

FACULTY LEAVE BANKING PROGRAM
SECTION IV.D.1.(i). – NOTICE AND COMMENT

The Board of Trustees revised Section IV.D.1.(i). of the Lone Star College Policy Manual on **February 1, 2018**. The notice and comment period for the policy was open to the public from **September 5, 2017**, to **October 5, 2017**. The procedures were last updated on **February 1, 2018**. The notice and comment period for the procedures was open to the public from **September 5, 2017**, to **October 28, 2017**. The policy and procedures were posted for public comment at <http://www.lonestar.edu/proposed-policies.htm>. Commenters could anonymously submit comments to LSC-PolicyFeedback@lonestar.edu and LSC-ProcedureFeedback@lonestar.edu. We received a total of ten responses, some containing comments on multiple subjects. We have responded to their comments based on the posted Policy and Procedures.

Comment 1: Commenters suggested that a faculty member should be able to request their Leave Semester and defer their last extra service assignment simultaneously.

Response 1: We revised the Leave Semester request form to indicate that faculty members may simultaneously defer their last extra service assignment and request their Leave Semester. Response: We revised the Leave Semester request form to indicate that faculty members may simultaneously defer their last extra service assignment and request their Leave Semester.

Comment 2: Commenters expressed satisfaction with the proposed changes, citing clear guidelines for the program.

Response 2: We thank the commenters who took time to express their satisfaction. Our office work diligently to clarify this important program for faculty members.

Comment 3: Some commenters were uneasy about a background paragraph, which attempted to give an overview of the program's purpose. Commenters felt the stated purpose conflated this program's purpose with the sabbatical program. Commenters felt afraid that such information would be detrimental and contrary to how faculty members currently use the program.

Response 3: We deleted this paragraph to avoid any confusion on the program's purpose.

Comment 4: Commenters expressed concern with language indicating that taking a Leave Semester during a Spring Semester may affect the faculty member's service year calculation. Commenters asked that the College provide specific information regarding this issue.

Response 4: This language was included for informational purposes only. The College wanted to flag this issue for faculty members. The College, however, has absolutely no control or input in how service years are calculated. This is the Teacher Retirement System of Texas's (TRS) prerogative and is a case-by-case analysis. The College encourages faculty members to consult TRS before making a retirement decisions.

Comment 5: Commenters asked whether these guidelines could be annotated as regards changes from the previous procedures.

Response 5: No prior Chancellor Procedures existed. These Procedures compiled historical information and best practices in a new document. No comparator therefore exists. If faculty members have questions, they may contact the College's Office of Human Resources, Payroll Department, or Office of the General Counsel. Each office is happy to answer any questions regarding these Procedures.

Comment 6: Commenters asked how TRS would treat a faculty member with a 9-month assignment versus a 10.5-month assignment as regards service year credit.

Response 6: Our understanding is that a faculty member with a 9-month assignment will be treated differently from a 10.5-month assignment as regards service credit. The College, however, cannot comment on particular situations and therefore encourages faculty members to contact TRS prior to making any retirement decisions.

Comment 7: Commenters asked how often a faculty member will be eligible to apply for leave banking.

Response 7: A faculty member may take a Leave Semester once they become Leave Eligible. Accruing sufficient extra service assignments will depend on assignment availability. It is therefore difficult to ascertain how often a faculty member will become Leave Eligible. Once becoming Leave Eligible, however, a faculty member has a limited time to request a Leave Semester.

Comment 8: Commenters asked if faculty members who are not currently deferring extra service assignment be eligible to accrue such assignment at any time.

Response 8: Faculty members may defer extra service assignment at any time as long as all other eligibility criteria is met.

Comment 9: Commenters asked whether the number of deferred extra service assignments affects when or whether a faculty member may continue deferring extra service assignments.

Response 9: Faculty members may continue deferring extra service assignments as long as they have not reached the maximum accrual.

Comment 10: Commenters asked whether there is a maximum number of times a faculty member can take leave banking in their career.

Response 10: No lifetime cap exists.