



FACULTY PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT LEAVES ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025

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FACULTY PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT LEAVES

ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025

The University's formal initiation of this year's applications for Faculty Professional Improvement Leaves (FPIL) for the 2024-2025 academic year is outlined below. Copies of the [University Policy Regarding Faculty Professional Improvement Leave \(UPR 6-12\)](#); and [Operational Procedures Regarding Faculty Professional Improvement Leaves \(sabbatical leaves\) \(Operational Procedures \(UPR 6-12.101\)\)](#) can be viewed online at these links and are included with this document. Also, included with this document are four flow charts which illustrate the application and review procedure for both the Kent and Regional Campuses. This document, the flowcharts and the policies are also available on the [Office of Faculty Affairs website](#).

Please review these documents carefully. As soon as possible, inform eligible faculty members and members of the Faculty Advisory Committees that applications for Faculty Professional Improvement Leaves to be scheduled in academic year 2024-2025 are now being accepted. **Applications for FPILs will be collected on FlashFolio** which can be accessed through FlashLine.

Eligibility

Faculty members who are eligible to submit a proposal for a Professional Improvement Leave at this time must **currently** (AY 2023-2024) be in at least the seventh full year of full-time employment in a tenure-track position at Kent State University or at least in the seventh full year of full-time employment since the completion of the academic year in which that faculty member most recently was granted a Professional Improvement Leave. Therefore, a faculty member who was not previously granted a Professional Improvement Leave must have begun full-time tenure-track employment no more recently than the 2017-2018 academic year. For a faculty member who was previously granted a Professional Improvement Leave, the most recent Professional Improvement Leave must have been completed no more recently than during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Time spent on unpaid leave of absence, as distinct from a Research and Creative Activity Appointment or assignment to an overseas study or university-sponsored faculty exchange program, does not count for the purpose of establishing eligibility to apply for a Professional Improvement Leave. Such time is deducted from the years of full-time employment for determining eligibility but does not necessitate the restarting of the eligibility clock from the time of the unpaid leave. In determining eligibility, it does not matter in which semester of a given academic year a faculty member either has held a previous leave or for which application is being made for the forthcoming year. The year in question is the academic year during which such leave either was held or is being sought.

A faculty member cannot be on a Professional Improvement Leave and any other University-funded leave at the same time; however, such leaves, when approved pursuant to applicable University policies, may be taken consecutively.

General Considerations

University Policy provides that the University may grant Professional Improvement Leaves to eligible faculty members for the purpose of

- 1) upgrading professional skills;
- 2) acquiring new skills; and,
- 3) intellectual and professional development that will be of benefit to the individual and to the University.

In order for a faculty member's application to be successful, the following conditions must be met:

- 1) The purpose of the leave must be judged acceptable; and.
- 2) The department or other budgetary unit must be able to support the programmatic and staffing needs of the unit in the absence of the faculty member who is granted the professional improvement leave.

Budget and Staffing Considerations

The impact on an academic unit's ability to maintain its budgetary and instructional staffing responsibilities, especially as it affects the unit's undergraduate and graduate programs, remains an essential consideration in reviewing Professional Improvement Leave requests. This dimension in the consideration of FPIL requests should be carefully assessed and explicitly addressed in all administrative recommendations, at all levels. Please note: University policy provides the following: "***As a general rule, the [academic unit] will absorb the load of the faculty member on faculty professional improvement leave without replacement. However, in extraordinary instances, which require presidential approval, a temporary replacement may be secured for some portion of the faculty member's load.***" Only in those extraordinary instances when the unit administrator requests presidential approval for staffing support, as described above, and provided that a proposal is otherwise determined to be acceptable, faculty members, who 1) have the greatest years of service to the University; and, 2) for whom the interval since the last award of a Faculty Professional Improvement Leave has been the greatest, receive priority.

At each level of administrative review (Department/School, College and/or Regional Campus), a ***detailed memorandum summarizing how budgetary/staffing implications of each recommended leave are to be met, including identification of actual—not merely projected—budgeted resources to be devoted to this purpose, should be included in the recommendation.***

PLEASE NOTE: Recommendations from any administrative level that do not include this information will not be considered at the next level of review.

Proposals

University policy states that eligible faculty members initiate a request for a Professional Improvement Leave by submitting a proposal of no more than 300 words; however, consistent with past years' applications, proposals of up to 1000 words will be accepted. As stated above, this year's FPIL applications will be collected on FlashFolio.

