

RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CONCERNING THE VOLUNTARY SHARED LEAVE PROGRAM

Approved by Personnel Committee – May 13, 2010
Approved by Board of Trustees – June 10, 2010

Recommendation:

The President recommends:

That the Voluntary Shared Leave Program be re-titled Catastrophic Shared Leave Program and authorized as a continuing benefit for staff employees of the University of Louisville, consistent with the attached “Concept Proposal.”

Background:

The Voluntary Shared Leave Program was originally authorized by the Board in 2000 on a trial basis and renewed 2002 and 2005. The program has continued in operation under the Board’s 2005 temporary authorization, though the University has not sought authorization from the Board to establish the program as a continuing benefit for staff employees.

During academic year 2009-2010, Human Resources conducted an evaluation of the program in consultation with the Staff Senate, Human Resources Advisory Committee, Committee on the Status of Women, and the Council on Diversity and Racial Equality. Together with these constituent groups, the Office of Human Resources recommends continuation of the shared leave program on a continuing basis, subject to enhancements & limitations in the attached “Concept Proposal.”

Purpose: “To promote a sense of collegiality and community among UofL staff by permitting administrators and staff employees to voluntarily contribute vacation or sick leave to fellow staff employees who would otherwise suffer a loss of regular income due to a personal or family catastrophic illness.”

Scope: From inception of the program to date, 247 employees have contributed leave to the program, which has benefited 102 employees who would otherwise have experienced a loss in income due to a serious personal or family member illness.

Cost: The average cost of the program over the past five years has been \$32,000 to \$37,000 per year – calculated as the value of leave used (\$56,250), offset by a portion of the value of leave donations (\$19,000 - \$24,000) which would otherwise have been used by donors. The value of leave donations averages \$24.53 per hour, while the value of leave used averages \$14.24 per hour – resulting in a net reduction in the contingent liability for accrued leave in the University’s financial statements of approximately \$41,000 per year.

Overall Assessment: The shared leave program has proven to be a valuable resource for employees in significant need and fostered a greater sense of community and collegiality among staff employees by enabling employees to help one another, at a very modest cost to the University. Recommend continuation as a permanent staff benefit, effective July 1, 2010.

University of Louisville
Catastrophic Shared Leave Policy Changes

Name: Change from Voluntary Shared Leave to Catastrophic Shared Leave, to clarify program intent.

Purpose: Expand purpose statement to read: "To promote a sense of collegiality and community among UofL staff by permitting administrators and staff employees to voluntarily contribute vacation or sick leave to fellow staff employees who would otherwise suffer a loss of regular income due to a personal or family catastrophic illness."

Program Enhancements:

- Permit personal representatives (including supervisors) to request leave on an employee's behalf, if the employee is incapacitated.
- Permit administrators to donate leave (even though administrators are not eligible to apply for leave awards).
- In addition to maintaining the current shared leave pool, permit direct transfers of leave from one employee to another (with the recipient employee's permission), subject to the following safeguards:
 - Only HR could publish the need for shared leave on behalf of an employee.
 - Employees will not be permitted to solicit leave on their own behalf.
 - Supervisors and managers will not be permitted to solicit leave from subordinate employees.
- Continue sick leave donation limit of 24 days per year for pool donations or donations to unrelated employees; permit unrestricted donation of sick leave on a direct transfer to an immediate family member (for whom the donating employee would otherwise be eligible to use sick leave to provide personal care); permit unrestricted donation of vacation leave.
- Increase award limit from 320 hours to 480 hours per year, equivalent to Family Medical Leave (FML).
- Permit Catastrophic Shared Leave to be used to augment workers' compensation leave and disability leave (to the same extent an employee would be eligible to use sick leave).

Program Limitations:

- Require 12 months of continuous service to be eligible to apply for catastrophic shared leave, equivalent to FML eligibility. [Employees may contribute vacation or sick leave, as soon as they are eligible to use their own vacation or sick leave, subject to maintaining minimum sick leave balances in existing policy.]
- Use of Catastrophic Shared Leave would trigger and run concurrently with Family Medical Leave.
- Continue to use "serious health condition" as qualifying standard, equivalent to FML, subject to the following limitations:
 - Exclude illnesses of seven calendar days or less (similar to Workers' Compensation leave) to encourage employees to save sufficient sick and vacation leave to cover short-term absences.
 - Require that the condition must prevent the employee from being able perform work and permit managers to assign alternative work within employee's ability.
 - Exclude conditions not medically necessary.
- Continue provision that Catastrophic Shared Leave may not be used to augment Parental Leave.

Program Operation & Evaluation:

- Ensure that a request for Catastrophic Shared Leave is acknowledged by the supervisor.
- HR will process all requests for Catastrophic Shared Leave and approve or disapprove requests consistent with policy (subject to appeal to the Shared Leave Committee).
- Shared Leave Committee would hear appeals and periodically evaluate program.

Approval, Policy Dissemination, & Effective Date:

- This concept proposal has been endorsed by the Human Resources Advisory Committee and the Staff Senate and enjoys the support of Vice Presidents and Deans.
- If approved by the Board of Trustees as a continuing benefit program for staff employees, the Office of Human Resources, in consultation with the Staff Senate, will exercise administrative authority to develop and publish policy statements consistent with this concept proposal, under the executive authority of the President to adopt University policy.
- Proposed effective date: July 1, 2010