

# FAYETTEVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

## FACULTY REASSIGNED TIME

<b>Authority:</b>	Issued by the Chancellor. Changes or exceptions to administrative policies issued by the Chancellor may only be made by the Chancellor.
<b>Category:</b>	Academic Affairs
<b>Applies to:</b>	●Administrators      ●Faculty
<b>History:</b>	Approved – February 2, 2024
<b>Related Policies:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Conflicts of Interest and Commitment and External Professional Activities for Pay</li> <li>●Guidelines on Reassigned Time for Faculty [UNC Manual policy #300.2.6 (G)]</li> </ul>
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### I. INTRODUCTION

Maintaining the highest level of competence in their discipline, keeping up with recent scholarships, and pursuing other professional and service interests, are expected of faculty members at Fayetteville State University (University). In addition, the University of North Carolina System (UNC System) has acknowledged that for faculty to remain highly competent in their disciplines and to maintain familiarity with recent scholarship, they often need sustained and dedicated periods to carry out tasks related to teaching, research, creative activities, or external activities related to their positions. Therefore, this policy (Policy) outlines the requirements that govern a Faculty Reassigned Time (FRT) program at the University.

### II. FACULTY REASSIGNED TIME

FRT is an approved period for faculty members to pursue full-time research or creative activities, participate in exchange or fellowship programs, or engage in other professional pursuits to enhance their professional competence. Faculty members approved for FRT may be supported by University funds or funds from external sources.

### III. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply for FRT, a faculty member must meet the following criteria:

- Be full-time and tenured at the rank of associate professor or above.
- Be on a tenure-track and be in the final probationary year. Consideration will be contingent upon the tenure-track faculty member receiving tenure.

- Not have received FRT within the last six years of the date of the application.

#### **IV. NUMBER OF AWARDS**

Depending on budgetary considerations, the University may support up to four (4) faculty members (one from each college) on FRT from University funding sources in addition to FRT fully funded by external sources in an academic year. Because the benefits of FRT must be balanced against the needs of the particular department/school, no more than one (1) faculty member per department/school may be awarded FRT in any given year. This is so as not to cause an undue burden on the department/school.

#### **V. APPLYING FOR FACULTY RELEASE TIME**

##### **A. Deadline**

Faculty members must provide notice of their intent to apply for FRT to their Academic Unit Head (i.e., Department Chair or Associate Dean) at least one year prior to the date the faculty member is seeking to begin FRT.

##### **B. Procedures**

###### **1. Application Process**

It is important to note that FRT is neither deferred compensation nor an entitlement based upon length of service. Approval of FRT will be based upon the merits of the faculty member's proposal and the recommendation and approval of the appropriate administrators.

A faculty member who is interested in applying for FRT must submit a completed form to their respective Academic Unit Head at least six months prior to the period when they expect to begin the FRT. Late applications will not be considered.

Along with the form, a faculty member requesting FRT must submit to the Academic Unit Head supporting documentation to include the following:

- Curriculum vitae
- Description of the project for which FRT is being requested.
- Expectations for supplemental funding for expenses and/or salary.
- Invitations to other institutions or award letters for fellowships.
- A statement on how the FRT will enhance the faculty member's effectiveness in teaching, scholarship, or service to the University, state, or nation.
- A statement on the potential value of the FRT to the faculty member's department/school/college.
- A statement on how the FRT will contribute to the faculty member's knowledge in the faculty member's field of study.

- Expected outcomes, e.g., book, article, creative expression, new academic or outreach program.
- Any other information/documentation required by the Academic Unit Head.
- Any other information/documentation that the faculty member considers relevant to the faculty member's application.

**2. Factors to Consider**

- a. In determining whether to recommend approval of a faculty member's request for FRT, Academic Unit Heads, Deans, and the Provost shall consider factors to include, but not be limited to the following:
- Needs and resources of the department/school, especially continuity of undergraduate and graduate teaching.
  - The time since the faculty member's last request for FRT (if applicable).
  - The faculty member's seniority in the department/school.
  - The faculty member's performance as determined by the faculty member's annual performance evaluation.
  - Length of time for which FRT is requested.
  - Quality of the project to be undertaken and how it fits into the faculty member's career goals.
  - Expected positive impact on the unit and the University.
- b. Academic Unit Heads and Deans shall consider, all other things being equal, requests for FRT in the following order of priority:
- FRT (without FSU pay) subsidized entirely by an external entity with no financial support from the University (e.g., NASA, NIH, NSF, Google, SAS).
  - FRT (with FSU supplemental pay) subsidized entirely by another entity which will allow the faculty member to conduct research or teach (e.g., Fulbright). The University may offer supplemental pay.
  - FRT (with FSU partial pay) subsidized by an external entity whereby the University will make up the difference between the external support and the faculty member's current salary (e.g., visiting appointment at another institution, externship at a non-profit entity).
  - FRT (with FSU full pay) in which the University pays full salary and benefits (e.g., educational attachment at a federal or state

agency, an educational/professional organization or a company or industry).

### **3. Review and Approval Process**

The review and approval process shall be as follows:

#### **9-Month Faculty**

- The Academic Unit Head shall review the submitted proposal and supporting documentation and forward a recommendation to the Dean within 14 calendar days.
- The Dean shall review the request and recommendation and decide on whether the request will be approved or denied within 14 calendar days.
- The Dean shall notify the faculty member, applicable Academic Unit Head and the Provost of the Dean's decision.

