

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to meet the objectives of faculty development as outlined in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 51, to provide a sound program of faculty development leaves of absence designed to enable the faculty member to engage in professional development, study, research, writing, and similar projects for the purpose of adding to the knowledge available to the faculty member, the students, and the institution. Faculty Development Leaves shall be awarded on the basis of merit and are subject to the availability of funding.

2. GENERAL PROVISIONS

2.01 Eligible Faculty

- a. For purposes of this policy, "eligible faculty" means a person who is employed by Sam Houston State University on a full-time basis as a member of the tenured faculty or tenured professional librarians at the time of application for leave. This term does not include a person employed in a position that is in the institution's classified personnel system.
- b. Tenured faculty members are eligible for a Faculty Development Leave when the starting date of the leave occurs after completion of:
 - (1) five (5) consecutive years of service with Sam Houston State University;
 - (2) a minimum of five (5) consecutive years of service with Sam Houston State University since completing their last Faculty Development Leave, and as outlined in this policy; and
 - (3) acceptable reports from all previous development leaves, if any, have been submitted to their chair.
- c. Exceptions to the above provisions are presented in Section 6.

2.02 Funding

- a. Faculty Development Leaves may be funded from the appropriations specifically for that purpose or from such other funds as might be available to the institution or college (Tex. Educ. Code 51.105).
- b. Not more than six percent (6%) of the faculty members of any institution of higher education may be on Faculty Developmental Leaves at any one time (Tex. Educ. Code 51.106). Practically, the available funding permits a much smaller percentage of available faculty leaves.

2.03 The Faculty Development Leave Committee (FDLC) shall consist of nine (9) tenured faculty members, including one (1) representative from each of the eight (8) colleges and one (1) representative from the Newton Gresham Library. The President makes all appointments from University Faculty Senate nominations. The committee annually elects the chair. Committee members serve three-year terms expiring at the end of the fiscal year. The Faculty Development Leave Committee acts only in an advisory capacity to the Provost and Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs. It makes recommendations but makes no awards in its own right.

2.04 The Provost may recommend to the President a Faculty Development Leave when, in their judgment, to do so is in the best interest of the University.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

3.01 Tenured faculty submit application materials to the chair/director of the faculty member's academic unit. Chairs/directors will have at least seven (7) days to forward leave application materials to their academic dean or, for the Newton Gresham Library, to the executive director of the Newton Gresham Library with comments and a score.

3.02 Application Guidelines

- a. Applicants should write for a multidisciplinary audience and explain their work in clear language aimed at non-specialists.
- b. Applicants should explain clearly why leave from regularly assigned duties is required for the proposed work.
- c. Applicants should include a CV which highlights related work, presents propensity for success, and describes current works in progress.

- d. Applicants who have received faculty development leave previously should also provide a brief description of what was proposed and what was completed during their previous leave.
- e. Applicants should include external letters of support.

3.03 Calendar

- a. The first Monday of October – Deadline for applicants to submit their completed application packet to the chair/director of their academic unit. A Faculty Development Leave application packet is attached to this policy.
- b. The second Monday of October – Deadline for the chair/director to verify the applicants' eligibility, provide comments and a score, and forward application packets to the office of the dean/executive director.
- c. The third Monday of October – Deadline for the dean/executive director to review and provide comments and a score on the application packets. The dean/executive director should forward the application packet, along with comments, to the Office of the Provost.
- d. The fourth Monday of October – Deadline for the Office of the Provost to forward complete application packets to each member of the FDLC.
- e. The fourth Monday in November – Deadline for FDLC to forward comments and rankings to the Office of the Provost.
- f. The second Monday of December – Deadline for the Provost to forward completed packets and FDLC recommendations to the deans/executive director. Only application materials unfunded by the Provost, but recommended by the FDLC, will be forwarded to their respective dean's/executive director's office for consideration of funding.
- g. The third Monday in December – Deadline for the deans/executive director to forward to the Provost all applications that they recommend for Faculty Development Leave funded by the college.
- h. The second Monday in January – Deadline for the Provost to forward completed packets and recommendations to the Office of the President.

- i. The fourth Monday in January – Deadline for all faculty members that submitted applications for developmental leave to be notified in writing, with copies to their respective deans/executive director, of the acceptance or rejection of their application. Faculty members may contact the Office of the Provost to view file comments.

