

# UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

*The task of the university is the creation of the future,  
so far as rational thought, and civilized modes of appreciation,  
can affect the issue. Alfred North Whitehead*

## Pythian Papers on Academic Careers

### Best Practices for FACULTY LEAVES, EXCHANGES, and VISITING APPOINTMENTS AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS

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## Faculty Leaves, Exchanges, and Visiting Appointments at other Institutions

This paper provides guidance for administering professional development leaves based upon existing University of Wyoming (UW) employment provisions. Those provisions are sufficiently flexible to provide for a variety of arrangements when leaves are beneficial and warranted; but following them ensures legal and other protections for the institution and the individual, as well as equity and fairness of treatment of employees. The UW regulations pertinent to this issue include: University Regulation 4-2 (Employment Provisions Applicable to all Personnel) and University Regulation 5-1 (governing Academic Personnel).

The ongoing career development of individual faculty members is critical to building a department's national and international reputation for research, scholarship, creative endeavor, and intellectual vigor. In this sense, there are mutual benefits that are shared among individual faculty members, their departmental colleagues, and the university as a whole when professors seek and obtain opportunities for professional growth and reward

While imminently worthy, professional development objectives of individual faculty members can pose challenging questions for department heads and other academic administrators. Challenges are most likely when professional development activities involve leaves of absence from campus or release from teaching duties. Absences from campus can create issues such as: course coverage, coverage of departmental service responsibilities, changes to the faculty member's compensation and benefits, accountability to students and external constituents, and fairness and equity concerns among faculty colleagues.

**Job hunting.** UW does not grant leaves for the purpose of job hunting, career transitions, or to support trial employment periods at other institutions.

**Sabbatical leaves.** Sabbaticals are the time-honored method for pursuing professional growth through a semester or year-long absence from the university. Governed by UW Regulation 5-1, sabbatical leaves may be granted to any tenured member of the faculty and may be used for enhancement of teaching, research, writing, or study at a place of the recipient's choosing. A minimum of six (6) years of academic service must be completed prior to each period of sabbatical leave. The sabbatical request memo is posted on the Academic Affairs website at:

[http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/Forms/sabbatical\\_announcement.doc](http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/Forms/sabbatical_announcement.doc)

Sabbatical leaves are normally granted for either a full or half 'contract year.' Leave for a full contract year is compensated at a rate equal to sixty (60) per cent of the faculty member's annual salary. Leave for a half contract year is compensated at the annual rate for the limited period. During the sabbatical period, faculty members may not receive supplemental salary from the University. Outside compensation in the form of externally funded grants and contracts, and other forms of funding may be accepted, e.g. Fulbright awards or support from the hosting institution. However, if a faculty member receives more than 40 percent of his or her salary from outside sources, then the University will reduce its compensation so that salary monies received from both University and external sources total no more than 100 percent of base salary during the leave period. If allowances for travel and other expenses directly related to the leave are included in the outside grant or contract, the university's contribution may be increased to account for these expenses. A faculty member who does not return to the University for at least one academic year immediately following sabbatical leave must repay the amount of compensation received from the University during the leave.

**Non-sabbatical leaves for professional development.** Clearly, professional opportunities that involve leaves of absence do not always coincide with sabbatical eligibility. Consequently, absences other than sabbatical leaves may be granted to faculty members, with the appropriate justification and approvals, subject to the terms of various University Regulations as discussed below. Different departments may have different cultures wherein faculty leaves and exchanges are viewed differently within the context of disciplinary norms and expectations. Consequently, departments should develop a common understanding among their members of the benefits and costs of granting leaves of absences, including the implications for delivering courses and meeting other academic obligations, and they may wish to establish guidelines for considering and accommodating such leaves. In all departments, faculty members requesting leaves of absence for significant periods of time should be aware that there are implications for their faculty colleagues, and that there may be effects on the curriculum, the research program, graduate-student supervision, departmental morale and perceptions of fairness, as well as concerns on the parts of students and other constituents. Those costs may be weighed against benefits to the department or program. Pre-tenure faculty should be especially cautious when considering leaves of absences for other than family or health reasons, and in consultation with their department heads give very careful thought to the potential implications for their UW careers.

