

PHASED RETIREMENT PROGRAM for FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy has been established to provide eligible academic and professional employees the opportunity to phase into retirement gradually.

PROGRAM

This phased retirement program allows eligible employees to reduce workload for one full year or two full years prior to retirement, upon the request of the employee and after appropriate, required approvals. Approval shall be made by the President (or designee) and will be based on the needs of the department and availability of resources. At the time of approval of the phased retirement program, the employee signs a letter of irrevocable resignation for the purposes of retirement.

PURPOSE

The phased retirement program will:

- Provide eligible employees an opportunity for a phased approach to retirement prior to full retirement.
- Promote workforce succession planning by developing staff and allow for the transfer of knowledge and institutional history to new staff through mentoring.
- Allow eligible employees to move into retirement gradually through a reduction in workload with a commensurate reduction in pay.
- Enable departments to plan for the replacement of long-term employees in advance of their actual full retirement.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for participation, an employee must:

- Have a minimum of ten (10) years benefits eligible service with New York State.
- Qualify for retirement as a member of the New York State and Local Retirement System, New York State Teachers' Retirement System or the SUNY Optional Retirement Program (TIAA, VOYA, AIG or Fidelity), and meet the age requirement for pension eligibility.
- Complete and sign a phased retirement program application (such application will include an agreed upon work plan for the duration of the approved phased retirement program).
- Be willing to sign an irrevocable resignation letter for the purpose of retirement.

MUTUALLY VOLUNTARY

This phased retirement program is entirely voluntary. Any eligible employee considering participation should discuss the program with their department chair/head and their appropriate cabinet-level administrator. Additionally, eligible employees should consult with their retirement system representatives, tax advisors, financial planners, Social Security Administration and our campus health benefits administrator (Victoria Phipps) before making a decision to participate. Eligible employees have the right to consult with their union representation and request that a union representative is present during any meeting discussing phased retirement.

Participation in this program is not guaranteed and is subject to review and approval by the campus President to ensure that the arrangement is manageable and beneficial to the campus. The campus retains the right to deny an application where it is not in the best interest of the campus to allow participation.

PROGRAM AND APPOINTMENT DETAILS

BUDGET TITLE

The eligible employee will remain in their current title (academic rank title, qualified academic rank title or professional title) achieved at the time they begin participation, and will continue to be represented by United University Professions (UUP) and covered by the Agreement between UUP and the State of New York for the duration of this appointment.

LENGTH OF CONTRACT

FACULTY: The program will coincide with the normal appointment year (09/01/xx to 08/31/xx) as defined by the SUNY Board of Trustees Policies in Article XI: Appointment of Employees, Title H, Section 3 *Appointment Year*. Spring contracts that are approved will begin with the January obligation; the payroll obligation of an approved spring program will begin on 03/01/xx and end on 2/28/xx of the next year.

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES: The program will coincide with the campus administrative payroll calendar and begin on a mutually agreed upon payroll period effective date within campus deadlines.

PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATION AND SALARY

The eligible employee will have **two** phased retirement program options to choose from:

1. Reduce to a workload/obligation of 50% FTE and commensurate salary and **remain benefits eligible** during the duration of their agreed upon program. Benefits eligible means that employees who choose this option to reduce to 50% FTE, 50% obligation and 50% salary will remain eligible to participate as an active employee in medical (health, dental and vision) insurances.
2. Reduce to a workload/obligation to less than 50% FTE and commensurate salary. Employees who choose to reduce to less than 50% FTE, less than 50% obligation and less than 50% salary will become **benefits ineligible** and will not be eligible to participate as an active employee in medical (health, dental and vision) insurances for the duration of their agreed upon program. NOTE: Employees choosing this option will collaborate with their department and the provost's office to determine workload and appropriate appointment percentage.

Phased retirement appointments will be for a full academic year (faculty) or calendar year/college year (professional) basis for either one or two years. Phased retirement programs will not be approved for one semester only.

WORK PLAN

The workload and work assignment will be established in consultation with the department chair/head and is subject to final approval by the appropriate cabinet-level administrator. This established and agreed upon work plan will be documented on the phased retirement program application. Applications submitted without a proposed work plan will not be approved.

FACULTY: The workload plan will be developed in a collaborative effort with the faculty member, faculty member's department chair or school dean and the office of the provost. Workload plans will be subject to approval by the Provost.

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES: Work assignments and work schedules will be developed by the employee and immediate supervisor and are subject to approval by the appropriate cabinet-level administrator.

SALARY

The starting salary for the phased retirement program will be calculated at either 50% or less than 50% of the full-time base salary of the employee's position immediately preceding participation in the phased retirement program. Phased retirement program participants remain eligible for negotiated across-the-board salary increases.

BENEFITS

Employees who reduce to 50% FTE will not have any change in health, dental and vision coverage, or premiums as the result of this program. Employees who reduce to less than 50% FTE will not be eligible to be enrolled in health, dental and vision programs as a result of this program. For SUNY Optional Retirement Program (TIAA, Voya, AIG or Fidelity) participants, retirement contributions made by the state on behalf of the employee will continue until such time as the employee retires. The retirement contribution will continue at the percentage achieved prior to entering the phased retirement program, but on the reduced salary received while in the program. For NYS Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) and Employees' Retirement System (ERS) participants, service will continue to be reported to their respective

retirement system and receive pro-rated service credit as per TRS and ERS crediting guidelines. Additionally, reduced FTE and salary may affect final average salary (FAS) calculations based on reduced earnings.

LEAVE ACCRUALS

Program participants will continue to accrue and use applicable leave accruals but on a part-time basis as outlined in Article 23 of the UUP agreement which is subject to change under future agreements.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Phased retirement program participants are not eligible for Title F leaves. Program participants may be eligible for other leaves such as Family and Medical Leave Act, if eligibility requirements are met as defined by law.

HOW TO APPLY

Eligible employees wishing to participate in the phased retirement program must:

- Complete the Phased Retirement Program Application for Faculty and Professional Employees Represented by UUP and route for approval.
- Upon approval, sign a contract letter of acceptance for the agreed upon phased retirement plan.
- Upon approval, sign an irrevocable letter for the purpose of retirement coinciding with the cessation of their phased retirement plan.