



ACCREDITATION EVIDENCE

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ACADEMIC LEAVE FOR PROFESSIONALS

It is the intention of the College to provide academic leave to qualified professional employees including instructional, professional, and administrative staff. The purpose of these academic leaves is to provide a means of carrying out an approved program which will ultimately benefit the College, the students, and the professional employee.

See following pages for procedure.

Adopted November 19, 1981
Revised February 12, 1987
Revised February 25, 1993
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ACADEMIC LEAVE FOR PROFESSIONALS

This leave provides qualified professional employees (all full-time instructional, professional, and administrative staff) a means of carrying out an approved program that will ultimately benefit the College, the students, and the professional employee.

Types of Leave

Types of leave include but are not limited to:

- Pursuing an advanced degree or advanced education,
- Improving artistic skills,
- Advancing a research project, or lab skill,
- Pursuing professional experiences.

A professional employee can always be creative and apply for a unique type of leave, but the applicant must address the basic purpose of a leave, i.e., describe how the leave is beneficial to the applicant, students, and the College.

Eligibility

Operating Principle for All Leaves: For every six (6) years of service a professional employee may apply for a one-year leave at one-half salary or for a half-year leave at full salary. The Human Resources office will determine eligibility of applicants. To qualify and make application, a professional employee must fulfill one of the following requirements:

- Has satisfactorily completed five (5) consecutive years of full-time service to Western Wyoming Community College as a member of the professional staff, OR
- Has been in a position upgraded from a paraprofessional position and who has satisfactorily occupied this position full-time for at least five (5) consecutive years either as a member of the professional staff or as a member of the paraprofessional staff, OR
- Has changed positions, moving from a paraprofessional position to a professional position. These persons qualify if they have satisfactorily completed at least two (2) consecutive years of full-time service to Western Wyoming Community College as a member of the professional staff and have completed at least three (3) years of full-time service as a member of the paraprofessional staff. (One year of paraprofessional service will be counted as equal to one year of professional service.)

Requirements of Applicants

The applicant must submit a written application to the Human Resources office which will send it to the Leave of Absence Review and Evaluation Committee. This application should include a detailed proposed program and such information as specific institution and course of studies. Applicants can

propose programs other than those towards an academic degree, such as research, study, or other proposals, considered worthwhile by the Leave of Absence Review and Evaluation Committee. Any major changes in the submitted proposal must be reported to the committee prior to the President's recommendation.

Some proposals may include elements that are contingent on the approval of another institution or entity with timelines beyond the submission date of the Board of Trustees, such as admittance or financial aid awards. If such a proposal is submitted, an alternative proposal shall also be submitted for approval by the November 10th deadline which is not contingent on the approval of another institution or entity.

Before a contract is issued to the professional employee taking Academic Leave, the professional employee must provide a financial guarantee to the College. This guarantee may be a promissory note, bond, or other approved instrument. With this guarantee the professional employee agrees:

- To serve Western Wyoming Community College for at least one (1) additional contract year after completion of the year's leave—regardless of whether that professional employee chooses to leave for one year or for half of a contract year, and
- To provide evidence of completion of the proposed program to the Leave of Absence Committee, the President and the Board of Trustees upon return.

This agreement remains in effect until the one-year term of service is completed.

Salary and Benefits

Academic Leave will be granted for one (1) contract year at one-half salary or for one-half of a contract year at full salary. With satisfactory arrangement with the College, the one (1) year of academic leave may be taken in two parts, e.g., non-consecutive semesters but within two years.

Employees may withdraw their requests. Employees who will have full-time replacements, however, may only withdraw their requests until the day that the Board approves the employment contract for a full-time replacement. Employees who will have part-time replacements may only withdraw their requests until the date of the regular April Board meeting.

Academic Leave will normally be granted in accordance with the length of the professional employee's standard contract. Therefore, a twelve month employee would get a twelve month paid leave, a ten month employee, ten months, etc.

The professional employee on Leave of Absence may accept scholarships and fellowships or employment if these contribute to the proposed plan of study.

Normal salary increments and other benefits will continue as follows: sick leave accumulation, retirement based on one-half salary, insurance; social security; and all other benefits not mentioned herein for which the professional employee is entitled.

Upon return to service the professional employee will be reinstated in the position held at the time leave was granted or in a comparable position. The professional employee may agree to be placed in a substantially different position for which he/she is qualified.

Deadlines

1. By November 10th of the year prior to Academic Leave, but no earlier than one year prior to that leave, the professional employee must submit an application to the Human Resource office. In the event of special circumstances such as a Fullbright Scholarship opportunity, an employee may apply one (1) year earlier than allowed herein, provided the College President grants this exception to Board procedure. Under no circumstances may Academic Leave be taken prior to the completion of six (6) consecutive years of full-time employment.
2. By November 20th, the President shall inform the Leave of Absence Review and Evaluation Committee and all applicants of his/her decision regarding how many leaves (both with and without pay) he/she will recommend how much additional money he/she will recommend be budgeted in the ensuing fiscal year for these leaves.
3. By December 10th, the Leave of Absence Review and Evaluation Committee will review all applications, recommend or not recommend approval of each application, prioritize those recommendations, and submit them to the President.
4. By January 15th, the President will review the committee's recommendation and recommend action to the Board of Trustees at the regular Board meeting in February, and the Board shall take action.
5. Within thirty (30) days after return to service, the professional employee shall submit a written report describing the leave to the Leave of Absence Committee.

Budgeting for Academic Leave

Because the costs of Academic Leave vary from year to year and the potential exists for substantial costs in a given year, it is important that the College address these financial implications before academic leaves are awarded.

Thus, the President shall conduct an initial review of the number of applicants for both paid and unpaid leave and make a determination by the

deadline set forth above as to how many leaves and/or how much money he/she will recommend be allocated for leaves in the ensuing fiscal year.

Composition of the Leave of Absence Review and Evaluation Committee

To be effective, the committee must be consistent and representative. The committee must be consistent, representative and fair in evaluating the different types of proposals, such as pursuing an advanced degree, improving artistic skills, or advancing a research project.

- Representation: To establish fair representation, a representative from each instructional division plus two (2) from the non-instructional division plus two (2) from the non-instructional areas of the professional staff will serve on the committee. Therefore, the committee will have eight (8) members. Six (6) members are to be elected from their respective divisions. Two (2) non-instructional professional staff are to be elected by members of the non-instructional professionals groups.
- Consistency: To establish consistency, the committee members will serve 2-year terms. The terms will be staggered. Therefore, each year, three (3) faculty and one (1) non-instructional professional will be up for election.

New members must be elected before September 30th of each year.

Committee Duties

The committee will review all applications, recommend or not recommend approval of each application, prioritize those recommendations, and submit them to the President. The total number of leaves, including both academic and professional leave without pay, however, cannot exceed one (1) leave for every fifteen (15) faculty employees and one (1) leave for every fifteen (15) professional/administrative employee. The committee will evaluate the written report of the applicant upon return from leave and submit this evaluation and a copy of the written report within thirty (3) days of receipt of the report to the President and the Board.

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