

Faculty Senate Resolution #12-29

Approved by the Faculty Senate: February 21, 2012

Accepted by the Chancellor: March 14, 2012

Formal Faculty Advice on the proposed Faculty Scholarly Reassignment Policy

Proposed additions are noted in **bold** print and deletions in ~~striketrough~~.

Faculty Scholarly Reassignment

REG # (To be done by Legal)

PRR General Subject Matter (Leave blank. To be done by Legal)

Authority: Academic Council

History: First Issued: month, year

Related Policies: UNC Policy Manual, §300.2.6 [G]

Additional References: *ECU Faculty Manual*: Part VI, Sections I, D. "Leaves of Absence"; Appendix C, Part III "Evaluation"; and Appendix I, East Carolina University Policy on Conflicts of Interest and Commitment and External Activities of Faculty and Other Professional Staff

Contact for Info: Associate Vice Chancellor for Personnel Administration in the Division of Academic and Student Affairs (328-1888); Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences Personnel (744-1910); Director of Benefits, Human Resources (328-9825)

1. Purpose

Faculty members are expected to remain highly competent in their disciplines and to maintain familiarity with recent scholarship. In pursuit of their scholarly interests, faculty often need sustained and dedicated periods devoted to a project involving research or creative activity. The purpose of this regulation is to provide for equity in submitting and consistency in approving requests for reassignment of faculty time for scholarly activities.

2. Definition

2.1. Faculty Scholarly Reassignment – an approved reassignment for a defined period of time in order for a faculty member to pursue full-time a project involving research or creative activity.

3. Eligibility

3.1. Full-time tenured faculty members are eligible to apply for a faculty scholarly reassignment.

3.2. Full-time tenured faculty holding an administrative appointment as a director or department chair, with the support of the dean, are eligible to apply for a scholarly reassignment. If awarded, the faculty member's administrative duties will be reassigned, along with other campus responsibilities, and the faculty member will forgo all administrative stipends for the period of the scholarly reassignment.

3.3. A probationary term (tenure-track) faculty member is normally ineligible to apply for these scholarly reassignments. ~~An exception may be made only if the proposed research or creative activity is of truly exceptional merit.~~ The faculty member must be in his/her last probationary year, and if awarded, the reassignment is contingent upon receiving tenure prior to beginning the scholarly reassignment.

3.4. Faculty will be expected to either maintain contact with graduate advisees or to make other arrangements to ensure that students' progress will not be disrupted. This expectation must be clearly stated in the reassignment agreement.

3.5. Faculty members selected for scholarly reassignments will undergo the annual evaluation process as prescribed by Appendix C, **Personnel Policies and Procedures for the Faculty** Part III of the *ECU Faculty Manual*.

3.6. The reassignment period will count as time toward promotion and post-tenure review.

3.7. The faculty member will continue to have the general obligations of a University employee other than teaching and service during the reassignment period, including but not limited to remaining accessible through a reliable means of communication with supervisory personnel, complying with reasonable directives of supervisors and officers of the University, responding in a timely and cooperative manner to requests for information, and taking such actions as may be required to comply with any applicable law or University policy or process.

3.8. Faculty on a scholarly reassignment are eligible for consideration for merit salary increases, promotion, and one-time payments or any other salary adjustments approved by the General Assembly, the Board of Governors, or East Carolina University.

3.9. During the reassigned period, the faculty member is expected to devote full time to a project **(in addition to duties noted in 3.4 and 3.7 above)** that is expected to result in a tangible creative or scholarly product, e.g., the submission and/or publication of one or more peer reviewed articles, a book or book chapters, a patent, or other creative or scholarly product.

3.10. A faculty scholarly reassignment is not an entitlement nor is it based on length of service. Decisions will be based on the merits of the proposal, productivity appropriate for the discipline and the faculty member's stage of career development, and the availability of funds.

3.11. A recipient of a faculty scholarly reassignment pursuant to this regulation is not eligible to receive another scholarly reassignment during a period of seven years following the start of the initial reassignment.

4. Terms and Conditions

4.1. The terms and conditions of the scholarly reassignment will be documented in an appointment letter from the appropriate Vice Chancellor.

4.2. A faculty member on a 9-month contract may be awarded a scholarly reassignment for one semester (either fall semester or spring semester) at full salary or for one academic year (excluding any summer sessions) at half salary.

4.2.1. The faculty member agrees to return to full-time employment at East Carolina University for two semesters following the reassignment.

4.3. A faculty member on a 12-month contract may be awarded a scholarly reassignment for 6 months at full salary or 12 months at half salary.

4.3.1. The faculty member agrees to return to full-time employment at East Carolina University for 12 calendar months following the reassignment.

4.4. During the reassigned period, the faculty member's salary may not exceed his/her regular full-time salary. Funds obtained by the faculty member for travel, per diem, housing, and similar expenses are not considered salary. Exceptions to the cap on salary may be approved by the

appropriate Vice Chancellor in cases where a scholarship or fellowship program provides a salary exceeding the faculty member's regular full time salary.

4.5. A faculty member on a faculty scholarly reassignment who accepts a position at another post-secondary institution or any other paid employment that was not included in the proposal or approved through the East Carolina University Policy on Conflicts of Interest and Commitment and External Activities of Faculty and Other Professional Staff policy (see Appendix I of the *ECU Faculty Manual*) will be considered to have failed to comply with the conditions of this regulation and voluntarily resigned from his or her employment at East Carolina University.

