

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Office of Academic Affairs

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To: Academic deans, directors, and department heads
From: Myron Allen, Bill Gern
Subject: Update on possible uses of released-time funds
Date: 3 April 2012
Copies: Dorothy Yates, Kathleen Miller, Jonnie Jenkins, Kathie Hull, Shannyn Adkins

This memo describes a change in the allowable uses of released-time accounts. The change should provide more flexibility than the rules that have been in place heretofore.

Because of changes in the management of released time, implemented at the start of the current fiscal year, academic units may now have positive balances in two types of released-time accounts:

- **Old accounts.** These normally contain section-2 funds accumulated before FY 2012. During that period, the most common practice for releasing employees from regular duties was to continue paying their salaries and benefits from their normal funding sources and to transfer dollars from grant budgets into unit-level accounts managed by department heads, deans, and directors.
- **New accounts.** These contain section-1 funds¹ freed and transferred into unit-level accounts when employees have been released from regular duties. The freed funds arise when employees have their salaries and benefits paid from contracts and grants for a period of time.

Earlier restrictions required that released-time funds be used only for compensation: salary, benefits, GA stipends, and the like. These restrictions no longer apply. Henceforth:

1. **You must replace the duties in question.** If funds have been transferred to a released-time account through the release of an employee from regular duties, the academic unit must replace the duties. There must be an expenditure of released-time funds to pay for the replacement. The expenditure need not equal the amount freed by the release of duties.
2. **Beyond that, no special restrictions apply.** The *unobligated residual funds* remaining after the replacement of duties may be used for any allowable purpose, including compensation, equipment, supplies, travel, and other legitimate academic needs.

Two caveats apply. First, academic units must document both the released duties that generate the money transferred to released-time accounts and the expenditures made to replace those duties. From time to time, the Office of Academic Affairs will ask department- and college-level business managers for this documentation, to confirm that UW's practices comply with federal regulations. Accompanying this memo is a sample excel file that can serve as a simple template for documenting the management of released-time accounts.

Second, we urge department heads, deans, and directors to direct their expenditures toward needs most highly aligned with the academic mission and with strategic planning directions. Traditional uses of unobligated residual released-time funds — support for graduate assistants, postdoctoral associates, visiting faculty members, summer research, and other forms of compensation — can have strong positive impacts on a department's scholarly program.

¹The section-1 funds in question are tuition revenues and other monies from the UW Income Fund, so they are not subject to end-of-biennium use-it-or-lose-it constraints.