

Implementing Procedures for Towson University Policy on Leave Without Pay for Faculty (02-02.20)

Application for Faculty Leave of Absence without Pay

An eligible faculty member applying for a leave of absence without pay must complete **Section I of the Application for Faculty Leave of Absence without Pay** (available in the TU Forms Repository and on the Office of the Provost website) and submit the application to the department chairperson at least six months in advance of the start of the proposed leave.

Leave requests that are professional in nature (not personal or health-related) must include a justification explaining why the leave is in the best interests of the university and how it will increase the teaching effectiveness or scholarly productivity of the individual. It should also specify what the faculty member will be doing while on leave and from where the faculty member will be receiving compensation, if any.

Leave requests that are personal in nature will require explanation and may also require supporting documentation. Leave requests that are health-related will require coordination with the Office of Human Resources.

Exceptions for notification of less than six months in advance may be made at the discretion of the Provost. Exceptions will generally be granted if reason for leave is unknown to the faculty member six months in advance.

Approval of Faculty Application for Leave of Absence without Pay

Within ten business days of receipt, the department chairperson completes **Section II of the Application for Faculty Leave of Absence without Pay** and forwards the application to the dean of the college. Within ten business days of receipt of the application, the college dean completes **Section III of the Application for Faculty Leave of Absence without Pay** and forwards the application to the Office of the Provost. The Provost makes the final decision, which will be communicated to the faculty member, the department chair, and the college dean within ten business days of receipt of the application. The completed form will be returned to the department of the faculty member applying for leave.

Benefits, Service Credit, Tenure, and Sabbatical Information

The Maryland State Retirement and Pension System provides members who are on a qualified leave of absence with survivor benefit coverage and the ability to purchase additional service credit. Types of qualifying leave include personal illness, birth or legal adoption of a child, government sponsored and/or subsidized employment, and career-related study.

Participants in an Optional Retirement Plan (ORP), including Fidelity Investments or TIAA, cannot purchase service credit. Therefore, time on an unpaid leave of absence is not credited toward years of service for retirement purposes. Years of service are used to calculate eligibility for the retiree health benefits subsidy.

Prior to the start of the leave, which has been approved by the Provost, the member must complete a *Qualified Leave of Absence Request* form, available in the Office of Human Resources (OHR) or on the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System website

(<http://www.sra.state.md.us/Participants/Members/Downloads/PrintForms.aspx>).

The member must submit the form, along with supporting documentation, to the OHR for review and approval.

- Members of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System may purchase membership service credit for the term of the approved qualified leave of absence during the required timeframe of their retirement system, provided they have completed a *Qualified Leave of Absence Request* form prior to the leave.
- Members of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System who separate employment after an approved qualified leave of absence ends have 60 days from the expiration of the leave of absence to purchase eligible service credit.

Prior to going on leave, the faculty member must contact the OHR to discuss options for continued participation in retirement, medical and health programs, and other benefit programs to the extent they are permitted.

Credit of the time to the accrual requirements for tenure or sabbatical leave shall be granted only upon prior written approval of the Provost, as outlined in related policies.

Return to Duties/Separation

Faculty members on leave without pay are expected to maintain contact with the University during periods of leave and to return to their duties mid-August in the time frame designated in the *Application for Faculty Leave of Absence without Pay*. Faculty must affirm their return to their department chair in writing by May 1 (for faculty returning in a fall semester) or December 1 (for faculty returning in a spring semester) prior to the semester in which they will return. Otherwise, faculty will be separated from the university as of May 31 (for faculty returning in a fall semester) or December 31 (for faculty returning in a spring semester).

In circumstances beyond the faculty member's control (e.g., illness, a death in the family, circumstances with faculty members overseas, or emergency situations) exceptions to these notification deadlines may be granted at the discretion of the Provost.