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School of Public and International Affairs Research Leave Program June 2023

The SPIA Research Leave Policy of the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) provides tenure-track and tenured faculty members periodic opportunities for a two-course reduction in their teaching load in a given academic year, with the expectation that the time normally devoted to those two classes will be spent on research. This program is intended to enable the production of high quality, publishable research and is beneficial to the University, SPIA, the faculty member's department, and to our students. The program also enables departments to be more competitive in faculty recruitment and retention, allows faculty to keep up to date with developments in their fields, refreshes faculty members' teaching, and advances the research productivity of the faculty. Note that each Research Leave requires the approval of the department head, dean, and provost. This program consists of the following:

- Full salary for an academic year, with a two-course reduction in teaching load for that year. The standard teaching load in SPIA is four courses, two each semester. The reduction may be taken in one semester (resulting in a 0-2 or 2-0 load) or spread across the academic year (resulting in a 1-1 load).
- Service commitments are reduced during the leave, as well. A semester's release from service ordinarily accompanies a semester's release from teaching, for example. Faculty on a research leave should arrange their reduced service load in consultation with the relevant department head.
- Depending on contractual obligations, tenure-track faculty are eligible to partake of this program after successful completion of the third-year review. Faculty whose contracts specify a reduced teaching load after successful completion of the third-year review shall receive priority for this opportunity, but they must still submit a one-page letter outlining the research agenda they intend to pursue, along with its benefits (see "Applying for the Research Leave Program" below). While a maximum of two Research Leave opportunities per year will be the norm for each of SPIA's three academic departments (beginning in the 2020-21 academic year), the contractual obligations of new faculty who recently joined SPIA may occasionally precipitate some departments to apply (and get approved) for more than the maximum of two leaves per year. For all pre-tenure, tenure-track faculty, the Research Leave Policy is not in addition to contractually obligated leaves that may be specified in offer letters (i.e., they are one and the same). However, so as to meet contractual obligations, and so as to promote the professional development of pre-tenure faculty, contractual, pre-tenure leaves take priority, and hence, in any given year, may compose, fill, or even exceed the typical annual allotment of two leaves available to each department.
- Tenured faculty members may be eligible to partake of the Research Leave no more than once every six years. The applicant must consult with and receive approval from the department head to determine sequencing of the leave.
- The SPIA dean's office will fund one Research Leave opportunity per department, per academic year, by providing funds to support the equivalent of one 33% EFT Graduate Teaching Assistant

(\$14,372 in 2019-20) for the academic year. Although the faculty member who receives this faculty development opportunity receives a two-course reduction, the expectation is that the resources provided by the dean's office will generate three replacement courses (which, as relevant, may be offered by more than one replacement instructor).¹ The replacement courses offered need not be the same ones released from the faculty member's teaching load. The remaining two courses in the faculty member's load will be determined by the department head, and the department head determines which courses are taught by the replacement instructor(s).

- Contingent on the department's own funding availability, the SPIA dean's office will allow a second Research Leave per department, per academic year, which will afford a release of two courses in one semester or one course released in the fall and one in the spring semester of the academic year. (Again, contractual obligations to pre-tenure faculty may necessitate that relevant departments, in consultation with the dean, make available multiple leaves in a given year). Ideally, the department would also cover the cost of a third course offering, so that a 33% EFT Graduate Teaching Assistant could be hired. Funding from dean's office may be available for departments that lack the full resources to provide for this third course.
- A grant of reduced teaching responsibility in one semester does not preclude appropriate buyouts from external sources in the same academic year (refer to the SPIA Instructional EFT and Research EFT Buyout Policy). Note that course buyouts cannot reduce a teaching load to zero. A course buyout on top of leave is limited to one course, reducing the faculty member's teaching course load to 1-0 or 0-1, and only in exceptional cases.
- Reduction to 0-0 represents a request for a full year faculty leave. In such cases, the buyout policy does not apply. The faculty member typically secures external funding to replace 50% of their salary plus associated fringe and overhead expenses (if this is processed as a sponsored project) to cover their salary for one semester of leave. Salary savings from these funds will be used to replace courses and can be used at the Dean's discretion to support needs across the School.
- The decision to award this Research Leave opportunity includes a determination that the two- (or four-) course reduction can be addressed by the department without adversely affecting its educational mission.
- Non-tenure-track faculty are not eligible to participate in this program.
- Participation in this program is not an entitlement; those who are chosen to participate will have articulated a sound plan for a productive use of the leave.

