

Business Office Procedures (updated 1/2014)

Budgets: Account director receives, at the beginning of the fiscal year, online access to their office budget. Listed thereon are all funds available for the various line items in the budget. Through the online system, directors can view account balances and transactions posted to each account under their direction.

The Business Office supervises the accounting of expenditures made by all areas of the college. Disbursements are made only if they have been properly authorized for payment, and as funds are available in the college budget. Monthly budget reports are distributed to sector vice-presidents. Account directors are expected to manage their programs within the approved budget allocation.

Purchasing Procedures: Account directors are given the authority to make purchases costing up to \$1,000 as needed for their department. It is their responsibility to make all purchases within their budgetary limits. Purchases costing more than \$1,000 require the approval of the sector vice president. Sector vice presidents can request an alternative limit of \$5,000 for an account director, which if approved by the Vice President for Business Affairs, will be granted.

At least three (3) bids or quotations should be documented and retained by the department for all items costing \$2,500 or more. Once bids have been secured, the selected bid order should be forwarded to the appropriate vice president for approval. This requirement can be facilitated by the college's purchasing clerk in the Business Office.

Purchases should be made and processed using the below procedures:

Purchasing Cards (p-cards) – Purchase cards are the first choice payment option for purchases costing less than \$2,500. Card holders must access the p-card software system within five business days after the close of each reporting cycle to review/approve transactions, make sure budget account numbers are accurate, and enter transaction descriptions. Monthly "Expense Reports with Tax" are to be printed each month, signed by the card holder and supervisor, and submitted to the Business Office along with supporting documentation within nine business days after the end of each reporting cycle. Reporting cycles typically end of the 26th of each month.

P-cards may also be used for purchases costing more than \$2,500 when practical and approved by the cardholder supervisor. The college's Purchasing Clerk must be informed of such purchases so that the single purchase transaction limit of the card can be temporarily increased. Each purchasing card has a monthly purchase dollar limit. This limit may be temporarily increased with supervisor approval when circumstances warrant such an increase (such as spring term or alternative break travel). The Purchasing Clerk should be contacted so that the change can be made.

Direct Billing to the College – When a p-card is not available or not accepted by the vendor, orders may be placed with a direct billing to the college. Vendors should be instructed to include on the invoice the name/department of the person placing the order, and send the invoice directly to the college accounts payable office. The accounts payable clerk will forward a copy of the invoice to the appropriate person/department for approval and budgetary account number designation. Approval may be entered on the invoice copy and returned to the accounts payable clerk, or emailed to the accounts payable clerk.

All appropriate steps are to be taken to assure that Alma College does not knowingly enter purchase commitments that could result in a conflict of interest. Questionable situations should be addressed with the Controller/Director of Business Services.

If at any time a vendor has not fulfilled the requirements to initiate payment, please contact Accounts Payable to make them aware of the situation. The Business Office will do whatever it can to help get any issues with the vendor resolved.

Travel Expenses: Reasonable and necessary business-related expenses incurred by employees while traveling on Alma College business are paid by the college. In most cases this is done on a reimbursement basis or by using a college p-card. There are numerous cases where the Business Office pays charges directly to the vendor in advance. The fundamentals of expense account policy are simple common sense. If an employee travels on college business, he/she will be reimbursed within the college travel policies for his/her travel expenses. As with any other expenditure, the college expects to receive value for the expenditure. Travel and entertainment must be intended to accomplish specific business objectives and those objectives should be documented on the expense and/or p-card report. The college purchasing clerk is available to assist employees in making travel reservations.

Air Travel: As a rule, all air travel on behalf of the college shall be coach. The "lowest logical airfare" (even including stopovers or connecting flights) shall be pursued with the travel agency/airline prior to departure. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of saver discounts when they make sense.

Hotel: Employees should stay at moderately priced hotels or book through travel agencies that offer corporate rates. The college encourages the use of our negotiated discount program through one of the following hotel chains:

- 1. Choice Hotels International** (Sleep Inn, Comfort Inn, Quality Inn, Clarion, Econolodge, Roadway Inn and Friendship Inn) - Our corporate membership number is 00947768 and will result in either a 15% or 20% discount for all reservations booked through the toll free number 1-800-258-2847.