- **Short-term leaves with pay.** Leaves lasting two weeks or less require no more than a department head's approval, in addition to any arrangements needed in order to cover missed class periods. Short-term leaves (in addition to those for approved personal reasons such as personal or family illness) may be granted for various purposes, such as conducting research at a remote site, presenting papers at professional meetings, collaborating with research partners at other institutions, offering visiting lectures at other universities, participating in symposia, workshops, or conferences, or serving on grant review panels or working with editorial boards, etc. *Such short-term leaves are entirely at the department head's discretion and are generally within the scope of a faculty member's regular University duties.* There are no mechanisms, at the department or university level, for compensating departments for such absences. Faculty members participating in such short-term professional opportunities may accept reimbursements for expense incurred and may accept honoraria and fees commensurate with the task. There are no university-prescribed limits on honoraria.
- In addition, **leaves with pay of more than two (2) and up to four (4) weeks** may be granted for good cause upon written recommendation of the department head and dean, and with the approval of the Provost. A faculty member granted such a leave must have an approved plan for covering courses and other duties during the absence. There are no college- or university-level resources to fund these plans. A leave of this duration may be used, for example, to accommodate a short-term visiting research or teaching professorship at another institution so long as that visiting appointment is deemed to be mutually beneficial to the faculty member and the UW department. Faculty members participating in such professional opportunities with full pay from UW may not accept formal employment at the hosting institution, but may accept reimbursement for expenses incurred, fees, and honoraria (as distinct from work for hire). There are no university-prescribed limits on honoraria and it is the employee's responsibility to understand any tax implications.
- **Longer leaves (not to exceed one year).** When deemed mutually beneficial to the individual faculty member and the department, longer leaves not to exceed one contract year *except in extraordinary circumstances* may be granted. Longer leaves may be granted to facilitate research

or creative endeavors conducted under Fulbright or similar national awards, semester or year-long faculty exchanges, prestigious visiting (temporary) professorships at other universities, or temporary appointments with government or international agencies or with private entities (corporations and non-profits). All such leaves require the recommendations of the department head and dean and the approval of the Provost. Such leaves must be reported to and approved by the Board of Trustees, and they require a strong justification based on benefits to the institution as well as to the individual. (Special personal circumstances, such as personal health or family circumstances may also provide the basis for an approved leave of up to one year.)

Like shorter-term leaves, long-term leaves require documented arrangements for ensuring coverage of duties from which the individual is released, particularly teaching. Longer-term leaves may certainly involve the continuation of some UW duties (such as the supervision of graduate students) or formal part-time duty arrangements. Such commitments and arrangements should be carefully spelled out to prevent misunderstandings, ensure fairness, and to provide a concrete basis for financial remuneration, such as partial pay or reimbursements from another institution to UW for the faculty member's time. Longer leaves require careful consideration of financial arrangements. There are several options for longer leave arrangements, and faculty members should in particular be aware of implications for their health insurance coverage and retirement benefits. Options are discussed below.

**Leave without pay (LWOP).** UW employees may be granted leave without pay (LWOP) for the purpose of pursuing a professional development opportunity of a year or less (unless extraordinary circumstances clearly warrant a longer time period). Employees who opt for LWOP should be aware that there are implications for their health and retirement benefits. While on LWOP, no retirement contributions are made by UW and no sick leave is accrued. If the retirement account is with the Wyoming Retirement system, no service time will be earned during the period of LWOP and the amount of the individual's monthly pension may be reduced accordingly. If the person is close to retirement, the break in service could also affect another factor in the pension calculation, that is, the highest average salary over 36 continuous months. If the retirement account is with TIAA-CREF, a LWOP means less money will be deposited to the account by UW. If the reason for the absence is not FMLA-related (i.e. not a serious health condition, birth of a child, etc.), then the faculty member will lose eligibility for UW health insurance and can participate in COBRA. COBRA rates are 102 percent of the full premium. In contrast, active employees (i.e. those not on leave without pay) pay approximately 15 percent of the full health insurance premium.

