University of Houston Clear Lake

Memorandum of Administrative Policy
Teaching Relief Policy

Area: **Academic Affairs**

Section: **Faculty Leaves, Retirement, and Dismissal**

Number: **04.A.01 AP**

Description

The University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) is committed to providing an inclusive and family-friendly workplace environment for faculty and recognizes that there are many different types of family and domestic responsibilities. For this reason, the university offers a policy of temporary workload adjustments for acute family care situations. Policy at the university level ensures that there is consistency in how such situations are handled across departments and units in the university, and that all faculty members have equal access to assistance with acute family care situations.

Acute family care situations include pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, and serious or prolonged illness of the faculty member or of a child, parent, partner, or close relative, which can include but is not limited to those related via guardianship, stepfamily, biological family, and in-law family members.

Dissemination of this information should be widespread so that all eligible faculty and administrators are aware of it.

Eligibility

Eligible individuals are full-time faculty and administrators with teaching responsibilities of UHCL who have acute family care responsibilities.

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Terms

This program allows faculty members and administrators with teaching responsibilities two options:

1. One long semester of teaching relief may be provided, in which other meaningful duties at the program, department, college, and/or university level are to be assigned instead of teaching duties. Teaching relief cannot be used for circumstances where use of sick leave is appropriate. The application must be approved by the Department Chair, Dean, and Senior Vice President/Provost based on the criteria set out below. Under the terms of this program, the teaching load of the faculty member in the semester before and after the leave will not be affected by the terms of the leave.

2. One long semester of teaching relief may be provided, in which the salary of the faculty member is reduced for each course release.

Application

Faculty member must submit an application to their department chair and dean as soon as possible, preferably 6 months in advance of the semester in which teaching relief is requested. In emergency situations, the application can be expedited.

Application for Option 1 must include:

1. A request establishing the eligibility for the teaching relief.

2. A sufficiently detailed description of the work to be done in place of the applicant's normal teaching responsibilities.

3. A defined work product to be advanced.

Commented [WL1]: Who decides?

Commented [JL2R1]: The faculty member based on their situation I believe.

Commented [WL3]: This sentence can be deleted as it is redundant as stated on page 5.

Commented [JL4R3]: I don't think this is redundant. It's needed here to establish that sick leave comes first and that it may be more appropriate in short term situations.

Commented [AK5]: How does one know the reduction amount or percentage? Is it the same for all faculty members within each colleges, and department?

Commented [JL6R5]: I think that can be decided, based on the word "each." So if you only need one course release, then you take that. If you need more, you take more, but your salary would be reduced accordingly.

Commented [AK7]: Maybe I am thinking too much like a nurse but at the begining of this document it states "acute family care situations." Any of these could happen at a moments notice pregnancy (loss or complication), childbirth (unexpected early or complication), serious illness (that could be a immediate diagnosis) of the faculty member or of a child, parent, partner, or close relative. How would this be feasible to say preferably 6 months in advance" What if it was a month would the member still be approved?

Commented [RR8R7]: I agree with Karen, some circumstances you do not know about in advance. Would it then fall under FML?

Commented [JL9R7]: I agree too, but doesn't the next sentence cover the emergency situation?

Commented [AK10R7]: I thought so.

Commented [AK11]: Not sure what this means

Commented [JL12R11]: I saw this policy play out when a colleague was awaiting the birth of her first child. She chose option 1 and then was assigned administrative work. She had to finish the administrative work and write a report at the end of it if I recall.

4. An adequate method for evaluation of the work by the department chair, dean, or provost during the semester.

~~5.~~ The faculty member's teaching load in the semester before and after the leave must be specified.

Application for Option 2 must include:

1. A request establishing the eligibility for the teaching relief and clarifying the relief requested.
2. The faculty member's teaching load in the semester before and after the leave must be specified.
3. In the case of partial load teaching reductions, t~~T~~he ~~department chair and dean~~ faculty member must ~~identify~~ propose how the affected teaching load will be managed.

In the case that two faculty members experience the same acute family case, each may take the teaching relief, either in consecutive semesters or simultaneously, as best fits their needs and those of their departments.

