Beginning Fall Semester 2009, the tuition waivers accompanying the Graduate School’s Teaching Assistantships will be **limited to registration for nine (9) credits per semester.** That is, students will receive a **waiver for up to nine credits.** Registration beyond nine credits will not be covered by the Graduate School, except in very unusual and pre-approved cases. Up until now, the Graduate School did not limit the tuition waiver credit. Unfortunately, current fiscal challenges require that the Graduate School tuition waivers be limited to nine credits only. In the past, many graduate students on assistantship have registered for nine credits per semester and this limit will not affect them; it only affects those who register for more than nine credits one or more semesters when they receive a stipend for a Teaching Assistantship from the Graduate School.

Holders of both teaching and research assistantships are expected to be working for the University and thus have activities split between courses, other educational activities, and the work that they do. Such work normally would imply some level of registration below the maximum. Both the maximum and minimum for full-time Teaching Assistants funded through the Graduate School is nine (9) credits per semester.

On the fiscal side there currently are two uncontrolled variables affecting allocation of the fixed tuition waiver budget—residency and number of credits. Since we accept the most promising applicants from throughout the world, it is not possible to fully control the residency ratio among graduate students. But, we can regulate the number of credits taken and we must do this to not over spend our waiver budget. The fixed amount in the waiver budget will allow nine credits of waiver for each Graduate School supported Teaching Assistant, assuming historical ratios among resident and non-resident students. In most years imposing a nine-credit limit should leave a very small surplus to deal with truly exceptional/unusual cases where more credits need to be taken.
In Fall 2009, using the Banner system, the Graduate School will set a dollar amount in each student’s account. When the students register for classes Fall Semester 2009, their individual CyberBear student account will be credited with a specific dollar amount that will cover the tuition for nine credits. The dollar amount will be adjusted for the student’s residency status.

The following link is UM’s tuition information. www.umt.edu/bussrvcs/studacctserv.htm. This link has the figures for tuition for the current academic year. If there are any changes to the current tuition for academic year 09-10, it will be updated by the end of June after the Board of Regents meeting.

Please be sure that both continuing and incoming Graduate Supported TA students for Fall Semester 2009 know that they should register for nine credits, no more and no less, and that they will receive a nine-credit tuition waiver each semester.

As noted above, exception to the nine-credit limit will be made to meet exceptional/unusual circumstances. Requests for exceptions must be submitted to the Graduate School at the time of registration via a memorandum signed by the student, advisor/major professor, and department chair or higher academic administrator. The number of credits above nine for which consideration is requested and the rationale for these additional credits, including why they must be taken in the specific semester, must be stated.

We wish that a strict limit on credits was not necessary, but to be fiscally responsible and ensure that we keep expenditures within a fixed budget, especially in these difficult financial times, such action is necessary. As we are observing daily, the current economic environment is driving many difficult decisions.

Copy:  Royce Engstrom, Provost