Personal Leave of Absence

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Scope
This policy applies to regular full-time and part-time administrators and staff.

Policy Statement
All employees covered by this policy are eligible to apply for a leave of absence (LOA) without pay for personal reasons, not to exceed six (6) months. Employees’ positions are guaranteed during an approved LOA, except in the case of position elimination due to a workforce reduction or restructuring. In this case, employees on an approved leave of absence would be eligible for severance in accordance with the University policy.

In considering a leave request, it is critical that the supervisor and department head evaluate the consequences of granting the request. Consideration should be given to employee retention efforts, and the department’s ability to continue to operate and provide a high level of service during the employee’s absence.

Procedures
1. Requests for a LOA must be made in writing to the supervisor generally 30 days prior to the beginning of the desired leave period, and have the approval of the department head. The written request must include the proposed length and dates of leave.
2. The department head must complete and forward a Personnel Change Form to the Office of Human Resources prior to the first day of leave.
3. The employee should return office keys to his or her supervisor.
4. The employee should be directed to contact the Benefits Office to arrange for the continuation of any applicable benefits.

Requests for an extension of a Personal LOA within the six (6) month maximum should be made in writing to the supervisor at least two (2) weeks prior to the expiration of the original approved leave period.

An employee’s failure to return to work after the expiration of a Personal LOA may be interpreted by the University as a voluntary resignation.

Benefits
For participating full-time employees, medical, dental and life insurance coverage will continue through the end of the month in which a Personal LOA begins. On the first of the following month, the employee may continue these benefits by paying the entire cost of the premiums (employee and employer portions).

Paid leave (including sick, vacation, and holiday) does not accrue during a LOA because it is an unpaid leave. Contributions to the Retirement Plan are suspended during the LOA, and because it is an unpaid leave, no social security taxes are paid. Tuition Remission benefits continue during the leave period.
Employees continue to be credited with service at the University during a Personal LOA. See policy #126, Breaks in Service and Rehire, for information on continuous service credit. For information on the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), refer to policy #502.