I. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Policy

In the course of carrying out job responsibilities, many employees may need to rely on cellular phones and related devices. Thus, use of university funds for cellular phones and service is allowed. Simple convenience is not a criterion for such expenses. Expenses may be authorized if at least one of the following criteria is met:

1. The job function of the employee (during the employee’s normal working hours) requires considerable time outside of the assigned office or work area and it is important to the University that the employee is accessible during this time.

2. The job function of the employee requires them to be accessible outside of scheduled or normal working hours (while at home, out of town, etc.)

B. University owned cell plans

Cellular phones and related devices are provided to improve customer service and to enhance business efficiencies. University owned cell phones should only be provided to employees who have a substantial business need and meet one of the criteria mentioned above. Possessing a university owned cell phone is a privilege and all employees are expected to use it responsibly. Misuse of your university owned cell phone will result in its revocation and possible disciplinary action, up to and including discharge and/or criminal charges.

C. Personally owned cell plans

A cell phone allowance may be authorized for employees who use their personal cell phone for university business and meets one of the criteria mentioned above. The recommended allowance is $30.00, $40.00 or $50.00 per month based on individual job requirements. The allowance should reasonably represent the cost of the business use and may not exceed the amount actually paid by the employee for the service. An allowance in excess of $50.00 may only be approved by the appropriate vice president.

D. General policies

All requests for a university owned cell phone or an allowance for business use of a personally owned cell phone must be approved by the employee’s supervisor. No employee may approve his/her own cell service allowance/benefit.

Each department may add additional stipulations regarding their department’s use of cell phones, plan limitations, allowance determinations, equipment, etc., at their discretion, with the approval of the appropriate vice president. No conditions specified herein may be set aside.

If an employee receiving an allowance no longer uses his/her personal phone for university business, the supervisor is responsible to make sure the payroll department is informed so that the allowance will be discontinued.
Employees who do not have a university owned cell phone and do not receive an allowance may be reimbursed only for specific business calls made on their personal cell phone. The calls must be detailed and documented with the related invoice in order to be reimbursed.

II. TAXATION OF ALLOWANCE/BENEFIT

A. University owned cell plans
   The fair market value of the provided service and equipment will not be added to the employee’s compensation as a taxable benefit provided 1) there is a substantial business need to have a university cell phone and, 2) provision of a University cell phone is not compensatory in nature (i.e. — the cell phone is not provided in lieu of additional salary or wages).

B. Personally owned cell plans
   The cell phone allowance will be paid through payroll and will be added to the employee’s compensation on a monthly basis. All applicable payroll taxes will be applied to the allowance amount. This allowance does not increase the employee’s base salary and will not be included in the calculation of any university benefits, such as pension.

Those who use a personally owned cell phone for business use may be able to deduct the business portion of their bill as a miscellaneous itemized deduction on their federal income tax return. However, miscellaneous itemized deductions are deductible only to the extent they exceed 2% of adjusted gross income. The employee is responsible to document the business vs. personal use. Please see your personal tax advisor for additional information.