The proposal must clearly indicate:

- 1) the purpose of the leave;
- 2) how the leave is related to the faculty member's professional growth and development;
- 3) how the leave is of benefit both to the faculty member and the university; and,
- 4) the duration of the leave (Fall semester, Spring semester, or academic year).

Faculty members are also encouraged to indicate the outcomes of the most previous FPIL, if applicable.

As in past years, Faculty members who submit FPIL proposals should also provide an updated curriculum vita as a WORD PDF file uploaded directly to FlashFolio. If faculty members have difficulty formatting their CVs they should contact my assistant Vanessa Courie (vcourie@kent.edu) for assistance.

Schedule

The following schedule has been established for the submission and review of Faculty Professional Improvement Leave requests and proposals:

1. As soon as possible, but no later than October 3, 2022, Deans, Campus Deans, Chairs, or Directors must provide my assistant in the Office of Faculty Affairs, Vanessa Courie (vcourie@kent.edu), as complete a list as possible of faculty members who will be submitting proposals so that the FlashFolio evaluation system can be prepared to process the FPIL requests.

Also, please send Vanessa a complete list of the faculty members who will be reviewing FPIL requests at your level of the process or indicate if the list will be the same as the one provided for RTP reviews.

2. No later than **October 15, 2023**, faculty members must upload FPIL proposals in the 2023 Professional Improvement Leave which will appear on their FlashFolio Dashboard after their name has been submitted to this office. The applicant's current curriculum vita must also be uploaded in FlashFolio.
3. **Lastly, to formally initiate the FPIL process, faculty members will be notified on their FlashFolio dashboard when the self-evaluation process**

is open and this additional step must be completed no later than 5:00 p.m. October 15, 2023. No FPIL requests will be accepted after 5:00 p.m. on October 15, 2023. In addition to their Regional Campus Dean, Regional Campus faculty members should also notify their academic unit administrator (Department Chair, School Director or College Dean in colleges without departments or schools and University Libraries) when they apply for a FPIL.

4. Chairs/Directors and Regional Campuses Deans must upload recommendations to the appropriate College Dean no later than **November 3, 2023.** **PLEASE NOTE:** ***A detailed memorandum summarizing how budgetary/staffing implications of each recommended leave are to be met, including identification of actual—not merely projected—budgeted resources to be devoted to this purpose, should be included in the recommendation.*** Recommendations that do not include this information will not be considered.
5. College Deans (with and without Department or Schools) and the Dean of University Libraries must upload their recommendations to the Provost, no later than **December 5, 2023.** These recommendations should indicate clearly the specific term of the forthcoming academic year for which the request is made and supported. Again, **PLEASE NOTE:** ***A detailed memorandum summarizing how budgetary/staffing implications of each recommended leave are to be met, including identification of actual—not merely projected—budgeted resources to be devoted to this purpose, should be included in the recommendation.*** Recommendations that do not include this information will not be considered.
6. Following the review and consultations provided for in University Policy, faculty members will be informed as early as possible in the Spring Semester 2023 whether a leave has been granted for AY 2024-2025 and of the term(s) under which it has been granted.

