

# **POLICY ON TUITION COST SHARING FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS ON EXTERNALLY FUNDED, SPONSORED RESEARCH**

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

## **Background**

The significant increases in the research portfolio outlined in the Rensselaer Plan will require that faculty undertake new and sustained efforts in the research arena. These efforts will require an increase in the rate of proposal submission; improvement in the quality of the proposals submitted, which will thereby enhance the success rate; and an increase in the number of large interdisciplinary, multi-investigator proposals, developed and submitted. It will further require that a greater percentage of faculty members participate in sponsored research programs. One way to strongly encourage and motivate these types of activities while at the same time making proposals more competitive is through the implementation of a tuition cost-sharing program.

The implementation of a procedure whereby a portion of the cost of the tuition for Graduate Research Assistants is provided by the Institute on externally funded, sponsored research projects, will result in a number of benefits:

- It will make proposals more competitive by reducing the amount of tuition charged to the proposal
- It may allow more students to be employed on a given contract, thereby allowing more work to be proposed for the same amount of funding
- It can serve as a mechanism to promote interdisciplinary research activities.
- It will provide institutional cost sharing on a much larger number of research proposals, thereby demonstrating a greater Institutional commitment to research, and making proposals more competitive when cost sharing is either formally or informally a sponsor requirement.

## **Policy**

All proposals submitted for competitive, externally-funded, sponsored research programs that pay the full indirect cost rate should incorporate institutional cost sharing in an amount equal to 35% of the required tuition for each fully supported Graduate Student. Tuition cost sharing for programs paying less than full indirect costs will be prorated accordingly. Tuition authorization funds must be used exclusively for tuition support, and in no case will the total amount of tuition cost sharing on any given contract or grant exceed, 35% of the total tuition costs expended.

## **Policy Implementation**

This revised policy becomes effective on March 18, 2002 for all new competitive, externally-funded, sponsored research proposals. It will also be applied to the budgets of incrementally-funded sponsored research programs with budget increments beginning March 18, 2002.

## **Closure**

It is reasonable to expect that the expenditure of these funds will result in both an increase in the number of proposals produced by the faculty and a corresponding increase in the success rate of those proposals. By limiting it to Research Assistants and tying it directly to externally-funded sponsored research awards, it will reward those entities, i.e., faculty, departments, schools, and centers that are directly responsible for the generation and production of successful proposals.

Initially Approved on 1/28/00

Revision Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Original signed on 8/7/02

Shirley Ann Jackson, President      Date

## TUITION COST SHARING GUIDELINES

revised 6/26/2006

*(Note: These cost sharing guidelines deal strictly with the tuition remission portion of an appointment. Stipends are not included in these procedures.)*

### Definitions

- ❖ A Graduate Assistant (GA) receives both the Institute minimum stipend and full current academic year tuition remission. A GA must be registered full time, as defined in the Rensselaer Catalog relevant to their specific position (TA/RA)\*, and maintain that status in order to be eligible for the assistantship. The GA is also responsible for no more than 20 hours of work each week.
- ❖ Sponsored Research is, as defined by OMB Circular A-21, *“all research and development activities that are sponsored by Federal and non-Federal agencies and organizations. This term includes activities involving the training of individuals in research techniques (commonly called research training) where such activities utilize the same facilities as other research and development activities and where such activities are not included in the instruction function.”*
- ❖ Full Facilities & Administrative Cost Rates (F&A) are the rates (Organized Research and Other Sponsored Programs) negotiated with the Office of Naval Research. Agency or program specific rates will be prorated against the full federally negotiated rates.

Original Implementation Date – All new proposals submitted on or after January 1, 2001 and continuations of awards where additional funding is requested with a start date on or after January 1, 2001 are administered under this policy and guidelines.

Implementation Date for Revised Policy 4/5/02 – All new proposals submitted on or after March 18, 2002 and continuations of awards where additional funding is requested with a start date on or after March 18, 2002 are administered under this policy and guidelines..

\*TA-Teaching Assistant (9 credit hours or more equals full-time); RA-Research Assistant (12 credit hours or more equals full-time)

### Guidelines

- ❖ All proposals must be submitted through RA&F in order to receive **any** tuition cost sharing.
- ❖ Only the 35% tuition cost sharing will be provided by the Institute-Wide tuition cost sharing fund. All other cost sharing is to be provided by the VP for Research, other portfolio or department as agreed to and approved during proposal circulation.
- ❖ Revision of budgets that include mandatory cost sharing must be approved by the PI, the department head, and RA&F.
- ❖ No tuition cost sharing will be provided on industrial membership affiliates or gifts.

## Process and Responsibilities

- ❖ PIs submit proposal information and budgets to Research Administration & Finance (RA&F).
- ❖ (RA&F) will review/prepare the proposal budget and include the appropriate tuition cost sharing percentage/amount
- ❖ If the award is made, RA&F establishes a program code equal to the award code to be used for charging the portion of the tuition that will not be reimbursed by the sponsor.
- ❖ The business/financial manager makes the appropriate entries in Banner for the tuition, charging the sponsor amount to the sponsor fund, and the remaining amount to the cost sharing fund. The award code is used as the program code to tie the cost share to the award.
- ❖ PIs / Financial Managers are responsible for monitoring the tuition charges on sponsored awards and for insuring that the correct amount of cost sharing as required in the award is provided from other sources.
- ❖ Tuition amounts in sponsor budgets will be encumbered by (RA&F).
- ❖ The annual budget for Institute-wide tuition cost sharing will be prepared by the Budget Office with assistance from the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Provost's Office. Expenses to the Institute-wide fund will be monitored by the Provost's Office (Grad School).