Application Approval

Approval is contingent on the following findings:

1. The proposed project must be found to be beneficial at the department, the program, the college, or the university level.
2. The instructional responsibilities of the department or program can be met through the allocation of existing resources. The dean and provost, in consultation with the department chair and faculty member, may make exceptions to this.

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Commented [WL13]: Does this mean how the faculty member will manage the teaching load, such as by teaching online, or does this mean who will cover the courses that the faculty member cannot teach? If it is the latter, then this is up to the Dean and does not belong in the application for relief prepared by the faculty member requesting the relief.

Commented [JL14R13]: I'm assuming the former and revised accordingly.

Commented [WL15]: Seems like this can be existing resources, or additional resources such as the hiring of an adjunct or lecturer to cover the courses.

Commented [RL16R15]: I would assume that if someone is hired, it would have to come from existing resources.

3. The department or program will continue to be in compliance with applicable statutes and policies, including:

    a. Texas Government Code § 658.002 – Working Hours Required for Salaried Employees

    b. Texas Government Code § 658.007 – Working Hours for Employees of Institutions of Higher Education

    c. Texas Education Code § 51.402 – Report of Institutional and Academic Duties

    d. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Faculty Workload Guidelines

    e. Board of Regents Policy § 21.05 – Faculty Workload

    f. UHCL Academic Workload Policy

4. Approval by SVP/Provost: The dean should submit the application to the SVP/Provost along with his or her written review regarding eligibility and approval. Upon final review, the SVP/Provost will issue a written decision to the applicant and the appropriate dean and department chair. The decision of the SVP/Provost is final.

5. Notification of approval is sent to the faculty member requesting the leave, the Dean, the Department Chair, and Human Resources.

Consultation with HR

Human Resources will be contacted by the faculty, after receipt of approval by the Provost, in order to coordinate the logistical details of the relief. Human Resources will advise on the timing of the relief as well as any requirements regarding how time will be coded (sick leave, FMLA, PeopleSoft designations, etc.).

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Clarifications and Exclusions

Tenure clock extension: The guidelines outlined in this document do not address tenure clock issues for faculty. A tenure-track faculty member may request separately a tenure clock extension owing to the issues raised by an acute family care situation.

Sick leave: These guidelines are independent of sick leave ~~or vacation,~~ which must be taken in situations where no duties are conducted. Thus, a faculty member will generally use either Teaching Relief or sick leave during the same reporting period. In situations such as childbirth or recovery from an illness, a faculty member or administrator with teaching responsibilities might take sick leave for a period of time and then subsequently begin Teaching Relief. However, if a faculty member or administrator with teaching responsibilities is able to work at home for some portion of the day, a combination of Teaching Relief and sick leave ~~or vacation leave~~ (if applicable) may be appropriate.

Annual reviews: Faculty members or administrators with teaching responsibilities who have been assigned modified duties should not be penalized in annual reviews. These faculty members and administrators should be evaluated on the performance of the duty assigned rather than on the duty for which it was substituted. For example, if a special service task is substituted for teaching, then the faculty member is evaluated on the special task rather than teaching, with normal service rated separately according to departmental criteria.

Commented [WL17]: Faculty cannot use sick leave if they are not sick; this would be fraud. Faculty do not have 'vacation' days so this part needs to be deleted.

Commented [AK18R17]: I agree maybe say as applicable since administrators do get vacation.

Commented [JL19R17]: Before this policy existed, I was instructed by HR to take all of my sick leave (about 10 days if I remember correctly) to bond with my newly adopted children. I was not allowed short-term disability since I hadn't been pregnant and didn't need any physical recovery time. My only other option would have been FML without pay. This policy would have been helpful. So let's maybe leave the question about sick leave for legal to sort out?

Commented [WL20R17]: This is for faculty specifically. Faculty do not have 'vacation' time so this needs to be deleted.

Commented [JL21R17]: Done. Please vote.

Commented [WL22]: See my comment above.

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Revision Log

Revision Number: 1, Approval Date: 05/10/2018

Approval

Approved by University Council:

May 10, 2018

Date