

February 5, 2008

MEMORANDUM

T0: Deans, Directors and Department Heads
FROM: Cliff Flood *CF*
University Controller
SUBJECT: Student Travel Policy Change

On December 19, 2007, the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) issued a memorandum regarding student travel policy and included a rewrite of the policy as is follows:

“5.7.3 Post-Secondary Students

Student travel expenses while working as an employee of the state is considered official state business when traveling on behalf of their position and shall be paid from the same source of funds from which the employee is paid. Non-employee students at state institutions who travel on official state business are reimbursed from the General Fund at the same extent as are state employees. All other student related travel must be paid from non-General funds supporting that particular organization or activity. Funds specifically appropriated or legally directed for student travel are authorized to be used for student travel expenses.

Approval for non-employee General Fund student travel must be signed by the student's department head. To substantiate and account for services related to non-employee General Fund student travel, the student and department head should enter into a signed agreement to document the required official state business and the travel reimbursement commitment. This agreement shall be signed by the department head and shall be a part of the department's prior approval documentation required for overnight travel.

The purchase of food or beverage for students at higher education institutions is not allowable unless the student is in travel status. However non-state funds may be used for these purposes if such funds have been established and authorized for such purposes.”

Highlights of the Change:

Removes prohibition of state funds for specific non-employee student travel activities and adds language to permit the use of state funds if travel is for official state business. Use of state funds for non-employee student travel requires the student and department head to enter into a signed agreement to document the required "official state business" and the travel reimbursement commitment. Such agreement shall be signed by the department head and be a part of the department's prior approval documentation.

Understanding and documenting "official state business" for purposes of non-employee student travel is critical to the proper implementation of this new policy. Official state business is defined as occurring "when the state employee or other person is traveling to attend approved job related training and/or work on behalf of, officially represent, or provide a state service upon the state's request." Using considerable discretion, departments must distinguish between what is a state purpose (for state supported operations) and other university purposes (for trust fund operations – such as; student activities, student club activities, athletic programs, contract and grant activities, self supporting activities, etc.). Non-employee student travel must be paid from the appropriate funds supporting that purpose/activity.

Non-employee student travel that may benefit state supported operations include travel for the purpose: of enhancing the visibility of university state supported programs to its peers, and future or current customers; of exchanging information and knowledge relevant to improving state funded program services; of enhancing skills relevant to improving volunteer services that support state funded programs; and other similar activities that relate to services supported by the state. Examples include: (1) a student volunteer recruiter attending a fair to publicize and attract students to the university, (2) a student in a biological services program asked by the college to work on a project on the Outer Banks, (3) a graduate or undergraduate student asked by the college to represent the university at a conference for the purpose of enhancing program services, and (4) a student that pays a special fee for travel to conferences that is deposited into state funds. When documenting the agreement between the non-employee student and the department head, the service provided and the state funded purpose must be clearly described and supported.

Travel reimbursements to students being recruited by the university or students traveling as part of a student club, auxiliary or related activity are not state appropriated activities. Such non-state appropriated activities must be paid from appropriate university trust funds supporting such activities.

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Student travel expenses incurred having little or no service benefit to the university, may be considered a financial aid expense and must be communicated to the Student Financial Aid Office for their consideration. Such student travel expenses may not be charged to state funds unless specifically authorized by legislation or legally directed for such purposes.

A new electronic travel authorization form has been developed for non-employees as well as other travel forms that may be required if a travel advance is requested and issued. Copies of these forms are attached and available on the web by going to the [University Controller's web site](#). These forms have automated functions and must be completed using a computer. When submitting a travel reimbursement request for a non-employee student, departments must include a copy of the signed non-employee travel authorization form.

In addition to the new electronic travel forms, Questions and Answers (Q&A) have been developed to address non-employee and student travel. A copy of the Q&A is attached and is also available on the [University Controller's Office web site](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Kim Kelley at 515-7132 or Kim_Kelley@ncsu.edu.

Attachments: [Questions and Answers](#)
[Non-Employee Travel Authorization Forms](#)

cc: Ernest Murphrey
University Business Officers