



**Central Washington University
Tuition Waiver Budget Subcommittee**

**March 25, 2020
3pm – 4pm**

Present

Josh Hibbard, Dennis Francois, David Pena-Alfaro, Jill Hernandez, Jeff Stinson, Faith George, Gregg Schlanger, Adrian Naranjo, Mike Harrod, Teena Chase, Gregory Heinselman

1. Athletic Waivers

A concern was raised by one of the committee members in writing outside of this meeting; about certain waiver pools being expanded and waivers being awarded to already admitted (in Athletics, specifically) just so the budget could be spent down with no input from this committee; Josh asked for details/history on this issue. There wasn't a significant amount of historical information available, but Josh noted that if this was in fact a practice, there isn't a procedure or policy in place to dictate that this isn't allowable. Dennis noted that any decisions previously related to the waivers included the President and various budgetary and enrollment representatives. They were given a certain number of tuition waivers to award but they have gone over their pool amounts in past years due to the number of waivers available not being accounted for in their budget, and to account for graduate-level student waivers who have a higher cost of tuition that was also not originally included in the budget. He confirmed that it has been a highly discouraged practice in Athletics to give any waivers to students that are already admitted.

New Business

1. Review and approve "rubric" evaluating new waivers

Discussion previously was that the agreed-upon rubric was intended to be a baseline for people to use to help guide this committee's decision to approve or deny a waiver. It is not intended to be a method by which waivers are approved based on the total overall rubric score. However, the rubrics will be compiled (can be done anonymously/confidentially) and provided to the requestor for feedback purposes.

Della will send out a copy of the rubric to the committee members to review, and we will gather feedback and vote on the use of the rubric for future waiver requests.

2. Discussion: Develop process for receiving waiver requests

Josh is aware of two waivers that have been approved outside of this group; one was a recruitment waiver good for one year that was specific to the closure of Concordia University. The second was one that was discussed in this group, but due to the urgency of the need (specific to a program being set up with the Saudi government) it was approved by the Provost and the President.

We will be working to put together a draft one-page waiver application request; if anybody is interested in assisting with this process, please let Della and Josh know. Once the draft is complete, it will be shared with this committee for review and feedback.

Josh is in the process of drafting a waiver specific to the closure of universities similar to the situation that was experienced with Concordia. As soon as that draft is completed, it will be shared with this group as well.

In a packet for the next meeting:

Draft Waiver Request Application (Della will send out in advance)

Assessment Rubric Draft

Application Process/Procedures

- Receive waiver
- Review/score waiver
- Discuss as a committee
- Make a decision at the next meeting

Side conversation:

The Director of Recruitment is currently working with students transferring from Concordia University (along with partners from other departments) to provide waivers for those students; Josh believes that approximately \$10,000 in waivers has currently been offered (not accepted/awarded but offered).

3. Discussion: Evaluate existing “West” waivers

Not discussed specifically; mentioned in other agenda item conversations

4. Discussion: Merit Waiver (Josh)

We currently award approximately \$3 million in merit waivers each year (entitlement awards). This committee adjusted the amounts of each of these waivers last year. Josh is preparing a memo recommending that we consider eliminating the merit waiver program. Instead of focusing on merit, he would like us to consider more of a need-based focus for awarding tuition waivers. For example: “If your parents make less than \$xx,xxx, then your tuition is covered.” Josh noted that we have also not had any way of tracking past year’s merit waivers and how they impacted students committing to CWU. Additionally, we haven’t looked at the academic profiles of the students that were accepting the waivers and

coming to CWU. These issues have since been corrected, but what was learned is that merit awards were not having a significant impact on students' decisions to attend CWU.

David asked whether or not we had information regarding the merit waivers and the GPA and/or SAT/ACT test scores of the students who received those, and if continuing to provide the waiver to those students would help improve/maintain our retention rates. Dennis asked if there was any data that could help us understand this, and Josh and David both suggested it was possible, but that we don't have it yet. Adrian noted that we've already started building a structure to help support students who may not have higher GPA and test scores, which should assist with retention efforts; there is some data available through the Retention Steering Committee on this.

In theory, of the \$3 million, \$1 million could be shifted to need-based waivers, and then the rest could be split between the colleges for specific merit waivers that aren't necessarily entitlement waivers.

Mike raised the concern about internal imaging and how colleagues might respond to shifting away from academically better-prepared students. Josh suggested that retention is probably more difficult to accomplish for students who end up leaving because they can't afford college than it is for those who do not have financial difficulties; Greg agreed that this is what he was seeing in Student Success. Gregg noted that they have seen students come through their program that wouldn't have been there if they hadn't received the "golden ticket," and that those students contributed significantly to their departments. Because of this he would hate to see that go away completely, but understands that need-based waivers are also important.

Mike asked if it would be possible to get a sense of what the four biggest waiver categories are. Jill mentioned that it would be important for the colleges to be able to maintain their ability to award tuition waivers based on recruiting efforts for their specific programs.

Part of the goal of this would be to simplify the process of understanding tuition coverage for students of need. This would take in to account the State Need Grant and Pell Eligibility, and would meet the gap between those and the full tuition amount as long as they fall within the parent income threshold (tbd). Jeff noted that any communications about this (if changes are actually made) need to be done so in a manner that doesn't suggest to any students that we don't want them here or that their achievements aren't deserving of merit. Josh suggested that maybe high achievers (GPA = 3.7+) still get a merit package.

This is still in discussion phase, and Josh noted that he would appreciate any additional feedback from members of this committee. In the meantime, they will continue to work on obtaining and analyzing data to help us better understand the benefits and drawbacks associated with a shift towards need-based versus merit-based waivers.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 21, 2020
11am – 12pm