- 2. Wyndham Hotel Group** (Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, Days Inn, RamadaWorldwide, Super 8, Wingate by Wyndham, Baymont Inns and Suites, Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham, Microtel Inns and Suites, Howard Johnson, Travelodge, and Knights Inn) - Our college account ID number is 1000007780 and our affiliate ID number is 000095. Alma College employees will receive a discount of up to 20% off the “Best Available Rate”. Reservations may be made by calling 1-800-525-5501 or by accessing one of the following web sites:

Wyndam Hotels and Resorts:

<http://www.wyndam.com/rates/main.wnt?corporateid=1000007780>

All brand except Wyndam Hotels and Resorts:

<https://wr.wyndamrewards.com/WyndamRewards/control/advancedsearch?clientaccount2=1000007780&affilid=0000095>

- 3. InterContinental Hotels Group** (Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Stay Bridge, Candlewood, Crowne Plaza, and InterContinental) – Our corporate ID number is 100291697. Access through the web at <http://www.ihg.com/hotels/us/en/reservation>.

In addition, through discussions with the Marriott chain, they have identified that we are eligible for a corporate rate if requested upon making the reservation. These vary by hotel but should be somewhere in the range of 5 to 26% off the published book rates. When making reservations at other hotels, please ask if there are corporate rates available. They may be able to give you a discount under one of their existing programs.

Employees are encouraged to select a hotel close to their destination with sensitivity to hotel accommodations, cost, mileage, and stewardship of time.

Reasonable tips for hotel baggage handling are allowable.

Car Rental: Only if extensive travel is required should a car rental be necessary. Optional insurance coverage should be waived as college policies provide adequate coverage. Be sure to refuel before returning in order to avoid surcharges. College insurance information is available from the Business Office.

Alma College has entered into an agreement with Enterprise for your car rental needs. The college purchasing clerk will place your reservation. You will need to provide basic information such as pick up location, length of time needed, name and driver’s license number for each driver, quantity and types of vehicles needed, and the budget number to charge. You will be provided a confirmation number for your reservation that you should present when you pick up the vehicle(s). Charges will be billed

directly to the college. You do not need to pay cash or use a credit card to pay for the rental costs.

Expense Advances: Most travel expenses can be paid for using a college p-card. For those who do not have an Alma College p-card, a travel advance up to the amount of anticipated reimbursable expenses for the trip may be requested in advance from the Business Office. Travel advance requests should be submitted to the Business Office by 5:00 p.m. on Friday in order to receive a check the following Friday. A travel advance should be requested on a regular requisition form with your supervisor's approval. Such advances are accounted for in the trip expense report. Only one advance per person may be outstanding at any given time.

Expense Reports: These must have the approval of the employee's respective supervisors or department chairs. They may be submitted at the end of the trip or at the end of each month, but no later than 30 days after the date of the expenditure. Any reimbursement requests submitted 30 days or longer after the expense is incurred may not be reimbursed.

Meals and Beverages: Business meals are defined as meals taken with students, colleagues or donors during which specific college-related business discussion take place, or meals due to college-related travel. Individuals should show prudence and fiscal responsibility when deciding upon a restaurant. Overly expensive restaurants should be avoided unless circumstances provide that it is appropriate and approval is obtained from the appropriate vice president. Please note: Hamilton Commons or the College Corner restaurant should be used whenever possible and appropriate.

Alma College will pay for up to the following meal amounts for employees traveling on Alma College business:

Breakfast	\$10.00
Lunch	\$15.00
Dinner	\$25.00

These amounts are inclusive of tips. If an employee is traveling for an entire day, where the employee is entitled to reimbursement for all three meals, it is acceptable to use the total daily amount of \$50.00 in a different combination than noted above. For example, it would be permissible to spend \$5.00 each on breakfast and lunch and \$40.00 on dinner. These amounts are for reimbursable meal expenses only and are not simply allowances for being away to be used on other personal expenditures. Meals already paid for by the college as part of conference fees are not reimbursable. Complimentary continental breakfasts should be taken advantage of if possible and are not reimbursable.

