

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FACULTY EARLY RETIREMENT PROGRAM**

### **WHAT IS THE FACULTY EARLY RETIREMENT PROGRAM?**

The Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP) is a program that provides a transition from full time teaching to full time retirement. It allows a faculty member to receive his/her retirement income plus receive up to a half year's pay for teaching fulltime one semester each year or teaching half time for two semesters. The program allows a faculty member to work a maximum of ninety (90) days a year while receiving retirement income from the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS).

### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR FERP?**

All tenured faculty, excluding Counseling Faculty Unit Employees, are eligible for FERP if they have (1) reached the age of fifty-five, (2) been granted a service retirement, and (3) meet any other requirements as specified in Article 29 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

### **HOW MUCH CAN I WORK UNDER FERP?**

Faculty members may either work full-time for one semester which gives them the ninety (90) days allowed by PERS or half-time for both semesters. Care must be taken regarding the amount of time worked since violations could have an extremely negative impact on your retirement income with PERS.

### **HOW LONG MAY I PARTICIPATE IN FERP?**

Individuals entering FERP have five (5) years eligibility.

### **ARE LONG TERM LECTURERS ELIGIBLE FOR FERP?**

No. According to Article 29.1 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the program is only available to tenured faculty. Lecturers are not eligible for the Faculty Early Retirement Program.

### **DO I HAVE TO RECEIVE APPROVAL TO ENTER FERP?**

FERP is an employment right guaranteed to tenured faculty under Article 29 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Provided that all the conditions specified in Article 29 of the CBA are met, a tenured faculty member cannot be denied entrance into the program.

### **WHAT IF MY PROGRAM VOTES NOT TO APPROVE MY REQUEST FOR FERP?**

Program faculty do not make recommendations on requests for entering FERP. Your right to enter the program is only conditioned on your meeting the requirements outlined in Article 29.1 of the CBA.

### **ARE THERE ANY DEADLINES THAT MUST BE MET?**

Yes. If you wish to participate in the program, you must notify the President in writing six (6) months in advance of entering the program. Fill out the FERP application posted on the Faculty Affairs website and return it to Faculty Affairs.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF I MISS THE DEADLINE DATE FOR NOTIFYING THE PRESIDENT IN WRITING BUT STILL WANT TO FERP?**

Article 29.2 states that the President may waive the required six (6) month period for the written notification. However, the president is not required to do so. Granting of waivers will be judged on the merits of each case.

**WHAT TYPE OF DOCUMENTATION DO I RECEIVE TO VERIFY THAT I WILL BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM?**

After you turn the FERP application in to the Faculty Affairs Office prior to the six month deadline, you will receive a letter with an offer of employment into FERP. Once you have signed and returned this letter to the Faculty Affairs Office, a contractual relationship between you and the university will be established for the time that you continue in this program.

**MAY I DETERMINE THE SEMESTER I WORK?**

Normally, the semester you request will be approved. However, the President (or the dean as the President's designee) may determine that it is necessary, due to programmatic needs, to assign you to a different period of employment. The program chair will be asked to review your request and make a recommendation. Should there be a disagreement; a mutually acceptable outcome will be sought. However, if mutual agreement cannot be reached, the President can alter the period of employment, provided that you receive a one hundred twenty (120) day notice.

**MAY I RETIRE IN DECEMBER AFTER THE FALL SEMESTER AND START MY FERP PARTICIPATION IN JANUARY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SPRING SEMESTER?**

No. Article 29.5 states that participation in FERP shall only commence at the beginning of the academic year.

**IF MY BIRTHDAY IS IN SEPTEMBER, CAN I BEGIN FERP IN AUGUST BUT DELAY MY RETIREMENT?**

No. The service retirement must begin concurrently with or prior to the academic year when you enter the program pursuant to Article 29.5. You could retire at the end of the Fall Term and begin FERP the following August.

**HOW LONG CAN I FERP?**

You may participate in FERP for up to five years. You may FERP for the entire five years, or leave the program before then. The typical period of participation in FERP on other campuses is 3 years.

**IF I AM A PARTICIPANT IN THE PERMANENT REDUCTION IN TIME BASE (PRTB) PROGRAM BUT STILL A TENURED FACULTY MEMBER, MAY I FERP?**

Yes. You could work full-time one semester. However, if you sought to work both semesters, you could only work half of the time base you were working at the time of retirement. For example, if you were .5 in the PRTB Program, you could work full time one semester or .25 both semesters.

