

## Tuition Policy

Nov 10, 2019 by SPR – (to be added in Employee Handbook)

It is the policy of SCUMC to assist full-time staff in self-improvement through training and education with higher learning degrees, provided there are funds budgeted and approved each year during the normal end-of-year budgeting process. A full-time employee, as he/she enrolls in courses, may request assistance upon completion of one year of employment at SCUMC. This benefit is not available to part-time or temporary employees, and a part-time employee who later transfers or is promoted to a full-time position must satisfy the full-time one year requirement as stipulated in the policy.

The employee should strive to maintain a healthy balance of classwork with current assigned job duties, and the job duties must not suffer or be affected because of the online or in person classroom time and work involved to accomplish the degree. Class attendance should not take priority over the work to be performed, and enrollment in courses requires that time absent from work is made up through an adjusted work schedule or time lost is applied to vacation leave. It will be the employee's responsibility to find another individual or sub to fill in for job duties if the enrollment requires an absence from his/her job duties. Although satisfactory completion of course work may result in qualification for a higher classification or promotion, such results are not automatic.

### Procedure

A. Eligibility:

Full-time employees are eligible to apply for tuition assistance in pursuit of an Associate, Bachelor, or Master's Degree. Employees pursuing a duplicate degree are not eligible for assistance.

B. Courses Covered:

Approved course(s) are only those required in the pursuit of a degree and that are directly related to current job responsibilities and duties. Courses must be completed at an accredited institution. Duplicate courses are not covered.

C. Approval Process:

In July, employees may submit a request for education assistance for the following calendar year. With the request for assistance, the employee should provide a list of courses that he/she will be enrolled in, a graduation outline/plan and a copy of the most recent transcript. Information should be submitted to the Staff Parish Committee Chair by July 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. The committee will notify the employee of the status of the request by November, and this will be contingent upon the availability of church funds budgeted and approved by year end.

D. Assistance/Reimbursement:

Assistance may be applied to eligible expenses: tuition, registration and lab fees, books or e-books, mandatory fees. Employees may submit receipts, and the church may pay the school directly for those expenses on behalf of the employee with prior approval from the Staff Parish Chair. Reimbursement is contingent on the employee providing documentation of successfully

completing the course(s), (i.e. credit earned, etc.) Should the employee not complete the course(s) successfully, any advance payments will be deducted from the employee's regular pay at an agreed upon amount with the supervisor and Sr. Pastor. Repayment will not take longer than 12 months and must be repaid prior to the employee leaving employment. If reimbursements are made directly to the employee, this payment may be considered taxable income, and the employee should consult with a tax advisor for IRS information.

E. Assistance/Reimbursement Limits:

A maximum of \$1500 per semester, or \$4500 per calendar year (in cases with schools having 3 terms/yr) can be reimbursed or given as assistance.

F. Commitment to the Church:

The employee who has received funding through the Tuition Policy will also agree and sign the acknowledgment below to remain an employee at SCUMC in the current or different job position for 1 year for each year that the church pays. This continued employment commitment, per this outlined policy, BEGINS after graduation of the student/employee. If the employee resigns or is terminated by the church prior to this commitment, the funding equal to the time remaining will be expected to be paid back to the church, and possibly remaining paycheck(s) forfeited.

I have read and understand this Tuition Policy of Signal Crest UMC, and agree to the terms as stated above.

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Employee Signature

Employee Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Job Title

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair, SPR Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior Pastor, SCUMC