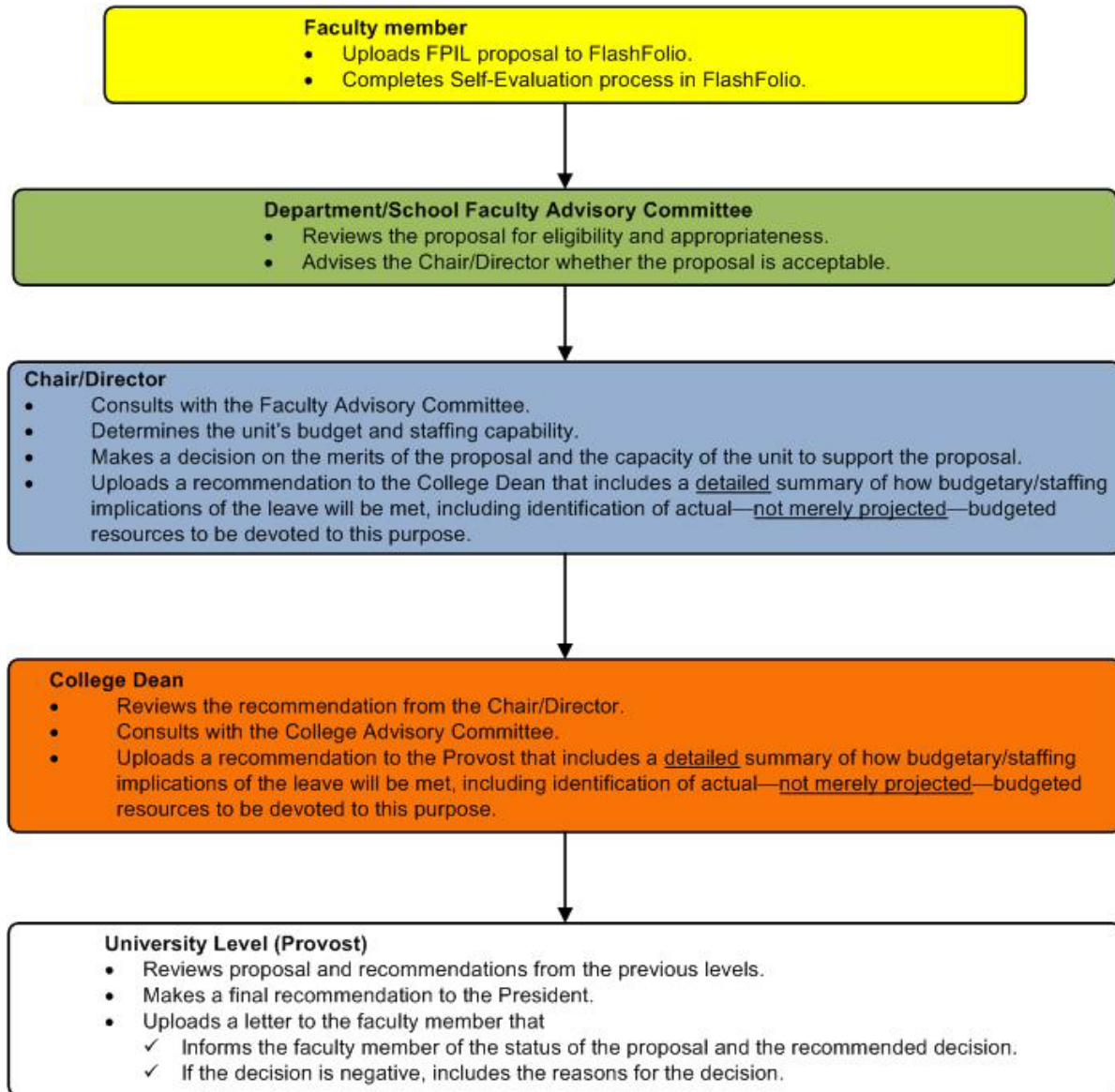
Appeals

If the decision of the Provost is negative, the faculty member may appeal to the President. The appeal must be sent to the Provost, in writing, within ten (10) days after receiving notice of the Provost's decision. In the appeal letter to the President, the faculty member should state completely and concisely why the appeal should be upheld.

