

ARTICLE 18
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Section 1. The University of Akron is committed to the development of an academic community recognized for its achievement in contributing, transmitting and using knowledge and ideas. An essential means for the faculty periodically to enhance competence and widen professional activity is a faculty improvement program. The major purpose of this program is to promote the professional growth and new or renewed intellectual achievement of faculty. In that regard, any bargaining unit faculty member with at least seven academic years of teaching service at the University of Akron may be granted professional leave for a period of not more than one academic year to engage in further education, research, or any other activity approved by the Board. Additionally:

- A. If the faculty member shows that the project is better served by dividing the leave over two academic years, the split leave may be permitted at the discretion of the President and the Board provided that such an understanding is reached before the leave is approved.
- B. A faculty improvement leave shall not be granted for the sole purpose of becoming self-employed or obtaining employment elsewhere. However, faculty improvement leave may be granted to acquire an advanced degree so long as pursuing the same is in the mutual interest of the University and the bargaining unit member.
- C. A faculty member who has completed a professional leave must complete another seven years of service at the University before becoming eligible for another grant of professional leave.
- D. Professional leave taken as part of the faculty improvement program shall not be deemed to be in lieu of ongoing commitments in connection with a specific research, scholarly or creative program.

Section 2. Compensation and other benefits paid to full-time faculty who are on professional leave will be handled as follows:

- A. The University shall pay the faculty member for or during a period of professional leave a salary not to exceed the amount that would have been paid to said faculty member for the performance of regular duties during the period of the leave. A faculty member shall receive not less than full pay for one semester of professional leave. If the professional leave is for two semesters, the faculty member will receive one half compensation for the two semesters. The salary paid for such leave may not be suitable for inclusion in a final average salary for retirement purposes, as determined by STRS.
- B. No faculty member shall, by virtue of being on professional leave, suffer a reduction or termination of regular employee retirement or insurance benefits or of any other benefit or privilege received as a faculty member at the University of Akron. Whenever such a benefit would be reduced because of a reduction in the faculty member's salary during the professional leave, the faculty member shall be given a chance to have the benefit increased to its normal level.
- C. A person granted leave under the faculty improvement program will be considered as providing full-time service to the University during that period, and the University shall not pay any additional stipend or other compensation during such period of leave. Leaves may include funding by third parties. Outside employment shall be governed by Article 24

Activities Outside of the University. However, no outside employment, not otherwise previously approved, whether for compensation or otherwise, shall be performed without the prior written approval of the dean and the Senior Vice President and Provost. The salary received from the University will be subject to retirement deduction and other appropriate tax deductions.

- D. No professional leave shall be granted that requires a compensating addition to the permanent faculty of the University. An account will be established under the direction of the Senior Vice President and Provost of the University to receive monies from any person, foundation, corporation, political subdivision, or the federal government to support the faculty improvement program of the University of Akron. The funds, if any, in this account shall be used to support the salaries of part-time, temporary, or visiting faculty hired on a temporary basis to assume the duties of the faculty member on leave; to provide for unusual expenses of the faculty member on leave when such expenses are more than the faculty member's regular salary could be expected to cover; and to provide for other expenses involved in the operation of the faculty improvement program. Requests for the expenditures of any funds from this account shall be directed to the Provost who shall not unreasonably deny such requests.

Section 3. Full-time faculty who wish to be considered for professional leave shall follow the following procedures:

- A. Application for professional leave, including the specific plan referenced below, shall be submitted to the department chair, or equivalent, as appropriate, before November 1 of the academic year, unless there is a compelling reason to modify that deadline, preceding the professional leave.
1. The dean of the college shall review and make recommendation—positive or negative - on the proposal.
 2. The recommendation shall be communicated in writing to the bargaining unit faculty member prior to being forwarded to the Provost. If the proposal is not approved, specific reasons for disapproval shall be given in writing to the applicant by the dean.
 3. The Provost will submit all positive recommendations to the President for review and transmission to the Board. If the Provost or the President does not approve the applicant's proposal, specific reasons for the disapproval shall be given in writing to the applicant.

- B. The leave is to be supported by a specific plan that shall evidence that the leave will increase individual effectiveness or produce academically or socially useful results. A leave may entail specialized scholarly activity or be designed to provide broad cultural experience and enlarged perspective.

Section 4. With respect to accountability to the University for approving professional leave, faculty members are expected to return to the University of Akron for at least one academic year after completion of their professional leave, unless the faculty member dies or becomes disabled. At the completion of the professional leave, the faculty member shall submit to the Provost of the University a report detailing the accomplishments of the faculty member under this professional improvement program and the faculty member's compliance with the terms of the faculty improvement leave program. Upon receipt of the report by the Provost, the faculty member shall be entitled to participate in any salary increase for which the faculty member may be eligible during the term of any improvement leave on the same basis as any faculty member who did not participate in a faculty improvement leave.

Section 5. The University shall continue its commitment to support research, teaching and instructional improvement/enhancement activities.