4.6. The faculty member agrees to return to full-time employment at East Carolina University for the period specified in sections 4.2.1 and 4.3.1 above. Should the faculty member fail to do so, he or she must repay the salary received during the period of reassignment by a date specified by the University. Prior to the beginning of and as a condition for receipt of any reassignment, the faculty member must execute the University's contract acknowledging the obligations contained within this regulation including, but not limited to, returning to full-time employment or repaying the salary.

4.7. Within three months after the conclusion of the reassigned period, the faculty member will submit a report of accomplishments to the unit administrator and to the dean of their college or school.

4.8. Within a year after the conclusion of the reassigned period, the faculty member will be required to provide a formal presentation of the work accomplished during the reassignment to unit colleagues and/or the university community at large.

4.9. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in this regulation may affect, among others, future eligibility for future faculty scholarly reassignments, annual evaluations, and may subject the recipient to repayment of the salary received during the reassigned period.

4.10. If circumstances require that a substantial change be made in the project after it has been approved, the faculty member should obtain approval of the changes from the appropriate unit administrator and dean.

5. Continuation of Benefits

5.1. Continuation of Retirement Contributions

5.1.1. For faculty on a scholarly reassignment, the period is considered an approved leave of absence for educational purposes.

5.1.2. The maximum allowable credit for educational leave or interrupted service for education purposes is six years over the course of one's career within the UNC system.

5.1.3. NC Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System (TSERS) – Full Pay

5.1.3.1. The University will continue making the employer contribution to TSERS and the faculty member will continue making his or her pre-tax contribution through payroll deduction.

5.1.4. NC Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System (TSERS) – Partial Pay

5.1.4.1. If the faculty member wishes to continue making his/her contribution, the University will continue making the employer contribution. The contributions are based on the faculty member's base rate of pay in effect immediately preceding the reassignment. The faculty member's contribution shall be on an after-tax basis and must be submitted by the faculty member to the Benefits Unit of

Human Resources by the payroll deadline for transmission to the State Retirement System. In addition, unless the faculty member returns to service as a contributing member within 12 months after completion of his or her scholarly reassignment and contributes to the Retirement System for at least three more years (except in the event of death or disability), TSERS will cancel the service credits and refund contributions to the employee.

5.1.4.2. In advance of the reassigned period, and after determining whether or not the faculty member wishes to continue making his/her retirement contributions, a letter and other appropriate forms will be submitted by the appropriate Vice Chancellor to the NC Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System requesting permission for the faculty member to continue his/her retirement contributions.

5.1.5. UNC Optional Retirement Program –Full or Partial Pay

5.1.5.1. If a faculty member participates in the UNC Optional Retirement Program (ORP) the same procedures, except provision 5.1.4.2, as outlined above for TSERS members apply, including the six year maximum allowable credit limit.

5.1.5.2. Employer and employee contributions are payable to the appropriate ORP carrier.

5.2. Other Benefits

5.2.1. Coverage under the State's Disability Income Plan and the Death Benefit will continue for eligible members during the reassigned period.

5.2.1.1. TSERS participants are eligible for the Death Benefit and the Disability Income Plan.

5.2.1.2. ORP participants are only eligible for the Disability Income Plan.

5.2.2. A faculty member who is on reassigned time is eligible and should continue to receive the University's contribution for State Health Plan coverage, whether on full pay or partial pay. The employee's contributions for dependents' coverage will continue to be payroll deducted from the faculty member's paycheck on a before-tax basis.

5.2.3. Continuation or eligibility for all other benefit programs is subject to each plan's policies or provisions.

6. Application Process

6.1. The application process takes place in the academic year prior to the academic year of the reassigned period.

6.2. By September 15 the applicant must submit a completed application to the unit administrator.

6.3. The application must include the following:

6.3.1. An abstract of the proposed project (maximum 200 words) including expectations, if any, for supplemental funding for expenses and/or salary

6.3.2. A current curriculum vitae

6.3.3. A narrative (maximum 1500 words, excluding references), which shall include all of the following:

6.3.3.1. a detailed description of the research or creative project

6.3.3.2. potential enhancement of the faculty member's teaching, scholarship, or service and the potential value to the teaching, scholarship or service program of the unit

6.3.3.3. contribution to knowledge in the field of study

6.3.3.4. expected outcomes (e.g., the submission and/or publication of one or more peer reviewed articles, a book or book chapters, a patent, or other creative or scholarly product)

6.3.4. Invitations to other institutions, award letters for fellowships, or other supporting documentation

6.4. The unit administrator will submit all applications to the appropriate departmental or school committee, consisting of no fewer than three persons, for review. The committee will submit a ranked order recommendation to the department chair or director.

6.5. By October 15, the department chair or director will forward to the dean the ranked order recommendation and will indicate how many reassignments can be supported with current resources, and if replacing the duties and responsibilities of any of the applicants presents an extraordinary challenge.

6.6. The dean will convene a college committee to review all the applications and the recommendations forwarded by the chair or director.

6.7. The college committee will submit a ranked order recommendation to the dean, who makes the final decision in consultation with the appropriate Vice Chancellor.

6.8. By November 15, the dean will announce the recipients, if any, for the following academic year.

6.9. Deans are responsible for providing the appropriate Vice Chancellor with a list of applicants and results of the process annually.

6.10. Decisions at the unit administrator level and above about granting scholarly reassignments must be made with a clear understanding of the source of funds to maintain the instructional expectations of the department.

6.11. A faculty member may appeal a denied request for a scholarly reassignment. The written appeal must be submitted to the appropriate Vice Chancellor within 14 calendar days of the announcement of the awards. The appeal must include a copy of the original application, a rationale for the appeal and any supporting documents. The Vice Chancellor's decision is final.