3.04 To be considered for future Faculty Development Leaves, applicants not receiving leaves must submit updated applications for reconsideration for any succeeding semester(s).

4. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT LEAVE COMMITTEE

4.01 Duties

The FDLC will use the evaluation form found in the application packet to provide ranking scores and comments for each application packet to the Office of the Provost.

4.02 Ranking Criteria

- a. Eligible faculty interested in academic or professional pursuits on-campus or off-campus to study pedagogy, conduct research or creative activities, develop writing projects, conduct field observation, and/or enhance their discipline are encouraged to apply for development leaves.
- b. The following general criteria will be used by the FDLC to evaluate the application:
 - (1) The applicant presents a comprehensive and feasible scheme of work that will enhance the applicant's knowledge and ability in terms of professional training, teaching, scholarship, and/or service and which is consistent with the needs of the University.
 - (2) The applicant provides external letters of support.
 - (3) The applicant clearly indicates why the project necessitates a leave from regular teaching and service duties and includes a clear, detailed timeline showing how the leave time will be used, as evidence of both the need for leave and the likelihood of completion.

- (4) The applicant clearly addresses whether the project work requires funding; includes costs. If applicable, the applicant outlines a budget, clarifies funding sources secured and sought, and explains the extent to which completion of the project depends on funding not yet secured.
- (5) The applicant specifies a clear set of reasonable outcomes and/or deliverables to be made at the completion of the project and for which the candidate is responsible.
- (6) The applicant makes a convincing case that they will successfully accomplish the project. Such a case may be made on the basis of a prior record of success and/or a plan that is endorsed by the applicant's immediate supervisor.

5. ADMINISTRATION DUTIES

5.01 Departmental Duties

- a. Faculty Development Leaves are authorized for the purpose of increasing the value of the recipient's sustained contributions to the department/school and the University by providing the individual an opportunity for professional growth.
- b. In most cases, the academic department/school will assume the work of an individual granted leave. If the academic department/school is unable to absorb the load of a faculty member who is awarded a development leave, the chair/director will consult with the dean/executive director to develop a funding plan or to recommend against approval. Staffing and budgetary concerns, however, will not factor into the committee's evaluations.
- c. Upon receiving the application packet, the chair/director shall provide comments and a score and then forward the packet to the dean of their college or executive director of the Newton Gresham Library.

5.02 Duties of the Dean/Executive Director

- a. Upon receiving the application packet, the dean/executive director shall provide comments and a score in the application sections titled, "Dean/Executive Director Statement."

- b. Once completed, the application packet shall be forwarded to the Office of the Provost.

5.03 Duties of the Provost and Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs

- a. The Office of the Provost will notify the faculty of the deadlines for applying for developmental leaves.
- b. The Provost will forward complete application packets to each member of the FDLC.
- c. The Provost shall make final recommendations for leaves, if any, to the President.
- d. Each of the application files, along with administrators' comments and rankings, shall be maintained for one (1) calendar year. Files including administrator and committee comments shall be made readily available to the submitting faculty member.
- e. Successful application packets may be used by the University for such purposes as training and public relations.
- f. The Office of the Provost will maintain a small reference collection of examples of successful applications that will serve as models for future applicants.

5.04 Duties of the President

The President shall approve or deny development leave requests in consultation with the Provost.

6. PROGRAM CONDITIONS

- 6.01 Faculty members may have a Faculty Development Leave for one (1) academic year at one-half their regular salary, or for one (1) academic semester at their full salary. (An academic year is defined as the nine-month period contained in the fall and spring semesters; development leaves are not authorized for summer sessions.)

