4.08 Professional Development Assignment

Leaves of Absence

1. The Board shall grant leaves of absence with full or partial compensation to staff members to undertake approved programs of study, research, or other professional activity which, in the judgment of the Board, will contribute to the improvement of the institutions. Any staff member granted such leave shall agree either to return to the institution granting such leave for a period of not less than two years or to repay to the state of Iowa such compensation as [the staff member] shall have received during such leave. (Code 262.9 [14])

2. Requests for leaves of absence for personnel covered by Section 2.1.1.C. shall be submitted to the Board by the institutional executives for approval.

3. Requests for leaves of absence for personnel covered by Section 2.1.1.D, including retired and emeritus faculty and staff, may be granted by the institutional executives and reported in the Register of Personnel Changes, except that professional development leaves shall be submitted to the Board by the institutional executives for approval.

4. Each request for a professional development leave shall contain information as to the length of service of the individual and an estimate of additional net budgetary support necessary to finance all leaves.


Regents’ Policy Manual 2.1.4.R

Leaves of absence are granted for one academic year dependent upon departmental needs and policies. Under special circumstances, such leaves may be extended for one academic year. Leaves of absence are available to non-tenured faculty members.

University Faculty Senate, 1972-1973

The University may grant paid or unpaid leaves of up to one (1) calendar year to carry out research/ scholarly work/ creative work, and/or educational activities supported under grants, contracts, fellowships, or University research awards. The University, at its discretion, may renew such a leave.

Faculty Handbook Subdivision 8.32

Leaves of absence require approval by the Department Head, Dean of the College (if appropriate), Provost and Executive Vice-President (or appropriate vice-president), and the President.

For a more extended discussion of professional development assignments, the section with that heading should be consulted.

Professional Development Leave Assignment

[NOTE: Leaves of absence are a mandatory subject of bargaining under the Iowa Public Employment Relations Act and therefore there is an Article (7) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board of Regents and UNI–United Faculty (AAUP/IHEA) which contains provisions concerning Professional Development Leaves. Section 7.1 of Article 7 describes the terms, conditions, and requirements for Professional Development Leaves for members of the faculty bargaining unit. In instances where there is any conflict between the provisions of Article 7 and the following policies as far as members of faculty collective bargaining units are concerned the provisions of the agreement are contractually binding. For example, Section 7.153 of the contract requires that the applications for PDL’s be evaluated by a faculty committee, and this means that only members of the faculty bargaining unit would be eligible for service on that committee.] [NOTE: The Iowa Public Employment Relations Act was revised in 2017, this paragraph may not apply. See also Faculty Handbook provisions] A Professional Development Assignment (“PDA”) is a paid semester or academic year assignment awarded to a Faculty Member
to undertake approved programs of study, research, or other professional activity.

I. Purpose
Professional development assignments leaves of absence (hereinafter abbreviated as P.D. ALs) are for the purpose of encouraging professional growth and increased competence of the professional staff which will contribute to the improvement of the University of Northern Iowa. The assignments leaves may be granted for advanced study at the pre-doctoral or post-doctoral levels, for research, and for other creative work.

II. Eligibility
Tenured Faculty Members are eligible to apply for a Professional Development Assignment. Probationary faculty after a successful third-year review are eligible to apply for professional development assignments. Priority shall be given to tenured faculty.
Except in unusual circumstances, only faculty members who are tenured at the time they file their application and who hold at least a master's degree and who have in the past demonstrated a desire for professional growth and improvement will be eligible.

III. Conditions
The staff member on assignment leave must return to his/her position, in accordance with Iowa law, or repay the full amount of compensation received while on assignment leave.

At the end of their assignment leave, the staff member shall make a report to the Vice-President and Provost and the Professional Development Leave Committee summarizing briefly their success in fulfilling their proposed program.

The number of assignments authorized annually will be as many as staffing and appropriations permit, but the total number shall not exceed 8 percent of the tenured faculty for any single academic year.

IV. Compensation and Benefits
Compensation during the assignment leave period may not exceed one-half of the staff member's full salary for the 9-month academic year. The assignment leaves will ordinarily take the form of: a one-semester assignment leave with full salary for that semester; a two-semester assignment leave with one-half salary for the academic year.

One-Semester Professional Development Assignments:
A faculty member on a one-semester Professional Development Assignment is a full-time employee of the University and is subject to existing policies on consulting and extra compensation.

Two-Semester Professional Development Assignments:
Faculty members on a two-semester Professional Development Assignment at half-pay shall not earn total wages in excess of 100 percent of their UNI salary adjusted for cost of living in the location where they shall reside. They are considered full-time employees of the University and are subject to existing policies on consulting and extra compensation.

Faculty members who receive assignments leave in order to pursue a terminal degree, whether for one or two semesters, may accept additional compensation in the form of grants or assistantships, provided these do not interfere with the expected progress toward their degree as outlined in their original proposal.
If the degree is being pursued at the University of Northern Iowa, faculty members on Professional Development AssignmentsLeaves may not receive Graduate Assistant Stipends or Tuition Scholarships from this university.

Consequences for Failure to Adhere to the Policy on Extra Compensation:

Faculty members who do not adhere to the policies on consulting and for extra compensation during a Professional Development AssignmentLeave will be ineligible for subsequent Professional Development AssignmentsLeaves or Summer Fellowships.