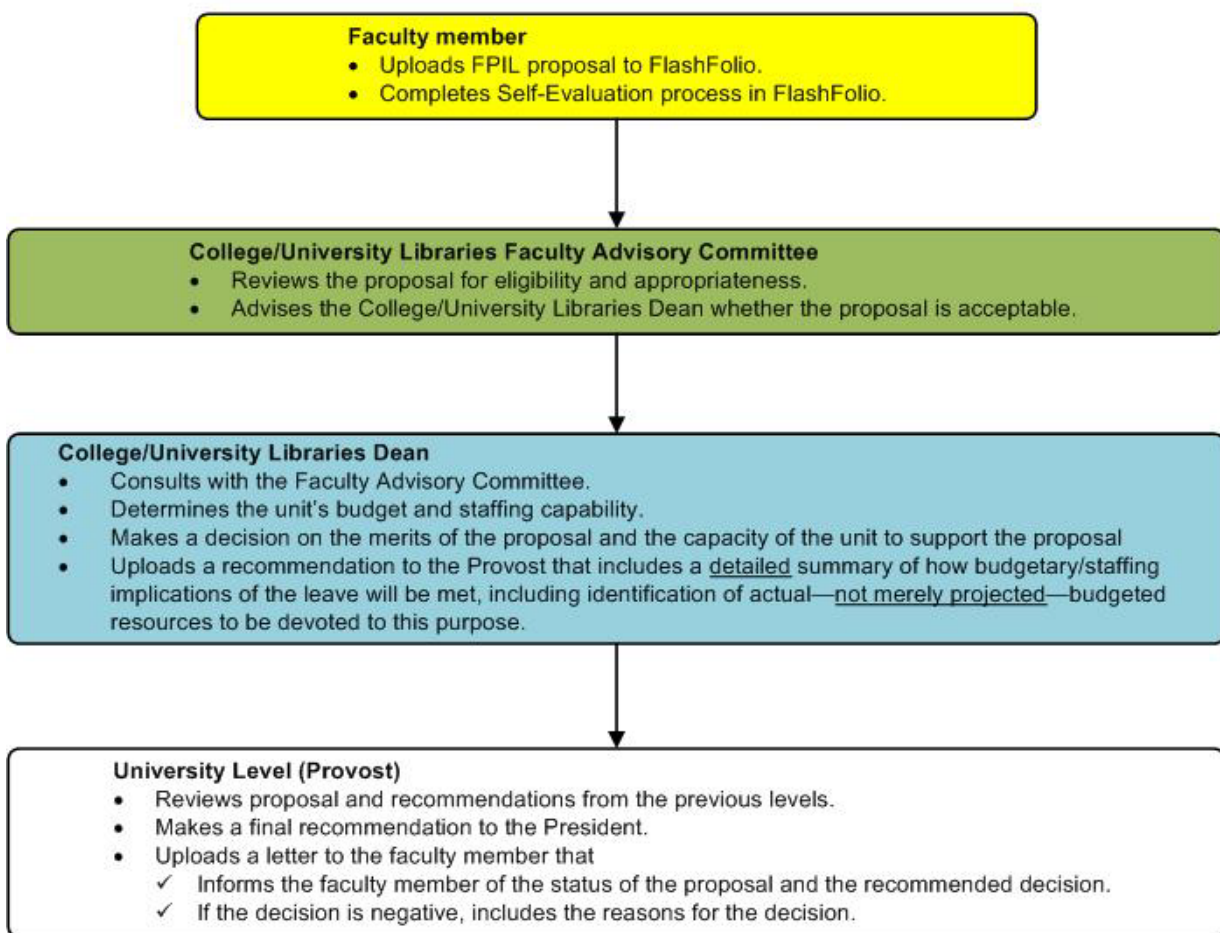
Revision/Resignation of Approve FPIL

Faculty who wish to revise or resign an approved FPIL must notify their Unit Administrator and Dean via email, who must forward the request to [Faculty Affairs](#) prior to the start of the FPIL. Revisions to an approved FPIL must occur in the same academic year as the approved leave. If a change is requested for the next academic year, the faculty member **must** resign the current FPIL and reapply.