- 6.02 Faculty on development leave are excused from all normal service duties except when dictated by policy. A faculty member may choose to participate or not in the Department Promotion and Tenure Advisory Committee (DPTAC).
- 6.03 It is not required that faculty members obtain matching funds to be eligible for development leave; however, faculty members who are granted development leave are encouraged to seek additional funding from authorized and appropriate external sources, if appropriate for the proposed project.
- 6.04 Recipients of Faculty Development Leaves must submit a written report of their activity to the appropriate departmental chair/director, dean/executive director, and the Provost. The report, not to exceed three (3) pages in length, should explain activities undertaken while on leave and the perceived benefits to both the faculty member and the institution. The report will indicate whether any possible patentable or copyrightable intellectual property was created during the leave.
- Reports of their activity while on leave must be submitted by May 1 for a fall semester leave and by November 1 for a spring semester leave. Those on a full year leave must submit a progress report at the mid-leave reporting period and a final report by November 1. Development leave reports should be accompanied by a memo addressed to the Provost through the department chair/director and the dean/executive director.
- 6.05 Subject to the Texas State University System Rules and Regulations concerning Outside Employment and the Sam Houston State University Academic Policy Statement 860811, *Outside Employment for Faculty*, a faculty member on Faculty Development Leave may accept a grant or stipend for study, research, or travel from any institution of higher education, charitable, religious, or educational corporation or foundation; from any business enterprise; or from any state, federal, or local government, but must provide an accounting of all such funds to the University for reporting to the Board of Regents. However, the Board of Regents must approve specifically any outside employment.
- 6.06 If the conditions under which the proposed development leave was approved should change, the Provost must be notified within a reasonable time. If the new circumstances require a substantial change in the project, the Provost will refer the matter to the Faculty Development Leave Committee for recommendation.
- 6.07 Faculty members on Faculty Development Leave will retain their rights and eligibility for benefits to hospitalization, medical insurance, income protection, life insurance, and

other such programs in force for full-time faculty members. Faculty electing half-time, two-semester leaves and faculty electing full-time, one-semester leaves may have different status with respect to eligibility for employment benefits. Concurrent University assignments and responsibilities can affect this eligibility. It is highly recommended that faculty anticipating a leave meet with a Human Resources representative in consultation with their department chair/director to determine the precise individual cost for these options.

- 6.08 Exceptions to the policies and procedures set forth above may be authorized only by the President of the University as authorized by the Board of Regents, The Texas State University System, or by action of the Board of Regents. The activities of the year on leave may be considered for merit, if such advances are warranted using the existing faculty evaluation system.
- 6.09 Faculty members having signed a legal agreement to serve one (1) full academic year after completion of the leave shall be required to reimburse the University in the amount they receive as salary and fringe benefits from the State while on leave if they should refuse to fulfill a consecutive year of service after the leave. As a condition of receipt of the leave, a faculty member must execute a contract that provides the University a legal remedy should they refuse to fulfill the year of service after the leave. Permanent disability attested to by the faculty member's medical provider and confirmed upon examination of the faculty member by a physician selected by the University could constitute basis for exemption.

7. DEFINITION OF FACULTY DISCRETIONARY LEAVE

- 7.01 Faculty discretionary leave opportunities for professional development and or program improvement often become available on short notice and fall outside the planning and decision-making time parameters required for the faculty development leave program. Examples of such opportunities include multi-week staff and faculty training programs, short-term visiting research collaborations, and short-term international exchange opportunities. When such opportunities arise, a faculty discretionary leave can be proposed to the dean of their college or executive director of the Newton Gresham Library. In some cases, the dean/executive director may invite faculty to take advantage of such opportunities. A brief proposal that describes the purpose of the leave, as well as a detailed plan for covering assigned duties during the period of the leave, shall be prepared in consultation with the chair/director and dean/executive director. Any costs associated with the faculty discretionary leave will be borne by the College. If

acceptable, the dean will then make a recommendation to the Provost who will make the final determination as to whether or not to award the requested leave.

- 7.02 Occasionally, faculty members receive appointments that require leaves from campus that are funded by entities outside of the University. These externally-funded leaves include, but are not limited to, those associated with research grants, visiting appointments to other institutions, temporary appointments to government agencies, or participation in faculty exchange programs, etc. Such appointments are addressed separately from the Faculty Development Leave Policy and do not alter the faculty member's eligibility for Faculty Development Leave. Prior to accepting externally funded appointments, faculty must obtain approval from their department chair/director and dean/executive director.

APPROVED: <signed>
Alisa White, Ph.D., President

DATE: 01/10/2024

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

This academic policy statement (APS) has been approved by the reviewer(s) listed below and represents SHSU's Division of Academic Affairs' policy from the date of this document until superseded.

Original: March 28, 1980
Reviewer(s): Academic Affairs Council

Review Cycle: Five years*
Review Date: Spring 2027

Approved: <signed>
Michael T. Stephenson, Ph.D.,
Provost and Sr. Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Date: 01/02/2024

*Effective January 2018, Academic Policy Statements will be reviewed on a rotating 5-year schedule. To transition to a distributed review load, some policies may be reviewed prior to the 5-year timeframe, with subsequent reviews transitioning to the 5-year schedule.