

Scheduled Semester Research Leave (SSRL) Policy

Approved by the Faculty Assembly February 21, 2006

a. Preamble

Faculty research and scholarship are part of the core mission of the university and fundamental to a) recruiting and retaining the best faculty, b) assuring that they and our students are nationally and internationally recognized, and c) allowing faculty the time to remain accomplished scholars, and therefore enhancing the intellectual climate and academic richness of every classroom, laboratory, and studio. A formal research leave policy is essential to enable individual faculty to achieve the highest levels of research productivity and to maintain the traditionally exceptional quality of the College faculties.

The scholarly work of the faculty at the College is demonstrated by the amount, depth, and quality of its research, creative and scholarly activity. This is evidenced by their publications, external grant and sponsored project support, performances, exhibitions, etc. An increasingly large fraction of the tenured and tenure-eligible faculty at the College are “research active,” and need regular research leaves. This is consistent with §IIID and §IIIF7a of the *Faculty Handbook* (2005 ed.).

b. Effective Date

Effective with the beginning of the 2007-2008 academic year, the current Faculty Research Assignment (FRA) program will be replaced by the Scheduled Semester Research Leave program (SSRL).

c. Procedures:

- i. All full-time faculty who are designated as “research active” shall be eligible for an SSRL. Typically, a faculty member’s first SSRL will be no sooner than the year following the award of tenure at the rank of associate professor. Eligibility for subsequent leaves will commence on the sixth anniversary of the first leave and every sixth year thereafter assuming the faculty member continues to meet appropriate criteria by remaining research active (see §IIIF#c.iv and §IIIF#c.vii. 2006 ed.) and are in good-standing. This means that a research-active, tenured William and Mary faculty member in good standing will, in the normal course of events, be able to plan on a SSRL every seventh year of continuous employment. For faculty hired with tenure or with an accelerated tenure decision date, the date of first SSRL eligibility should be specified in the first employment contract.
- ii. Each department, program, and school shall establish and maintain a current list of research active faculty who are eligible for SSRLs and a calendar that indicates when each leave-eligible faculty member may take his/her next SSRL.
- iii. No less than eighteen months in advance of the SSRL, the faculty member shall formally notify his/her Chair, Program Director, and Dean of his/her intent to take the scheduled leave. This SSRL Proposal need consist of no more than a concise

statement —typically one page — which summarizes the research project or projects the faculty member plans to pursue while on leave, the duration of the leave (see §III F#c.vi, 2006 ed.), and the probable publications, grant proposals, creative activities, or other product of the research to be accomplished while on leave. The Chair, Program Director, and Dean will approve this leave within four weeks unless there are concerns as to the eligibility of the faculty member or other, unforeseen events which lead the Chair, Program Director, or Dean to have concerns as the impact of the scheduled leave on the quality of the academic program.

The Chair, Program Director, and Dean may wish to discuss with the faculty member the timing of this leave, but will not, in the normal course of events, deny a faculty member his/her scheduled leave. Normally, the circumstances that might lead a Chair, Program Director, or Dean to wish to negotiate the pre-determined schedule will be based on financial exigency or staffing matters unforeseen at the time of development of the most recent unit leave schedule. In either case, the Chair, Program Director, and Dean must demonstrate that the faculty member's scheduled leave will have a demonstrably negative impact on the quality of instruction in the unit (see §III F7c3, 2005 ed.). A faculty member whose regularly scheduled leave is deferred or denied may appeal that decision to the Dean, in the case of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and to the Provost. Should the faculty member wish to defer the scheduled leave for good and sufficient reasons, he/she will negotiate that deferral with the Chair, Program Director, or Dean and, to the extent necessary, with other faculty whose scheduled leaves may be impacted. In the normal course of events, a mutual agreement to defer a leave by no more than one year will not alter the schedule of the faculty member's next SSRL.

Faculty who hold joint appointments and whose SSRL will affect the instructional programs of both home and host unit(s) must have their SSRL scheduled in all units and should present the SSRL Proposal to all relevant Chairs, Program Directors, and Deans for prior approval.

- iv. Individual departments, programs, or schools (as the case may be) shall determine whether faculty are “research active” by applying guidelines that each department, program, or school adopts for this purpose. Departments, programs, or schools *may* choose to employ the research scores generated as part of annual merit reviews in their respective definitions of “research active.” The guidelines should be as explicit as possible consistent with the standards of the unit. Guidelines may vary from unit to unit consistent with that unit's primary mission, e.g., Ph.D.-granting units may have different standards than a baccalaureate-only unit. Units may also wish to consider criteria that will take into account publications and active scholarship that involve inquiry and research into the best practices of teaching and learning (the Scholarship of Pedagogy in the terminology of Ernest Boyer). Guidelines will be subject to approval by the Faculty Research Committee (FRC) as will any substantive changes in these guidelines.

- v. A faculty member deemed “research inactive” by his or her department, program, or school shall have a right of appeal. For faculty in A&S that appeal is first made to the Dean of the Faculty. For non-A&S faculty and for A&S faculty whose appeal to the Dean is unsuccessful, an appeal is then made to the FRC pursuant to procedures the FRC shall promulgate for this purpose. In deciding the appeal, the Dean and/or FRC shall apply the approved definition of “research active” adopted by the department or school in question and the FRC. An FRC finding may be appealed to the Provost.
- vi. Faculty eligible for an SSRL may elect to receive a one-semester leave at full pay or a one-year leave at 80% pay. Faculty who choose the latter option should so indicate in their SSRL Proposal and provide essential context in that proposal as to why a full-year’s SSRL is warranted. Faculty who elect to take a one-year leave at 80% are strongly encouraged to seek external funding to support their salary during the period they are on leave.
- vii. Faculty who receive and accept an SSRL shall, after the completion of the leave, submit a Leave Activity Report to their Chair, Program Director, Dean, and the Provost summarizing the results of the research conducted during the assignment. It should also include the SSRL Proposal. This report is due no later than three months after the beginning of the academic semester immediately following the faculty member’s return from the SSRL, though the faculty member is strongly encouraged to update this report as publications and other scholarly/creative products of the leave become available for citation.

Failure to submit a Leave Activity Report may render faculty ineligible for a subsequent SSRL. That decision will rest with the faculty member’s Dean and/or the Provost. In addition, should the Chair, Program Director, or Dean, determine from the Leave Activity Report that the faculty member has not accomplished sufficient work to justify continuing designation of the faculty member as “research active”, that assessment will be conveyed to the faculty member and the Chair and Program Director as appropriate and a reevaluation of that faculty member’s status will be made by the department, program, or school consistent with department, program, and school guidelines and procedures (see §IIIF#c.iv & v, 2006 ed.). The basis for that evaluation will be a comparison of the self-described results of the SSRL in the Leave Activity Report with the standards for research active designation in the faculty member’s home and/or host unit(s) and the proposed plan of work in the SSRL Proposal.

- viii. Faculty are expected to return for at least one year’s full-time employment at the College following a SSRL. Exceptions will, under normal circumstances, have the approval of both the faculty member’s Dean and the Provost in advance.