



PROFESSIONAL LEAVE AT GEORGIA COLLEGE

Adopted by University Senate
February 2006

PURPOSE

The purpose of professional leave is to refresh and reinvigorate tenured faculty members; to improve, through appropriate activity, the academic qualifications and teaching competence of the faculty; to encourage productive scholarly research; and to stimulate contributions of high caliber in the future that will enhance the stature of both the individual and the University.

POLICY

Georgia College policy on faculty development requires that a program of ongoing faculty development opportunities be implemented and monitored by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. In addition to more traditional professional development, such as funding to support the dissemination of research/creative activities, or workshops to enhance abilities and skills associated with the work of faculty, a program of faculty development should include opportunities for professional leave. A Faculty Professional Leave Program recognizes that continuing faculty excellence, supportive of the profession and the reputation of the University, requires periodic opportunities for respite from normal academic responsibilities so that faculty may be refreshed through suitable enterprises they may choose to pursue during the leave.

Differentiation from Related Programs:

- The Professional Leave Program is intended to be separate and distinct from other programs or leaves of absence available through state or federal laws. Leaves granted for visiting professorships, consultantships, and work on advanced degrees are not necessarily covered by this leave program (unless requested by the faculty concerned and approved as such by the dean and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs), and the granting of leave shall not be restricted because a faculty member has had other such types of leave granted previously.
- The payment of normal professional leave compensation is based upon the assumption that the individual receiving the leave will not sell his or her services or be employed elsewhere during the leave period. However, a fellowship or scholarship and/or a travel grant that does not conflict with the intent of the professional leave may be accepted. Research grants, fellowships, and other positions that do require service may be accepted only after the approval of the department chair, dean, and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs of the University. This is to assure that the period of the leave will be used for the intended purposes.

Conditions for the Granting of Professional Leave:

1. Eligibility

- a. Any tenured member of the instructional staff of the University holding the rank of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor who has a minimum of six years of full-time tenured and /or tenure-track service shall be eligible for professional leave. No semester spent on leave can be counted as part of the required six years. At the Dean's discretion, a faculty member may be excused from teaching for a semester and still have that semester count toward the six years so long as he or she remains in residence and performs other university duties. Otherwise, any exceptions to the six-year rule must be approved by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- b. Except in the case of the kind of time extension described under Procedures, item 9, of this policy, a minimum of six years in residence must elapse following the completion of a sabbatical leave before the same faculty member would again be eligible for professional leave.
- c. The acceptance of a professional leave automatically commits the faculty member to return for a minimum of one academic year of teaching or other appropriate functions at Georgia College. Should the faculty member decide to leave the university within that one-year period, he or she shall reimburse the University for the pro-rata share of his or her obligation.

2. Compensation:

- a. A faculty member may apply for and be granted either one full academic year or one-half academic year of leave. If one full academic year is granted, the rate of compensation from the University shall be one-half of the faculty member's regular salary for the academic year.

If one-half academic year is granted, the rate of compensation shall be the individual's full pay for the period of the leave (one-half of the individual's full academic year salary). The administration will establish the salary rate that would have been in effect without the leave, and this rate will be used to compute the professional leave compensation.
- b. While on leave the faculty member may not engage in other regular remunerative service unless specifically authorized to do so by the department chair, dean, and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, or unless the activity is described in the accepted request for leave.

PROCEDURES

1. An eligible faculty member desiring a professional leave shall submit a formal application to the department chair. The department chair reviews and makes a recommendation to the dean of the college or director of the library.
2. The application must be submitted by October 15th of any year for a leave to begin the following academic year (example: application is due by October 15, 2011 for professional leave that will commence in fall 2012, spring 2013, or the span the entire 2012 AY).
3. The individual's application must contain a statement of plans for the use of the leave period, and may also contain pertinent supporting documents such as records of publication, grants received, etc., if a research program is planned.
4. The department chair's recommendation, if supportive of the application, shall contain specific information as to how the workload of the member on professional leave will be handled during his or her absence.
5. The dean shall consider the applications and recommend to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs by November 1, for leaves to begin the following Academic year and all applicants shall be informed in writing of the disposition of their requests at the collegiate/library level by the dean/director. In reaching his or her conclusions, the dean/director should be guided by considerations of seniority, demonstrated academic superiority of the applicants and potential for growth, adequate distribution of leaves among the various disciplines, and the needs of the college. In the awarding of any faculty leave, both the welfare of the academic unit and individual faculty opportunities will be preserved. Approved applications will be forwarded to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs with a cover letter from the dean indicating support.
6. If the number of leave requests exceeds the budgeted support for professional leave in any given year, then the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may forward the applications to a faculty advisory committee for ranking. Advisory Committee recommendations are made to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the President, shall accept or reject the recommendations of the deans and/or the Advisory Committee by December 1st, for professional leaves to begin the following fiscal year.
7. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall inform in writing all persons recommended for leaves and the dean whether such leaves will be granted. In reaching a decision, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will be guided by the following considerations: the availability of adequate funding to support leaves, the recommendation of the dean (and, when applicable Advisory Committee), the distribution of professional leaves among the colleges /library, the needs of the institution and the welfare of the department/college and individual faculty applicant. While the distribution of leave does not have to be equal between colleges every year, in general the goal will be to fund the equivalent of at least four professional leaves per year. Upon Presidential approval, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

will notify the USG office using the prescribed reporting mechanism. A faculty member whose request for professional leave is rejected by his or her dean may appeal the decision in writing to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The decisions of the President (or the President's designee) are final.

8. The recipient of professional leave shall, within one month of returning to the university, make a report in writing to the dean of his or her college outlining the accomplishments of the leave. A copy of the report will be sent to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs to be added to the personnel file (note: if the recipient has received a grant, the report should be copied to both the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and to the Office of Grants and Contracts). Failure to produce the required report will impact the individual's ability to qualify a second professional leave later in his/her career.
9. Although the constraints outlined under "Eligibility" of this procedure, must be observed, professional leaves are to be awarded regardless of the size of the department. If the faculty member's normal workload cannot be absorbed within the department of discipline, a temporary replacement will be provided by the college. However, when the welfare of the academic unit is at stake, the dean, with sufficient notice and with the concurrence of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, may require the faculty member to reschedule his or her leave, on the condition that such a delay would in no way lengthen the calendar under which the faculty member becomes eligible to apply for subsequent sabbatical leaves.

The authority to grant exception to one or more of these policies and procedures is vested with the President of the University or his/her delegated representative.