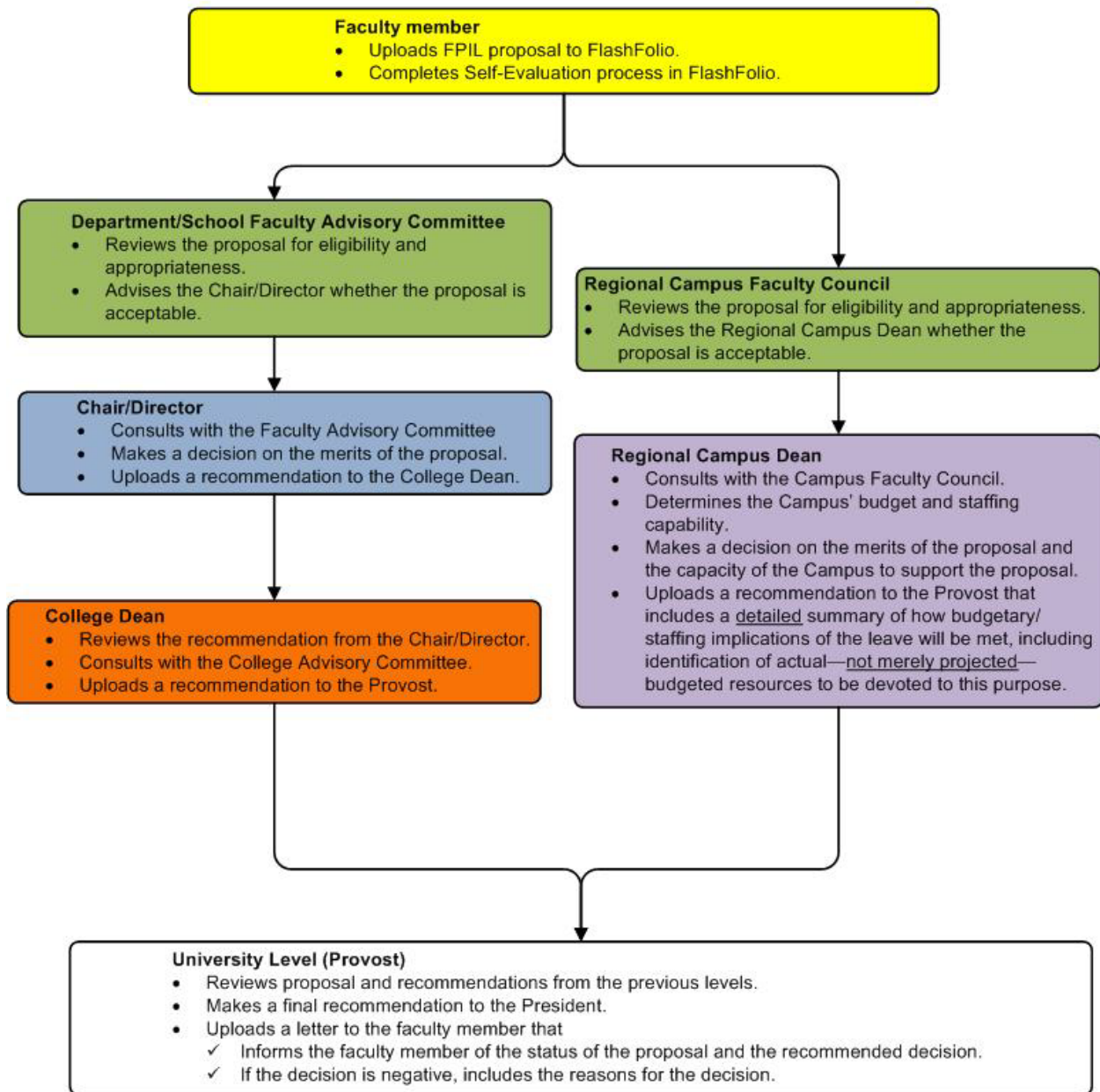
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KENT CAMPUS – Colleges with Departments or Schools**



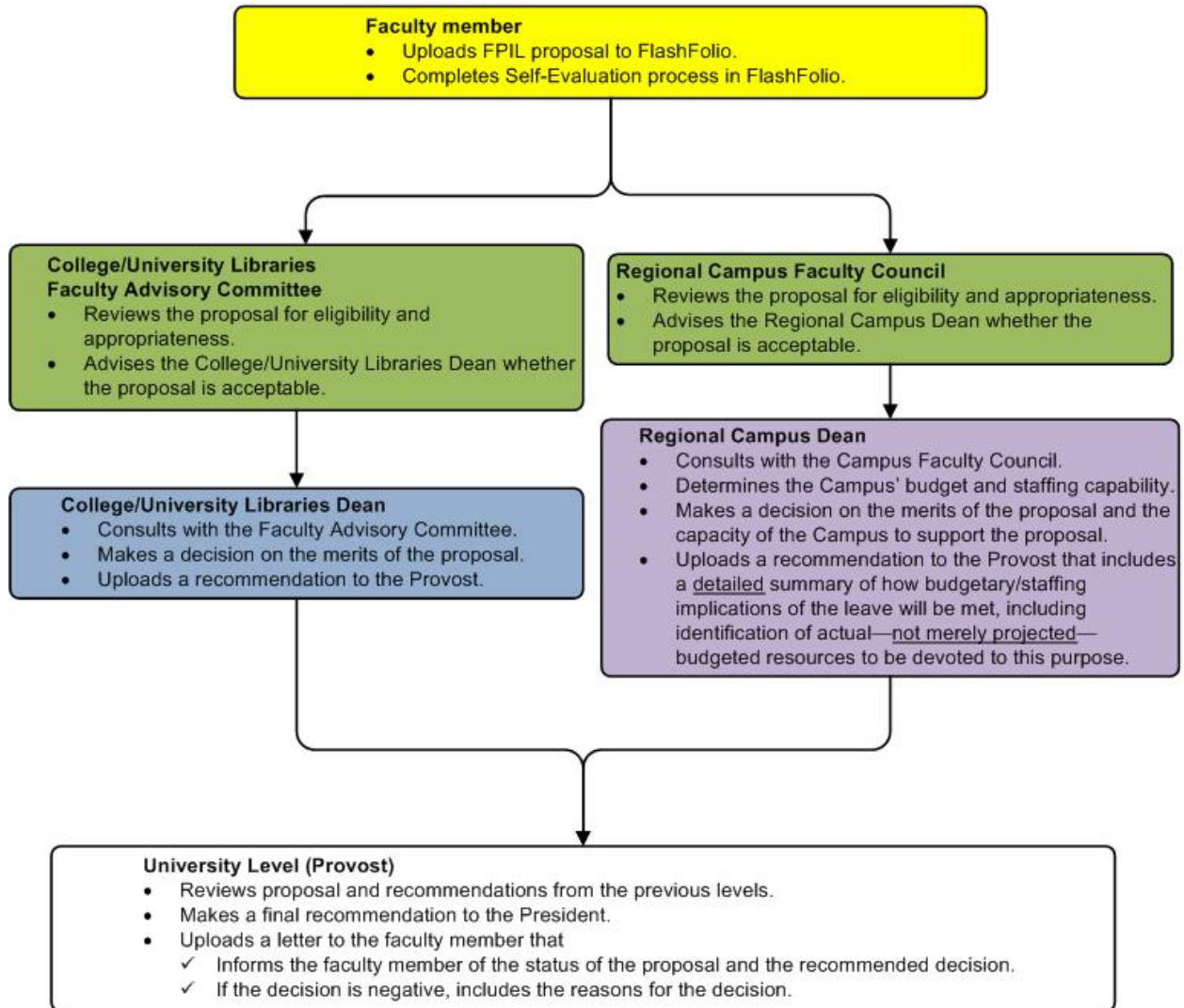
FACULTY PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT LEAVES
KENT CAMPUS – Colleges Without Departments or Schools and University Libraries



