Pre-tenure Research Leave Policy Proposal (revised December 2, 2014)

I. Purpose:
The pre-tenure leave program supports the development of teacher-scholars by providing faculty members with a concentrated period of time dedicated to research and professional development during their probationary period.

II. Rationale:
A sustainable pre-tenure leave policy represents a commitment on the part of the CLA to the newest members of our academic community. It is a dedication of resources to their success – and to the ongoing development of intellectual vibrancy of the college. Pre-tenure research leaves help enable faculty to develop and disseminate their scholarship as they approach tenure and enhance the potential for the integration of professional development and teaching. Pre-tenure leave policies are also a vital recruiting tool for job candidates – a significant consideration as the CLA enters a period of more robust faculty hiring. As a wise investment of resources, there is shared support for pre-tenure leaves among faculty and administration.

The challenge has been providing a more stable funding structure for pre-tenure leaves. The proposal being presented today seeks to establish not simply the procedures governing the leaves themselves, but also the reallocation and dedication of resources necessary to sustain a program for pre-tenure leaves.

III. Policy:
1) The leave is a two-course release from teaching and a full release from service and advising responsibilities generally taken over one semester. Exceptions to the one semester rule must be justified in the application.
2) The leave is dependent on the candidate meeting the eligibility requirements and selection criteria (see below).
3) The period of the pre-tenure research leave counts toward the tenure and promotion probationary period. The year of the leave does not count toward subsequent sabbatical eligibility.
4) Recipients of pre-tenure research leaves may not receive teaching salary from another source during the leave (though the recipients may be eligible to receive external stipends and awards to support research).
5) Faculty members awarded a pre-tenure research leave must return to Willamette for at least one full year of employment immediately upon conclusion of the academic year of the leave. Exceptions to the timing of this requirement are allowed only when another formal leave is approved.

IV. Procedures:
1) Eligibility
   a) Pre-tenure research leaves are available to non-tenured, tenure-track assistant professors entering their third or fourth year in rank.
b) Only those faculty members hired at the assistant professor level with no more than one year of credit toward tenure are eligible (that is, to be eligible the pre-tenure faculty member must have a 5-6 year probationary period).
c) A pre-tenure research leave funded through the pre-tenure research leave program may be awarded only once during the course of a tenure-track appointment.

2) Application
   a) Applications are submitted to the Faculty Resource Committee by the published deadline.
   b) The application will include:
      i. A proposal in which applicants make clear the nature of the research and/or scholarly work undertaken, the feasibility of the project, and the role of the research in the scholarly trajectory leading up to tenure.
      ii. Current CV.
      iii. Applications must include a letter from the department chair outlining how the department will continue to deliver the programs for which it is responsible while the faculty member is on leave.
   c) Pre-tenure leaves will be supported by the candidate’s Department and Program members and the Office of the Dean, but the specific timing of the leaves ideally should be planned so that such leaves have a minimum impact on the program.

3) Selection
   a) The quality of the proposal (see above).
   b) Support from the candidate’s Department.
   c) Approval by Faculty Council based on the second year retention review, with particular attention to the candidate's record of effective teaching.

4) Reporting
   a) A report detailing the work accomplished and plans for dissemination must be submitted to Faculty Council following the leave.
   b) The application and report are part of the tenure review file.

V. Funding:
1) Program Costs
   a) Financial costs – To the extent that we choose to replace faculty members on leave, the cost of these leaves will come from hiring adjunct faculty.
      i) Cost per leave: We anticipate hiring contingent faculty on a per-course basis at a rate of $4,500/course.
      ii) Total program cost per year: Total program costs in a given year depend on the number of faculty taking leaves. As we fill vacant tenure-track lines, we will undergo a period of time in which a significant number of pre-tenure faculty will be eligible for pre-tenure leaves. The exact number depends on hiring decisions that have not yet been made. However, 6 new tenure track faculty members started in 2014-2015. Another 7 positions are being hired to
start in 2015-2016. Thus, we take 6 leaves per year as a reasonable estimate for near future. Based on that assumption we need to reallocate $0-$54,000 to fund the program, depending on how we choose to replace courses.

b) Programmatic costs – To the extent that we choose not to replace faculty members on leave, the cost of these leaves will come in the form of a reduced number of class offerings.

2) Recommended Funding Model
a) Reallocate $27,000 from the Travel line within the Faculty Resource Budget to a new pre-tenure research leaves budget line. In each of the last 3 years, there has been an unspent residual of more than $20,000 in the FRC Travel budget. In addition, there are currently no limits on the number of funded trips or total disbursement to single individual. This is not the case at most of peer institutions. If we limit individuals to two funded trips and a maximum of $3,600 in funding per year, we could reduce the Faculty Travel budget by $27,000 per year with modest reductions in funded travel. This money could then be reallocated to a different budget line to support the pre-tenure leaves.
   i) Individuals who wish to exceed these travel funding limits for some reason may apply to FRC.
   ii) When the funding is not needed for the pre-tenure leaves, it will be available for faculty travel and research support.

b) Limit replacement costs to one course, or $4,500 per faculty member on pre-tenure

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1 The following funding sources were considered but rejected
1. New revenue - unwise to assume that we can generate new revenue by increasing the total package price.
2. Personnel restructuring – theoretically possible to reduce salary spending at the administrative or classified staff levels by reorganizing or renegotiating contracts, but impractical if we hope to implement the program quickly
3. Capital campaign -- this is a possible long run solution, but again impractical if we hope to implement this program quickly.
4. Unfilled TT positions – As noted above, the hiring of contingent faculty to support sabbaticals, and other faculty leaves currently depends upon the budgetary resources available from full-time faculty positions that have not been filled. As the CLA moves to fill these lines with tenure-track faculty, this pool of money to support faculty leaves will shrink. The loss of this pool, coupled with the hiring of more faculty who will be eligible for leaves, will place more pressure on these resources.
5. Salary saving - Sabbaticals and other leaves are often taken with some reduction in salary during the leave. A similar policy for pre-tenure research leaves would cover at least part of the program costs and allow for the pre-tenure leave policy to be at least partially “self-funding.” However, funding the program in this way would create a disincentive for pre-tenure faculty to take the leave.
6. Reallocate money from the sabbatical program -- The sabbatical program is currently underfunded. The money set aside in the sabbatical budget line (~$60,000) combined with the money generated by faculty members taking sabbaticals at reduced pay (~$225,000 in a typical year) does not cover the money spent hiring contingent faculty to replace courses (~$400,000 in a typical year). So, there is no money to reallocate from the sabbatical program.
7. Reallocate money currently being spent on non-replacement adjunct faculty - Currently we hire adjunct faculty to replace faculty who are on sabbatical or other types of leaves. In addition we hire adjunct faculty to teach classes that we cannot staff even when all TT faculty members are on campus. A strategic priority of the university is to reform the curriculum so that we can reduce our reliance on this second (non-replacement) group of adjunct faculty. However, because we are currently spending significantly more money on non-replacement adjunct hiring than we have allocated in the adjunct faculty budget line, it is difficult to argue that reducing spending in this category would allow us to fund the program in a sustainable way.
leave.

i) Each Department or Program will commit to planning all leaves in ways that decrease dependence on part-time faculty members including collaborating with other programs to share the burden of faculty leaves.

ii) By only replacing one of the two “missing” courses when a member of the faculty goes on a pre-tenure leave, based on six pre-tenure leaves per year, we reduce the costs of the program from $54,000 to $27,000.

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