

## Distance Education Fees Mississippi State University

Dr. Steve Taylor, Interim Director of the Center for Distance Education met with Staff Council on October 10, 2012, to discuss distance education fees for Mississippi State employees. The following information was shared during the discussion.

Policy HRM #60-225 regulates tuition remission for MSU employees (<http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/PDF/60225.pdf>). **The Tuition Remission Program does not include course fees; therefore, distance learning fees are paid by the employee.** HRM #60-225 was revised in 2007 and renewed without revision in October of this year.

Distance courses require additional technological infrastructure, which makes them more expensive to deliver than face-to-face instruction. **Beginning in fall 2012, a \$25 per credit hour “Instructional Support Fee” was added to all distance courses to cover the technology costs.**

In addition to the system-wide “Instructional Support Fee,” the fees of distance courses at MSU vary across college and program of study. The total fees for a distance class may also include different combinations and amounts of “Distance Fees” and “Other Fees.” **Currently, the total fees for a 3-hour distance course could be as low as \$75 or as high as \$672.** The complete distance learning course fees schedule for the fall 2012 semester is located at the following link.

[http://www.controller.msstate.edu/docs/Distance\\_Education\\_Fee\\_Table\\_Fall\\_2012\\_1.pdf](http://www.controller.msstate.edu/docs/Distance_Education_Fee_Table_Fall_2012_1.pdf) The spring 2013 semester fee schedule is at the following link.

[http://www.controller.msstate.edu/docs/distance\\_education\\_fee\\_table\\_spring\\_2013.pdf](http://www.controller.msstate.edu/docs/distance_education_fee_table_spring_2013.pdf)

**A specific area of concern discussed with Dr. Taylor was the cost of courses for MSU-Starkville employees enrolled in the distance Master of Business Administration (MBA) program.** Currently, MSU employees at the Starkville campus who are in the distance MBA program only have to pay the \$75 “Instructional Support Fee” to enroll in a 3-hour class. If a proposed repeal of the “local student exemption” is enacted and the fee structure and tuition remission policy remains constant, in the spring 2013 semester, these employees will see the costs of taking a 3-hour distance MBA class increase from \$75 to \$822 (\$249/hr distance fee and \$25/hr instructional support fee). It is recognized that this will drastically alter the cost of completing a degree in the distance MBA program for MSU staff at the Starkville campus.

Staff Council appreciates the University’s continued commitment to encourage staff to further their education while employed at MSU. Furthermore, given the complexity of the topic of distance education fees and its potential to impact the costs for some staff to continue their chosen program of study while employed at MSU, Staff Council appreciates the University continuing to review the fee structure for distance courses.