



## Voluntary Unpaid Leave of Absence

### *PURPOSE*

As part of the University's ongoing efforts to control and reduce cost, it has adopted a voluntary unpaid leave of absence program. This program affords staff members the opportunity to take time off without pay. All unpaid leaves granted under this program must be taken voluntarily, initiated by the employee, and approved by the employee's department head **and** dean, executive director, or vice president.

### *APPLICABILITY*

This program is applicable to all regular full or part-time staff members who work at least 20 hours per week. Employees covered by a labor contract and temporary employees are *not eligible* to participate in the program. Due to the nature of their teaching obligations, faculty are also not eligible for this program.

### *DEFINITION*

For purpose of this program, a voluntary unpaid leave of absence is a scheduled, approved period of time away from work not to exceed eight (8) weeks or four (4) pay periods. This leave is distinct from the traditional unpaid leave of absence and must not be confused with the federal Family Medical Leave Act. Rather, this voluntary unpaid leave of absence requires advance approval of the employee's department head **and** dean, executive director, or vice president. This unpaid leave must be taken in full-day increments.

There are two types of unpaid leaves—an intermittent and extended leave.

An **intermittent leave** is (a) a reduced number of work days in a week, or (b) scheduled days off during a given month. Neither option can exceed a total of 8 weeks or 4 pay periods.

An **extended leave** is scheduled time away from work of at least one full pay period at a time. Like intermittent leaves of absence, an extended leave must not exceed eight (8) weeks or four (4) pay periods.

### *PROVISIONS*

This program is completely voluntary. Requests for an unpaid leave of absence may be approved provided doing so does not



result in increased costs, e.g. overtime, need to back-fill the employee's position, or loss of anticipated revenue.

*IMPLEMENTATION*

An employee must submit a Voluntary Unpaid Leave of Absence Form at least 30 days before the proposed start of the leave. The employee's department head and dean, executive director, or vice president will respond to requests within 10 working days of receiving a request form. Whether the employee's request is approved or disapproved, the department head or dean, executive director, or vice president shall document the reason for the decision on the Voluntary Unpaid Leave of Absence Form and provide a copy to the employee and the Human Resources Department.

*BENEFITS*

Benefits coverage continues during the employee's unpaid leave of absence—although the leave affects a few of them. An employee's pre-tax insurance premiums will be deducted from his/her first payroll check after returning from the unpaid leave of absence. Since pension contributions are a percentage of salary, the net annual dollar contribution will be reduced due to the employee's voluntary, annual salary reduction. Employees do not receive holiday pay during the unpaid leave of absence. However, his or her PLT accruals, vacation allotment, and earned service credit are not affected by the voluntary unpaid leave.