The above per diem amounts may not be satisfactory when traveling to certain major cities. In such cases the college will cover the per diem costs as stipulated in federal

regulatory guidance. To obtain these amounts go to www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120 and enter the city and state to which you will be traveling. Click on the “Meals and Incidental Expenses” column to obtain the daily rate for meals.

When expensing meals, please note the following:

- Detachable tabs from dinner checks are not considered valid receipts and will not be accepted. A register receipt or a copy of the dinner check must be submitted.
- Tips may not exceed 20% of the cost of the meal.
- Reimbursement for any alcohol purchases while on college business must be approved by the sector vice president and follow the college alcohol policy.
- All meals should be entered under the correct date in the corresponding category (breakfast, lunch, dinner). If there are multiple receipts for one meal, please list each separately (do not add them together).
- Receipts should describe who attended and the business purpose. This information can be written on the back of the receipt itself or on the expense or p-card report.
- The college will pay for breakfast charges for employees beginning their travel prior to 7:00 a.m. The college will not cover breakfast charges for travel beginning after 7:00 a.m. Likewise, the college will not cover dinner charges for employees returning prior to 7:00 p.m., but will cover dinner charges for individuals returning after 7:00 p.m.

Parking, Toll Roads and Bridges: Expenses for these items are covered by the college subject to the receipt requirements below.

Entertainment: If an employee entertains others for a good business reason, the college will cover the cost for those expenses. The cost in these cases is not subject to the meal and beverage maximums. The expense reimbursement or p-card report must include the person(s) entertained, the location, and the business purpose. As with any other expenditure, the college expects to receive value for the expenditure. If there are any questions on the use of college funds for entertaining expenses, the employee is encouraged to consult the sector vice president ahead of time.

Receipt Requirements: Receipts must be provided for all meal expenses, lodging expenses or any other expenditure. If the expenditure is made using a college purchasing card, receipts are only required for purchases costing \$20.00 or more. Lodging expense must be supported by a detailed billing statement. Airline ticket stubs are required for substantiation of airline charges. Credit card receipts or printed cash register tapes are required for meals and other expenses. When prior arrangements are made with the Business Office, certain hand logs or per-diem allowances may be allowed. These arrangements are made primarily for group travel programs.

Auto Expenses: Employees are encouraged to use college vehicles when available. Employees may be authorized to use personal cars for occasional travel on College

business. They will be reimbursed at the current college rate (\$0.50 starting 1/1/13) which may change annually. Mileage between home and the office is considered personal mileage and is not reimbursable. Employees with a college vehicle assigned to them are not eligible for reimbursement of mileage on their personal car. The college does not provide any insurance on personal vehicles, even when used for college business.

Gasoline Reimbursement Policy: These are for relevant scenarios as outlined below:

- A. Motor Pool Car - The department is charged a rate per mile and the college pays for all gas. This is best done with a college p-card. A mileage log is required.
- B. “Permanently” Assigned College Car - A number of employees have a college-owned vehicle on an ongoing basis. The college will pay for the gasoline for all miles traveled in this vehicle. Employees are to reimburse the College \$.12 (or the current rate established by the Vice President for Business Affairs) per personal mile at the end of the month with the mileage log as a means to reimburse the college for personal gasoline. Miles for commuting to and from work are considered personal miles. The rate per mile may change periodically.
- C. Use of Personal Car - The employee is reimbursed on a per mile basis at the current college rate, which includes the understanding that the employee will pay for his/her own gasoline expenses. Reimbursable miles are reported on the Travel Reimbursement form.
- D. Vehicle Allowance - The employee is given an allowance toward vehicle expenses. The employee is then responsible to pay all vehicle costs, with the exception of gasoline for business miles. In case of business miles, trip information will be required as if it was a business trip on a personal vehicle.

Employees living Outside the Area: Periodically, it is to the mutual benefit of the college and an individual to have the employee reside in a part of the state that is removed from the mid-Michigan area, to include areas such as Detroit, Grand Rapids, Traverse City, Chicago, etc. In these cases, the college travel policies will be somewhat different than they are for employees living in the area.

