

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Associate Deans, Chairs, Chairs of Graduate Studies Committees, and Graduate Advisors

FROM: Philip Cohen, Dean, Graduate School

RE: New 99 Doctoral Hour Policy

DATE: 27 April 2004

cc: Dana Dunn, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Rusty Ward, Vice President for Business Affairs & Controller

In 1997, the 77th Legislature placed a 99-hour limit on the number of doctoral credit hours that are eligible for formula funding for any student first enrolled in the Summer of 1999 and thereafter. Subsequently, UTA sought and received permission to charge non-resident tuition to students exceeding the 99 doctoral credit hour limit to compensate for this loss of formula funding. Many faculty and administrators on campus felt that charging non-resident tuition after 99 doctoral hours could create extraordinary difficulties for students nearing the end of their doctoral studies and interfere with completing their degrees.

After reviewing our current 99-hour policy and those adopted by other public institutions such as UT-Austin and UT-Dallas, President Spaniolo and Provost Dunn have authorized us to adopt a policy that does not create additional degree completion hurdles for our doctoral students. Effective immediately, any student first enrolled in a graduate program at UTA in Summer 1999 or thereafter will be subject to the following policy:

A doctoral student must pay non-resident tuition beginning the first long semester in which a) the student has been enrolled previously as a graduate student for 14 or more long semesters, AND b) the student has accumulated more than 99 semester credit hours of doctoral study at UTA. Students exceeding both limits will not be eligible for assistantships supported by state funds.

Under this policy, both the long semester limit (14) and the doctoral hour limit (99) must be exceeded before a student will be billed at non-resident tuition rates for additional hours or be disqualified from holding a state-funded assistantship or associateship. Reaching only one of the two limits will not result in higher tuition or loss of a state-funded assistantship.

The following details are important for an understanding of the revised policy.

- The long semester count begins when a student first enrolls as either a master's or doctoral student at UTA. Thus semesters spent earning a master's degree will count toward the 14 long semester limit.

- Doctoral hours begin to accumulate only when a student is classified as a doctoral student and is enrolled at Census in courses that receive state doctoral funding.
- The grade assigned in a doctoral level course does not affect the 99-hour count. Even courses from which a student withdraws after Census or in which an X or an R grade are received are counted toward the hour limit. The Coordinating Board sets this policy.
- It is difficult for faculty advisors to determine the number of doctoral hours a student has accumulated by looking at transcript data because many of our 5000 level courses generate doctoral funding when taken by doctoral students and thus count toward the 99-hour limit. Only by looking at the Active Course Inventory to see if a course's level is given as "MAST" (master's funding only) or "MS-DR" (master's funding when taken by a master's student, doctoral funding when taken by a doctoral student) will allow a person to make an accurate count of doctoral hours taken in doctoral status. To help keep track of students nearing the 99-hour limit, we will send graduate advisors a list of students who have accumulated 75 or more doctoral hours each semester.
- Under the new policy, persons exceeding both the semester and the 99-hour limit may not hold state-funded assistantships. However, these students may be supported by money derived from other sources.

We believe this new policy strikes a better balance between the funding needs of the University and the needs of our students. Under it, most doctoral students will be able to complete their degrees without the burden of unexpected tuition increases imposed near the end of their studies.