#### **12-Month Faculty**

- The Academic Unit Head shall review the submitted proposal and supporting documentation and forward a recommendation to the Dean within 14 calendar days.
- The Dean shall review the request and recommendation and forward a recommendation to the Provost within 14 calendar days.
- The Provost shall review the request and recommendation and decide on whether the request will be approved or denied.
- The Provost shall notify the faculty member, applicable Academic Unit Head and the Dean of the Provost's decision.

Compensation for salary and expenses from all sources must be approved prior to FRT being granted.

The faculty member approved for FRT is expected to devote full-time to the approved project.

If circumstances require that a substantial change be made by the faculty member after approval by the Dean or Provost, the faculty member should obtain approval of the changes in same manner as outlined above.

### **4. Appeal**

A faculty member may appeal a denied request for FRT to the Provost. The Provost's decision on the appeal is final.

### **C. Report**

A faculty member awarded FRT must submit a report of accomplishments to the Academic Unit Head and the Dean within three (3) months following the end of the FRT. The Dean will forward a copy of the report and the Dean's assessment of those accomplishments to the Provost.

In addition, within six (6) months of the end of the FRT, the faculty member shall formally present the work accomplished during the FRT to departmental/school colleagues and the University community. Failure to comply with the requirement to submit a report and make a formal presentation will subject the faculty member to being ineligible for future FRT opportunities.

## **VI. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **A. Duration**

The duration of a 9-month faculty member's FRT shall be determined by the Dean but shall not exceed one (1) or two (2) semesters. The duration of a 12-month faculty member's FRT shall be determined by the Provost.

### **B. Promotion and Post-Tenure Review**

The period of FRT will count as time toward promotion and post-tenure review.

### **C. Salary Increases**

A faculty member on FRT is eligible for consideration for merit salary increases, promotion, one-time payments or any other approved salary adjustments.

### **D. Continuing University Obligations**

A faculty member on FRT will continue to have employment obligations as an University employee; thus, the faculty member is expected to remain accessible through a reliable means of communication with supervisory personnel, comply with reasonable directives issued by University personnel, respond in a timely and cooperative manner to requests for information, and take such actions as may be required to comply with any applicable law or University policy or process.

### **E. Return To Service**

A faculty member who receives FRT shall be required to return to full-time service at the University for a minimum of 9 months or 12 months, whichever is applicable, or to repay the salary received during the leave period.

Faculty members who are members of the N.C. Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System who are on an approved leave of absence for educational purposes are required to return to service as a contributing member for at least three (3) years; otherwise, service credit earned during a leave of absence will be cancelled.

A faculty member while on FRT who accepts a position at another post-secondary institution, or any other paid employment not included in the proposal or approved as external professional activities for pay will be considered to have abandoned their employment.

## VII. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

### A. Compensation

If approved, a faculty member on FRT for a full academic year (9-month faculty) or twelve months (12-month faculty) may be paid 50% of the faculty member's annual salary for that period of time. A faculty member on FRT for one (1) semester (9-month faculty) or six (6) months (12-month faculty) may be granted the faculty members' full salary for that period of time. The Provost shall use any salary funds not utilized for FRT to replace faculty on FRT.

In some cases, an external source may pay a portion or all of a faculty member's salary while on FRT. In these cases, the faculty member's total salary should not exceed the amount of the salary the faculty member is to receive while on FRT. Such an amount does not include funds awarded to cover living expenses, travel costs, administrative support, research efforts, publication costs and other expenses related to the approved proposal.

Any changes in the amount or source of compensation must be approved in accordance with the University's *External Professional Activities for Pay* policy.

### B. Benefits

#### 1. Retirement

##### a. N.C. Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System

During FRT with full pay, the University will continue making the employer contribution to TSERS, and the faculty member will continue making his or her pre-tax contribution to TSERS through payroll deduction.

During FRT with partial pay, if the faculty member wishes to continue making his or her retirement contribution, the University will continue making the employer contribution. The employer and employee contributions are based on the faculty member's base pay rate in effect immediately preceding the reassignment. The faculty member's contribution shall be on an after-tax basis. Monthly payment must be made timely by the faculty member, by personal payment, to the University's Office of Human Resources, for transmission to the State Retirement System.

By State law, if a faculty member is on an approved leave of absence for educational purposes with partial pay, service credit may be purchased if retirement contributions are paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month following the month service credit is allowed. If contributions are not made by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the Retirement System shall assess a penalty of 1% of the combined employer and employee contributions per month. In addition, unless the faculty member returns to service as a contributing member

within twelve (12) months after completion of his or her educational program and contributes to the Retirement System for at least three (3) more years (except in the event of death or disability), contributions will be refunded and the service credits canceled. Regardless of when the educational program was completed, the maximum allowable credit for educational leave or interrupted service for educational purposes is six years over one's career.

During FRT, the faculty member will remain eligible for the State's Disability Income Plan and the Death Benefit.

**b. UNC Optional Retirement Program**

If a faculty member participates in the UNC Optional Retirement Program (ORP), the same procedures outlined above for TSERS members apply, including the six-year maximum allowable credit limit. (See TSERS discussion above). However, employer and employee contributions are payable to the appropriate ORP carrier instead of the Retirement System.

**c. State Health Plan**

A faculty member on FRT is eligible and should continue to receive the University's contribution for State Health Plan coverage, whether on full or partial pay. The employee's contributions for dependents' coverage will continue to be payroll deducted from the faculty member's paycheck on a before-tax basis.

**d. Other Benefits**

A faculty member should contact the Office of Human Resources for information about continuing other benefits while on FRT.