**FACULTY PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT LEAVES
REGIONAL CAMPUSES – Colleges with Departments or Schools**



FACULTY PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT LEAVES
REGIONAL CAMPUSES – Colleges Without Departments or Schools and University Libraries



University policy regarding faculty professional improvement leave

- (A) The university permits a tenured faculty member who has completed at least seven years of full-time service to the university and has the rank of assistant professor or higher to be freed of instructional or official responsibilities and granted a faculty professional improvement leave for purposes of:
 - (1) Upgrading professional skills;
 - (2) Acquiring new skills; or
 - (3) Intellectual and professional development that will be of benefit to the individual and to the university.
- (B) Every possible effort will be made to distribute fairly such leave to all units: departments, schools, independent schools, and library administration. As general rule, the department will absorb the load of the faculty member on faculty professional improvement leave without replacement. However, in extraordinary instances, which will require presidential approval, a temporary replacement may be secured for some portion of the faculty member's load.
- (C) Sabbatical leave shall be governed by the following:
 - (1) One semester at full benefits and a uniform rate of not less than one hundred per cent of the faculty member's contractual salary for the semester; or
 - (2) Two semesters at full benefits and uniform rate of not less than fifty per cent of the faculty member's contractual salary.
 - (3) For faculty on a twelve-month contract, the period between the end of the spring semester and the start of the following fall semester may also be taken as leave under this policy at full benefits and a uniform rate of not less than one hundred per cent of the faculty member's contractual salary for that period.
- (D) It should be clearly understood that the faculty member has an obligation to continue in active service with the university for a period of at least one academic year following the completion of the leave. If the faculty member does not return to the university, then the faculty member may be required to refund any salary received from the university during the period of the leave.

- (E) Any faculty member granted faculty professional improvement leave is not eligible for another faculty professional improvement leave for a period of seven years after the faculty professional improvement leave has been completed.

Policy Effective Date:

Jul. 01, 2018

Policy Prior Effective Dates:

3/18/1982, 2/14/1983, 6/11/1986, 6/1/2007, 3/1/2015

Operational procedures regarding faculty professional improvement leaves (sabbatical leaves)

(A) Eligibility.

- (1) All regular, full-time tenured members of the faculty at the rank of assistant professor or higher who are in their seventh year of regular tenure-track appointment by the university are eligible to apply for a faculty professional improvement leave. A faculty member granted a professional improvement leave must wait until the seventh year of regular faculty appointment after returning from that leave in order to be eligible to apply for another faculty improvement leave.
- (2) A faculty member cannot simultaneously have both a faculty professional improvement leave and a university research leave.
- (3) Members of a review committee at any level are eligible for a faculty professional improvement leave, although they cannot participate in any decision affecting themselves, a spouse or a relative.