**ONCE I ENTER THE FERP PROGRAM, CAN I BE DISMISSED FROM UNIVERSITY EMPLOYMENT?**

Like all faculty employees, you still can be dismissed for cause, or terminated for failure to meet the employment commitment. As FERP faculty, you would still be a tenured faculty member and a member of the collective bargaining unit with all the rights and

protections thereto. FERP faculty may be terminated through layoff. A faculty member participating in FERP who is laid off does not have recall rights.

**DOES ENTERING THE FERP PROGRAM INCREASE MY VULNERABILITY TO LAYOFF?**

Consistent with Article 38 of the CBA, your layoff vulnerability would increase. Most faculty members who are retiring are close to, if not at the top of, the seniority list in the department. Under FERP, you could be laid off prior to any probationary or tenured faculty in the department. You could be laid off only after all temporary faculty, full-time or part-time, were laid off.

**IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO REDUCE MY TIME BASE ONCE I ENTER FERP?**

The President may consider and approve a request for a reduction in time base under FERP. However, any change in time base will be permanent.

**MAY I BE EMPLOYED BY EXTENDED UNIVERSITY DURING THE PERIOD OF ACTIVE EMPLOYMENT?**

Yes, however your total employment may not exceed the equivalent of fulltime for one semester or halftime for two semesters; summer work does count in the total.

**MAY I TAKE A LEAVE WITHOUT PAY WHILE IN FERP?**

No. Except when there is a specially negotiated leave program, the CBA prohibits leaves without pay during participation in the program. You may be granted a leave without pay for medical reasons.

**WHAT PROVISIONS ARE MADE FOR SICK LEAVE?**

Usually, when a faculty member retires, he/she has any sick leave balance is credited outstanding sick leave toward retirement. You may elect to carry over six (6) days or forty-eight (48) hours of sick leave over to the FERP program. It is recommended that you do so. While participating in FERP, you will receive sick leave on a pro rata basis (up to six days or forty-eight hours) a year for a maximum of twenty (20) days or one hundred sixty (160) hours. This sick leave may not be added to the retirement service credit at the end of the FERP period.

**WHAT ARE MY NORMAL DUTIES DURING THIS PERIOD?**

As a tenured faculty member, you will be required to perform normal responsibilities and your share of normal duties and activities including advising and committee work. You may serve on evaluation committees with the approval of the President.

**DO I RECEIVE ANY INSURANCE COVERAGE WHILE I AM WORKING?**

You will be covered for worker's compensation and the CSU will provide a CSU dental plan on the same basis as such a plan is provided to other faculty. The provision of such a dental plan shall require that you were enrolled in a CSU dental plan immediately prior to your service retirement. All other available insurance benefits will be derived through your PERS retirement.

**HOW FREQUENTLY DO I GET PAID?**

Your pay warrants will arrive as follows:

Fall Semester: At the end of September, October, November, December, January, and February.

Spring Semester: At the end of January, February, March, April, May, and June.

**WILL I GET ANY SALARY INCREASES DURING MY PARTICIPATION IN FERP?**

FERP faculty will receive any General Salary Increases (GSIs) which are negotiated during their participation in the program. Faculty members in FERP are not eligible for SSIs.

**IF THE STATE WERE TO OFFER A GOLDEN HANDSHAKE AFTER I HAVE BEGUN MY EMPLOYMENT IN THE FERP PROGRAM, COULD I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH AN OFFER ?**

No. To participate in the FERP program, you must already be retired. You would have already received a retirement check from PERS and therefore be ineligible for any golden handshake.

**WHAT IF THE STATE WERE TO OFFER A GOLDEN HANDSHAKE AFTER I HAVE NOTIFIED THE PRESIDENT BUT BEFORE I BEGAN MY PARTICIPATION IN FERP AT THE BEGINNING OF ACADEMIC YEAR, COULD I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH AN OFFER ?**

You would be eligible to take advantage of a golden handshake up until the effective date of your retirement which according to Article 29 must be concurrent with or prior to the beginning of the academic year. If you have already received a retirement check from PERS, you would be considered to be retired and ineligible for a golden handshake. If a golden handshake were offered, the university would work with you if you wanted to take advantage of that option. Normally, if you take a golden handshake, you will be ineligible for participation in FERP.

**AFTER I COMPLETE MY PARTICIPATION IN THE FERP PROGRAM, IS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY I COULD STILL BE EMPLOYED BY THE UNIVERSITY?**

Yes. The program entitles you to employment for a fixed period under specified conditions. After you have completed your participation in the program, you may apply for part-time teaching as a retired annuitant. As a part-time lecturer, you would be hired in the Lecturer B range. Care must be taken, however, not to exceed the time limits imposed by PERS (no more than 15 WTU per year).