Illustration

Faculty members A, B, and C have all requested research leave from their Department for the upcoming academic year. Faculty member A just successfully completed their third-year review and, as part of their offer of employment, was granted research leave once that milestone was reached. As such, Faculty member A is granted a research leave. The faculty member has chosen to have the two-course release provided in the Spring term, thereby enabling research in another state, and the Department Head agrees. Forms A and B are completed, along with the other steps in the process, and the leave is granted.

For this faculty member's approved request, the Dean's office provides one .33 EFT Graduate Teaching Assistant to teach three courses (in replacement of the faculty member's two released courses).

The Department, having funds available from other sources, is able to support one more faculty leave request. Faculty members B and C submit their proposals to the Department Head for consideration. The Department Head then consults the Dean. Together, it is determined that the proposal submitted by Faculty member C warrants approval for this upcoming year. Faculty member B may submit a request for

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the following year.

Faculty member C has requested to take a full-year of leave offsite, justifying the extra two-course release through the award of an externally funded grant that pays for the faculty member's salary, fringe, and overhead for the entire second semester. Forms A and B are completed, along with the other steps in the process, and the leave is granted.

The Department then uses the funds it already had available to replace the teaching of Faculty Member C. The Department's funds were depleted after having only replaced two courses from Faculty Member C's load, so the Department Head requests additional funding from the Dean to replace the additional two courses.

Applying for the Research Leave Program

- A one-page letter to the department head that requests the leave, explains the nature of the leave and its importance to the faculty member's research (and teaching) program, and describes, as applicable, relevant funding or awards that enable the leave. The letter should be accompanied by:
 - a current cv.
 - a description of any external funding you are pursuing or plan to pursue (please include supporting documentation, e.g., award letters or confirmations of salary/stipend support from external sources).
- If the department head supports the leave request, as relevant, the head will work with the faculty member to complete UGA's Faculty Leave of Absence Request Forms A & B with all original signatures. Forms A & B are relevant, for example, when the leave involves substantial time away from UGA (e.g., to fulfill terms of a visiting fellowship).

¹The three-course replacement norm may be impractical for the Department of Public Administration and Policy due to costs of hiring replacement instructors qualified to teach graduate-level classes. Similarly, departments with large numbers of pre-tenure contractual leaves occurring in the same year may be unable to self-fund the third course of a three-course replacement. Depending on these types of constraints, a two-course replacement may be accepted by the dean.

- [Form A](#) – completed by the faculty member and the faculty member's department head; please note the signed obligations on this form*;
- [Form B](#) – completed by the faculty member's department head.
- Submit Forms A and B, the request letter, vita, and supporting materials – as one pdf – to SPIA Associate Dean John Maltese (jmaltese@uga.edu).
- Following the SPIA dean's approval, the dean will submit the approved leave requests to the Office of Faculty Affairs for review.
- The senior vice president for academic affairs and provost has authority for final approval of all leave requests. Department heads and the SPIA Business Team will be notified by email of decisions on leave requests.
- Following approval of the leave, the department head will request (as needed) replacement teaching funds (see above regarding funds from the dean's office).
- The department must complete appropriate travel authority forms at least two weeks prior to departure if the faculty member travels from campus during the leave. The faculty member is not entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses incurred while on leave status.
- Within thirty days of the end of the leave, the faculty member must submit a written statement to the dean and department head describing what was accomplished during the term of absence.

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- Deadlines: any request for a leave of absence beginning fall semester must be submitted to the dean's office no later than November 1 of the prior year. Any request for a leave of absence beginning spring semester must be submitted to the dean's office no later than May 1 of the prior year.

*Note that, per University System of Georgia rules, faculty taking leave, attest to the following on Form A:

I, the undersigned petitioner for leave with pay for less than one year, do hereby agree to return to the institution for at least one year, OR that, for a leave with pay of one year, do hereby agree to return to the institution for at least two years of service after the termination of my leave. I further agree to return the full amount of compensation received from the institution and any other expenses paid by the institution while on leave, including benefits costs, if I should not return to the institution for the full amount of time as specified here. I certify that this leave is for a visiting/temporary position.

Faculty taking leave *without* pay attest to the following on Form A:

I, the undersigned petitioner for leave without pay, do hereby agree to return the full amount of any expenses paid by the institution, including benefits costs, while on leave if I should not return to the institution after the termination of my leave. I certify that this leave is for a visiting/temporary position.