(B) Initiation.

- (1) A faculty member initiates a request for a faculty professional improvement leave by submitting a concise proposal of no more than three hundred words. The proposal must clearly indicate the purpose of the leave, how it is related to the faculty member's professional growth and development, and how it is of benefit both to the individual and the university. The proposal must also note any appointment the faculty member expects to accept during the term of the faculty professional improvement leave.
- (2) The faculty member may withdraw his/her proposal from further consideration at any time.

(C) Submission.

- (1) The university permits a tenured faculty member who has completed at least seven years of full-time service to the university and has the rank of assistant professor or higher to be freed of instructional or official responsibilities and granted a faculty professional improvement leave for purposes of:
 - (a) Upgrading professional skills;

- (b) Acquiring new skills; or
 - (c) Intellectual and professional development that will be of benefit to the individual and the university.
 - (2) In order to grant a faculty professional improvement leave, the following conditions must be met:
 - (a) The purpose of the leave must be judged acceptable, and
 - (b) The department or other budgetary unit must be able to support the programmatic and staffing needs of the unity in the absence of the participant.
 - (3) For the purpose of submission and determination of seniority the lowest budgetary level to which a faculty member belongs will be considered the department. In the case of regional campus faculty, the lowest budgetary level is the regional campus in which a faculty member holds the primary appointment.
 - (4) For Kent campus faculty, the proposal must be submitted to the faculty member's department chairperson/school director or independent school dean. The final date for submission to the chairperson/school director of the proposal is the fifteenth of October of the prior academic year.
 - (5) For regional campus faculty members, the proposal is submitted to the dean of the regional campus and to the faculty member's department chairperson/school director. A copy of this plan must also be sent by the faculty member to the associate vice president for the extended university. The final date for submission to the chairperson/school director of the proposal is the fifteenth of October of the prior academic year.
- (D) Review process at department/school level.
- (1) The proposal shall be reviewed by the department/school advisory committee to determine whether eligibility requirements have been met and consider the appropriateness of the proposed plan to the interest of the university and the applicant's professional development. Upon completion of its review, the advisory committee shall advise the chairperson as to whether the purpose and plan for the faculty professional improvement leave is acceptable.

- (2) The chairperson/school director, after consulting with the advisory committee, shall determine for each proposal form a Kent campus faculty member the budget and staffing capability of the department to replace the faculty member requesting the leave.
 - (3) The chairperson/school director shall make a decision on both the merits of the proposal(s) and the capacity of the department to provide the staffing support required by the proposal(s). For regional campus faculty, the chairperson's recommendation shall be concerned solely with the merits of the proposal.
 - (4) For Kent campus faculty, the chairperson/school director shall recommend staffing support, where possible, first to those applicants in the department or school whose proposals were judged acceptable:
 - (a) Who have the greatest years of service to the university at the date of submission, and
 - (b) For whom the interval since the last award of faculty professional improvement leave has been greatest.
 - (5) The chairperson/school director shall then forward the proposal(s) and all recommendations to the college dean.
 - (6) After forwarding the recommendation(s) and proposal(s) to the dean, the department chairperson/school director shall inform the faculty member of the status of the proposal, including chairperson/school director recommendation(s). In the case of regional campus faculty, the chairperson/school director shall also send a copy to the regional campus dean and the associate vice president for the extended university.
- (E) Review process at the regional campus level.
- (1) The proposal shall be reviewed by the regional campus advisory committee to determine whether eligibility requirements have been met and consider the appropriateness of the proposed plans to the interests of the university and the individual's professional development. Upon completion of its review, the advisory committee shall advise the campus dean as to whether the purpose and plan for the faculty professional improvement is acceptable.

- (2) The campus dean, after consulting with the advisory committee, shall determine for each proposal the budget and staffing capability of the campus to replace the faculty member requesting the leave.
 - (3) The campus dean shall make a decision on both the merits of the proposal and the capacity of the campus to provide the staffing support required.
 - (4) The campus dean shall recommend staffing support, where possible, first to those applicants from the campus whose proposals were judged acceptable:
 - (a) Who have the greatest years of service to the university, and;
 - (b) For whom the interval since the last award of a faculty professional improvement leave has been the greatest.
 - (5) The campus dean shall then forward the proposal(s) and all recommendations to the associate vice president for the extended university.
 - (6) After forwarding the recommendations and proposal(s) to the associate vice president, the campus dean shall inform the faculty member of the status of the proposal, with copies to the chairperson and college dean.
- (F) Review process at the independent school level.
- (1) The proposal shall be reviewed by the school advisory committee as to its merits and determine whether eligibility requirements have been met and consider the appropriateness of the proposed plan to the interests of the university and the applicant's professional development. Upon the completion of its review, the advisory committee shall advise the dean as to whether the purpose and plan for the faculty professional improvement leave is acceptable.
 - (2) The dean, after consulting with the advisory committee, shall determine for each proposal from a Kent campus faculty member the budget and staffing capability of the school to replace the faculty member requesting the leave.
 - (3) The dean shall make a decision on both the merits of the proposal(s) and the capacity of the department to provide the staffing report required by the proposal(s). For regional campus faculty, the dean's recommendation shall be concerned solely with the merits of the proposal.

