, and spouses of employees (active or retired) shall be assessed all fees and surcharges.

B. Institutions Covered: LCTCS Board Office and all LCTCS Colleges, per established Board or college policies.

C. Approval Requirement: The college Chancellor, or the LCTCS President as applicable or their designee. Approval is required prior to the start of class. If the full-time employee is the student, then supervisor approval is required.

The full-time employee's (active or retired) child, dependent, or spouse electing to attend an LCTCS institution other than the employee's (active or retired) home institution requires the joint approval of the home institution's Chancellor (or designee) and the Chancellor (or designee) of the host institution and are subject to the host institution policies.

Full-time employees (active or retired) and children, dependents, or spouses of qualifying System Office staff may enroll at any System institution with the joint approval of the LCTCS President (or designee) and the Chancellor (or designee) of the host institution.

D. Benefit: Tuition reduction for full-time employees (active or retired) and their children, dependents, or spouse.

E. Fees (Non-Tuition): All LCTCS system-mandated fees and fees required to be paid by statute shall be paid by the employee. These required fees include, but are not limited to, Academic Excellence, Technology, Operational, Building Use and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) fees, or any new fee(s) added to a college's fee schedule that is mandated to be paid by the student.

F. Enrollment Limit: Active full-time employees may take up to six (6) credit hours per semester (or the equivalent under other than regular semester systems). There is no such limit for children, dependents, or spouses.

G. Enrollment Requirement: Enrollment in the tuition reduction program may occur only after the selected class has officially made and only if there is an available slot in the class. The person enrolled (i.e., employee or their children, dependents, or spouse) must meet any prerequisite course requirements. An approved administrator at each institution shall certify space availability and that the class has made after the institution's deadline for student schedule changes.

H. Continuation Requirement for Active Employees: Continued participation in this tuition reduction program will be based upon making satisfactory progress as determined by the employee's supervisor. Satisfactory progress includes, but is not limited to, completion of the course with a passing grade.

I. Exclusions: Please note that the provisions of the tuition reduction program do not apply to self-supported programs.

III. TUITION REIMBURSEMENT – For Non-LCTCS Institution

A. Eligibility: Full-time employee that has worked at least one-year in a full time, permanent position for a period full year or the entire academic year. (i.e. Faculty = 9 months)

- B. Institutions Covered:** All academic courses must be taken at a public college or university that is a regionally accredited institution. The Appointing Authority may approve an exception to the public college or university when it is in the best interest of the college or Board Office.
- C. Approval Requirement:** The employee's supervisor and the college Chancellor, or the LCTCS President as applicable or their designee. Approval is required prior to the start of class. The LCTCS President or Chancellor, as applicable, may approve a policy exception if it is in the best interest of the college and/or LCTCS. Exceptions shall be justified, documented, and kept on file at the college or Board Office.
- D. Benefit:** Reimbursement of the costs of approved job-related educational courses, professional certifications or licenses, or the acquisition of a degree. Such reimbursement consists of tuition and applicable mandatory attendance fees.
- E. Reimbursement Process:** Colleges and the Board Office should use the following procedures when reimbursing employees upon completion of appropriate courses:
1. Employees pay the required tuition and applicable mandatory fees initially and are reimbursed for the costs when the course(s) are completed and appropriate documentation is submitted.
 2. To be eligible for reimbursement, the course(s) must be completed satisfactorily with a grade of "C" or better, or "Pass" if a Pass/Fail course.
 3. The employee must produce documented proof of successful completion of the course(s) before reimbursement.
 4. This benefit does not cover fees or financial penalties associated with a dropped course, a course from which the student withdraws, or other types of financial penalties due to failure by the student to meet set deadlines.
- F. Enrollment Limit:** Employees may take up to six (6) credit hours per semester (or the equivalent under other than regular semester systems).
- G. Enrollment Requirements:** Approved job-related educational courses, professional certifications or licenses, or the acquisition of a degree.
- H. Continuation of Employment Requirement:** Any employee receiving tuition reimbursement will be required to sign an employment continuation agreement. When the tuition reimbursement payment is made, the employee will be required to sign an agreement to remain an employee of LCTCS for at least two months from the date of receipt (of the reimbursement payment) for each credit hour reimbursed. (For example, if 6 credit hours are taken, a continuation agreement of 12 months will be required.) If the employee separates from LCTCS prior to the end of the continuation period, the amount due back to the employer will be pro-rated.
- I. College Agreements:** To the extent possible in implementing this policy, LCTCS colleges should maximize the use of any available tuition/fee agreements with other four-year universities or colleges in providing discounted tuition or fee rates for employees attending these institutions.

NOTE: Employees taking courses at a Louisiana college or university are encouraged to first consider using the Tuition Waiver option outlined in the previous section of this policy before requesting tuition assistance under this reimbursement option.

IV. EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

Educational leave up to 3 hours per week may be granted per LCTCS Policy #6.003, Leave for Unclassified Employees for job-related coursework.

The employing institution can determine by policy whether to offer educational leave for a chosen course if it is taken during the employee's workday. However, employees are encouraged to schedule courses with minimal disruption to their regular work schedule by taking courses outside of regular work hours, on-line, or making up work hours missed with the supervisor's approval. In all such situations, the employee's taking of a course should not adversely affect department services.

NOTE: This policy has been rewritten to include the following previous policies:

Policy #6.037, Tuition and Fee Exemption for all Full Time Employees

Policy #6.038, Tuition Assistance for Full Time Employees

Policy #6.039 Employee (Active or Retired), Child or Dependent, and Spouse Tuition Reduction

Signature: *Gena Doucet*
Gena Doucet (Nov 30, 2020 16:13 CST)

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Signature: *Joseph F. Marin*

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H.12.Policy 6.037 Education Assistance

Final Audit Report

2020-11-30

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