Violations may obligate the faculty member to pay the University an amount up to all salaries and benefits received during the period of the assignmentleave.

University contributions to regular retirement, group insurance, and Social Security benefits, where applicable, are to continue while the faculty member is on assignmentleave. The contributions of both the faculty member and the university are to continue on the same basis as with full salary.

V. Interview with Committee

Senate action (Minutes 1022, March 22, 1971) provided that applicants for the P.D. ALv. be granted an interview with the Committee if requested.

VI. Administration of the Program

The authorization of P.D. ALvs. will be dealt with by the university as an integral part of the total process of recruitment, orientation, assignment, promotion and compensation of staff. Hence, the P.D. ALv. program will be administered by the Executive Vice-President and Provost for Academic Affairs or designee (serving as chair) through the usual departmental and college channels, with the assistance of a special P.D. ALv. committee whose responsibility it shall be to make recommendations to the Vice-President and Provost concerning the acceptability of proposals submitted by staff members desiring leave and the priority among acceptable proposals for any given semester or academic year. The composition of the Committee shall be as follows (Senate Minutes No. 1008): (1) Vice-President for Academic Affairs (new Vice-President and Provost) and Provost or his designee representative, non-voting Chair; (2) one member of the instructional faculty from each undergraduate college selected by the members of the College Senate (college); (3) one member of the faculty who does not have a college affiliation appointed by the Vice-President and Provost. Members will serve three-year staggered terms. None of the members (selected by the college) may succeed him/herself more than once.

A faculty member desiring a P.D. ALv. will submit an electronic application form, describing his/her-the proposed program of study or research and carrying the comments of his/her-the department head, to the College Dean of his/her College who will refer it to the Vice-President and Provost. All applications will be referred to the P.D. ALv. committee for analysis and recommendation. Before the leaveassignment is finally authorized it must have been recommended by the P.D. ALv. committee and approved by the Department Head, College Dean. Vice-President and Provost, President, and State Board of Regents.

A report will be made periodically to the Board of Regents, state of Iowa concerning assignmentsleave granted and programs carried out during the leave.

Procedure For Handling Professional Development AssignmentsLeaves

1. Applicants pick-up/submit the electronic application forms found on the UNI Graduate College webpage for either "advanced degree" study or for "faculty improvement" leave from the Office of Academic Affairs. Complete the forms, have each signed by department head and college dean, and return the applications to the Office of Academic Affairs. The electronic application form requires approval from the department head, college dean and the Office of the Graduate College.

2. The committee reviews/studies the applications as they are received over a period of several weeks. The committee may request additional information from applicants if they feel the statements on the
application forms are incomplete or unclear. The Vice-President and Provost, non-voting chairman of the committee, also seeks to gather any additional information the committee members may wish.

3. Voting members of the committee acting independently rate place each application in one of three categories.

1. Category I—proposals applications which seem to deserve support as soon as possible.
2. Category II—proposals applications which may deserve support but some processes/merits are undefined are worthy of support but not quite as deserving as those in the first category.
3-2. Category III—proposals applications that should not be supported applications that the members believe should not be supported at the time the review is being made.
4. The committee then rank orders all proposals applications based on the numerical ratings above and discusses until it reaches a consensus.

As a result of budget decentralization, especially "salary savings," funds for replacement of faculty members on P.D.Lv are now in the college budgets in the form of "salary savings." In order to insure that a college may make reasonable and necessary replacement plans before knowing what the amount of salary savings will be in the college and when they will become available, the university underwrites the cost of necessary replacements in case a college does not generate sufficient salary savings to offset the cost replacements over the period of a fiscal year. Funding of the P.D.Lv. replacement has the first claim on salary savings in the colleges.

The number of assignments leaves granted is ultimately decided by the Provost president based on the ability of the university to sustain the cost associated with the assignments leaves. The incremental cost to the university, of course, is the net cost of replacement since it is a paid leave program for faculty members.

1. The Professional Development Assignment Leave Committee "makes its recommendations to the Vice-President and Provost concerning the acceptability of proposals submitted by facultystaff members desiring assignments leave and their priority among acceptable proposals for any semester, or academic year." (Section 6 of Policy approved by Faculty Senate and Board of Regents.)

2. The Vice-President and Provost consults department heads and deans concerning the necessity of replacement of applicants. This information is forwarded to the president and The Office of the Vice President and Provost informs the chairpersonchairman of the committee how far down the list of recommended candidates the funds available will allow for allocations to go. The number of replacements needed determines the commitment of funds of the university to support the program.

3. The list of recommended grantees is taken to the Board of Regents along with a report that describes each a description of the project to be undertaken which the faculty member proposes to undertake. When the Board approves the assignments leaves, the grantees are notified. Faculty members are so informed. Those who have not been approved for assignments leave are also notified and their applications are returned to them. (Applicants are informally notified of the recommendations sent to the Board of Regents approximately ten days before the Board meeting. Each applicant is formally notified by letter from his or her College Dean after Board action.)

The members of the Professional Development Assignment Leave Committee review their procedures every year and make changes which are designed to make the selection process as equitable as possible.

Vice President and Provost