- (4) For Kent campus faculty, the dean shall recommend staffing support, where possible, first to those applicants in the school whose proposals were judged acceptable:
 - (a) Who have the greatest years of service to the university at the date of submission, and
 - (b) For whom the interval since the last award of a faculty professional improvement leave has been greatest.
 - (5) The dean shall then forward the proposal(s) and all recommendations to the office of the vice president for faculty affairs and personnel for review by the vice president for academic and student affairs.
 - (6) After forwarding the recommendation(s) and proposal(s) to the vice president, the dean shall inform the faculty member of the status of the proposal, including the dean's recommendation(s). In the case of regional campus faculty, the dean shall also send a copy to the regional campus dean and the associate vice president for the extended university.
- (G) Review process at the collegial level.
- (1) The college dean shall review the recommendation(s) concerning each proposal and, after consultation with the college advisory committee, shall make a recommendation concerning the proposal. The dean shall then forward the proposal, together with all previous recommendations, to the vice president for faculty affairs and personnel for review by the vice president for academic and student affairs (for Kent campus faculty members), and to the associate vice president for the extended university (for regional campus faculty members).
 - (2) The college dean shall inform the faculty member of the status of the proposal, including his/her recommended decision to the vice president, with a copy going to the chairperson/school director. In the case of a regional campus faculty member, a copy of the recommended decision shall also be sent to the regional campus dean.
- (H) Review process at the associate vice presidential level.
- (1) The associate vice president for the extended university will review the recommendations from the college deans and campus deans for all proposals submitted by regional campus faculty members, and make a recommendation concerning the proposal. The associate vice president

shall then forward the proposal, together with all previous recommendations, to the vice president for faculty affairs and personnel for review by the vice president for academic and student affairs.

- (2) The associate vice president shall inform the faculty member of the status of the proposal, including his/her recommended decision to the vice president, with copies to the chairperson, the campus dean, and the college dean.
- (I) Review at university level.
- (1) The vice president for academic and student affairs may consult, where appropriate, with the dean of the graduate college. After review by and consultation with the vice president for faculty affairs and personnel, the vice president shall then make a final recommendation to be forwarded to the president.
 - (2) The vice president for academic and student affairs shall inform the faculty member of the decision and, in the case of a negative decision, shall include the reasons therefore. In all cases a copy of the decision shall be sent to the vice president for faculty affairs and personnel, the dean and the department chairperson/school director. In the case of a regional campus faculty member, a copy shall also be sent to the regional campus dean and the associate vice president for the extended university.
- (J) Appeal.
- (1) If the decision of the vice president is negative, the faculty member may appeal to the president.
 - (2) The appeal must be sent to the office of the vice president for faculty affairs and personnel, in writing, within ten working days after receiving notification of the vice president's decision.
 - (3) In the appeal letter to the president, the faculty member should state completely and concisely why the appeal should be upheld.
- (K) Resignation. In the event a faculty member must resign a faculty professional improvement leave, notification shall be sent to the vice president for academic and student affairs as soon as possible, with copies sent to the appropriate dean and the vice president for faculty affairs and personnel.
- (L) Summary report. No later than two months after the beginning of the semester following completion of a faculty professional improvement leave,

the faculty member shall submit a summary report of the leave activities to the vice president for academic and student affairs, with copies going to the vice president for faculty affairs and personnel, the appropriate dean, and the department chairperson/school director. In the case of regional campus faculty, copies must also be sent to the associate vice president and the campus dean.

Policy Effective Date:

Mar. 01, 2015

Policy Prior Effective Dates:

3/18/1982, 10/29/1984, 6/11/1986, 12/29/1986, 3/16/1987, 6/1/2007