A LWOP arrangement can be, however, appropriate or beneficial for other reasons. For example, a professional development opportunity at a salary rate substantially above UW's may provide an adequate incentive for a LWOP. In addition, a leave that involves a complete break with academic duties (i.e. private sector employment) may be most appropriately pursued through LWOP.

**Leave with pay.** A faculty member with an approved leave of absence for professional development purposes may continue as a UW employee on the UW payroll with no interruptions in salary or benefits under the following conditions:

- If the faculty member is on paid leave in order to conduct research or teach in-residence at another academic institution, then that hosting institution must reimburse UW for the employee's time at an agreed upon rate. If research or scholarship activities while on leave are commensurate with those that would be conducted at UW, then UW should be reimbursed principally to cover course replacement costs. The usual reimbursement should be calculated as

follows: Base salary \* 1/24<sup>th</sup> \* # of course credits normally assigned to the faculty member during the leave period. Such reimbursements are managed by the College dean (or commensurate academic program director).

- Academic year appointees on paid leave status may earn supplemental pay, e.g. summer salary, channeled through UW from the host institution. Supplemental pay for teaching, research, or scholarship is subject to UW's supplemental pay rules as described in UW Regulation 402, which limits such compensation to 1/3 of the (academic year) base salary. Full-time fiscal year appointees who are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act cannot receive overtime pay and therefore have no capacity to earn supplemental pay through the UW payroll.
- Faculty members on approved leaves with pay may be reimbursed directly from the host institution or through UW for expenses incurred in conjunction with the leave, e.g. travel, temporary residence, etc. Such reimbursements may be in addition to base and supplemental pay.
- Faculty members on approved leaves with pay may receive honorary or monetary awards and honoraria from host institutions.

**Faculty Exchanges.** Faculty exchanges (that is, a UW faculty member visits another institution and a faculty member from that institution visits UW) should not involve a disruption in pay status. In other words, UW should continue to pay and to provide benefits to our faculty member; the other institution should continue to compensate and provide benefits to its faculty member. Exchange-related expenses incurred by the faculty members may be reimbursed by either institution, but there is no *a priori* guarantee of such reimbursements. Such arrangements should, however, be conducted under the terms of a written MOU between the two institutions.

**Part-time leaves.** Faculty members may also be granted part-time leaves of absence of up to one year. Part-time arrangements may be most appropriate for professors that have won Fulbright or other fellowship awards, but not in conjunction with a sabbatical leave, for example to conduct work overseas for longer than a month. In such cases, assuming the award cannot be channeled through UW, the faculty member may be granted a reduction in on campus duties. That reduction should be sufficient to release the salary dollars needed for replacement teaching costs. Alternatively, if the award can be funneled through UW, a commensurate amount of UW salary dollars may be released and used to cover replacement teaching costs. Faculty members on part-time appointments should check with Human Resources to ensure they understand the implications for their employment status and employer paid benefits. Faculty members on temporary part-time appointments are eligible for reimbursements for expenses incurred, honoraria, and supplemental UW pay (at the adjusted rate), if funding is available.

**Intergovernmental Personnel Act Agreements.** There may be instances when an approved leave is best facilitated through an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Agreement. For example, an IPA is an appropriate vehicle for supporting a faculty member's visiting appointment with a federal agency, such as a research administration agency like the National Science Foundation or a policy making office such as the Council of Economic Advisers. The purpose of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) program is to facilitate cooperation between the Federal Government and non-Federal organizations, including state and local governments, institutions of higher education, Indian tribal governments, and some other organizations, through the exchange of personnel. The regulations governing IPA's can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), part 5, chapter 334. Assignments under IPA's can be made for up to

two years, and may be intermittent, part-time, or full-time. They may be extended for an additional two years when the extension will be to the benefit of both organizations. Cost-sharing arrangements for IPA's are negotiated between the participating organizations. The Federal agency may agree to pay all, some, or none of the costs associated with an assignment. Costs may include base pay, supplemental pay, fringe benefits, and travel and relocation expenses. Cost-sharing arrangements should be based on the extent to which the participating organizations benefit from the assignment. The larger share of the costs should be absorbed by the organization which benefits most from the assignment. Deans and department heads interested in setting up IPA cost-share arrangements should seek approval from Academic Affairs, which will arrange for consultation with UW's legal staff.