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*Policy Note 1: Percentage effort and earned vacation*

Dear Colleagues:

Misunderstandings about university policies and practices occasionally place faculty in conflict with the University. These misunderstandings might arise from a misreading of the Regents' Bylaws, the Standard Practice Guide (SPG), the Faculty Handbook, or the Rules of the Faculty of the College of Engineering, or from misinformation shared in the hallways. When misunderstandings or uncertainties about a policy or practice appear to affect more than a few of us, I will use Policy Notes, like this one, to review the policy or practice. The subjects of this Policy Note are percentage effort and earned vacation.

We faculty sometimes forget we are not hourly employees. We typically work more than 40 hours per week and might be tempted to view the first 40 hours as satisfying a commitment to the University or the research sponsor, and the remaining hours as extra effort that occasionally might warrant additional compensation either from the University or from an external sponsor. From this viewpoint, a 60-hour work week is erroneously viewed as a 150% effort. The reality is that a 100% appointment refers to the total professional effort whether it is 40 hours per week or 60 hours per week. A 100% appointment and our employment contract with the University effectively limits direct work compensation from any source to our 9-month salary rate, plus any adjustments from the University related to work assignment, plus external compensation from up to four consulting days per month allowed by the University.

We sometimes hear the hallway myth that we faculty earn vacation time. Those of us on 9-month academic year appointments do not accrue vacation time either during the academic year or during summer appointments. We take our vacations during University holidays (Winter Break is not a University holiday), when we are not on an appointment, or when we are on a reduced appointment. For example, a 50% appointment in August would allow me two-weeks of vacation. I can 'escape' during Winter Break if I can arrange my University obligations to permit it, but I am not 'owed' the opportunity. It is easy to imagine how a sponsor's review or a dissertation defense, for example, could limit my time away from the University.