

Proposed  
Professional Improvement Leave Program  
Revised, January 8, 2008

In the interest of facilitating the improvement of the qualities of faculty which relate to teaching research and outreach, the University grants leave with pay for approved professional enrichment activities. The University recognizes the importance of activities which provide an opportunity for professional renewal and growth. Additionally, the University recognizes that an enriched faculty member can dramatically improve both the quality of research and the quality of the educational experience for undergraduate and graduate students taught or mentored by faculty. Except in cases of financial hardship, funds are made available for professional improvement leave for at least 4% of the tenured faculty members per year. This paid professional improvement leave is awarded based on merit through an application process. To ensure maximum flexibility in improving and enriching the capabilities of faculty members from diverse backgrounds, no restrictions are placed on where the development activity occurs or the type of improvement activity which is to be pursued provided that the activity is approved through the application process. The following guidelines apply to paid professional improvement leaves:

A tenured faculty member is eligible for a professional improvement leave after six calendar years of full-time employment. He or she may be granted one semester at full salary or two semesters at half salary. In order to facilitate such leaves, department heads should arrange teaching loads and course offerings in such a way as to minimize the need for additional funding to the department. The University recognizes that departments in which faculty do not have research appointments will need extra help in providing such leaves.

The application must be accompanied by a proposed program which gives reasonable promise of contributing to the improvement of the applicant's professional services to Auburn University. A fall deadline for applications for leave for the following academic year will be announced by the Office of the Provost. Application should be submitted through the department head and the dean to the Office of the Provost. Professional improvement leaves are competitively awarded. Preference will be given to proposals of faculty who have a proven record of success in research, teaching, and/ or outreach.

A faculty member granted professional improvement leave must serve as a member of the Auburn faculty for one year after taking leave. If he or she does not do this, he or she must reimburse the University for the paid leave time. A faculty member granted professional improvement leave with pay must submit a written report of his or her activities and accomplishments to his or her dean and to the Provost by the end of the first semester after returning to campus. A faculty member on leave with compensation may receive fellowship support or part-time teaching or research appointments which do not interfere with their programs.

Professional improvement leaves granted to the outgoing Chair and Secretary of the Auburn University Senate are not covered by the provisions of this program.

# Notable Changes

- Except in cases of hardship, funds are made available for 4% of tenured faculty to engage in professional leave activities per year
- Language is included specifying that no restrictions on the activities are explicitly included in the policy
- This policy would apply only to tenured faculty members going forward
- Professional leave would be available after 6 years of full time employment rather than after 4 years of full time employment
- Language limiting the amount of money that a faculty member can earn while on professional leave has been deleted
- Cumulative leave options are eliminated
- Senate Officer professional leave has been separated from this policy