The college will pay for overnight accommodations in Alma when it is necessary that the employee stay overnight in this area. This may be provided on campus, or at an off campus hotel at the discretion of the department director. Meals while commuting here, commuting back home, or while here will be at the employee’s expense. The mileage to and from home will be considered personal mileage and treated as such under the college mileage reimbursement policy. The college will pay for the cost of a phone line in the employee’s home, and for any business long distance calls. The college may decide it is advantageous to provide some college-owned equipment for the employee to use in the home in these cases. These will be handled on a case by case basis by the sector vice president. If the vice president does approve this type of

arrangement, the equipment is to be inventoried and a copy of the inventory placed in the employee's personnel file.

Other: Expenses for hotels, meals, etc. beyond the business purpose of the trip are personal expenses and therefore are not covered by the college. The exception to this would be in the case of an airfare super saver where the airfare savings are greater than the additional costs of extending the stay.

One personal phone call is allowed at college expense if the employee is gone from home on college business for five or more consecutive days. In lieu of a dollar limit on this call, employees are encouraged to use reasonable judgment (5-10 minutes) or a cell phone.

Some employees own personal cell phones and occasionally choose to use those for college business calls. It is appropriate for the employee to be reimbursed for the charges related to that individual business call. These reimbursements may include airtime, long distance charges and/or roaming charges.

These policies are for employee expenses only. Additional expenses incurred for a spouse or guest is the responsibility of the individual.

Vendor Payments: Payment to vendors for merchandise, services and travel requests will be made by the Business Office each Friday. These claims must be submitted to the Business Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the check date.

Sales Tax: Alma College is exempt from sales tax. When making purchases you need to have with you and show our sales tax exempt certificate. Individuals will not be reimbursed for sales tax charges. You can obtain sales tax certification off the college portal, or by contacting the Business Office. When traveling many states require a state-specific sales tax certificate. Many of these are available on the college portal. The Business Office can assist you in obtaining certificates for other states.

Wage Payments: Payment is made according to your signed contract. Employees have the option of receiving their pay on a payroll debit card, or direct deposited to their bank account. Payment advices will be distributed from the Business Office or available on the college portal every other Friday for hourly employees and on the 30th of each month for salary employees.

Amounts withheld for various purposes (health insurance premium, employee retirement contribution, charitable contributions, etc.) will be deducted from the amount of the monthly paycheck, upon written authorization of the employee. In the event of an emergency, a staff member may request a payroll advance by written memorandum addressed to the Vice President for Business Affairs. The request for an advance of salary must be in the hands of the Payroll Specialist no later than the 20th

of the month. Salary advances are considered loans and an interest charge will normally be applied.

Gifts/Awards: Gifts and awards given by the college to employees are typically considered taxable income and thus must be treated as compensation, subject to required payroll tax withholding, and reported on the employee's Form W-2.

Cashier Deposit(s): Deposits of cash or check to a budget line and or restricted account should include a cash receipt information form completely filled out. All gift money should go directly to the Advancement Office.

Outstanding Obligations: The Business Office reserves the right to withhold voucher payments (payments other than payroll) for employees who have outstanding obligations with the college, i.e., unsettled travel advances, overdue library books, parking fines, etc.

Personnel File Policy

Personnel Files: The College maintains personnel files on faculty, administrators, and support staff as a source of information for effective administration, employee development, and to comply with various federal and state laws and regulations.

Contents of Personnel Files: The term "personnel file" means all files which are used or have been used to determine the employee's qualifications for employment, tenure, promotion, transfer, additional compensation, termination, or other disciplinary action.

The personnel file will not include information concerning an employee's associations, political activities, publications or communications not related to the employee's employment, unless (1) the employee authorizes the College to keep such records, or (2) the activities occur on the college's premises or during working hours and they interfere with the employee's duties.

Access to Personnel Files: An employee may, upon written request, review his/her personnel file no more than twice per year (unless authorized by the sector Vice president). An appointment time will be established within two working days after the request has been received.

An employee will be allowed access to all items, except confidential letters of reference or records of the employee relating to the investigation of a possible criminal offense. The term "confidential letters of reference" means confidential, written communications, including written notes of telephone or person-to-person conversations, concerning the qualifications of a prospective or current employee for employment, tenure, promotion, awards, additional