

## CHAPTER V BENEFITS AND SERVICES

### 1. RETIREMENT BENEFITS.

All full-time faculty members shall be required to participate in either the Teacher Retirement System of Texas or the State's Optional Retirement Program (ORP). Within ninety days from the contract date of employment, faculty members must select one of these programs. Contribution rates, application procedures, and additional information are available in the office of human resources. Faculty members also are covered by social security and are entitled to all the benefits of the program. Salary deductions are made monthly.

## 2. INSURANCE, ANNUITIES & WORKERS' COMPENSATION

- 2.1 INSURANCE AND ANNUITIES. Members of the faculty may participate in group accidental death insurance, health care insurance, life insurance, dental insurance, and salary continuation plans. Tax-sheltered annuities also are available for faculty. Further information on insurance and annuities may be obtained from the office of human resources.
- 2.2 WORKERS' COMPENSATION. Lamar University's employees shall be eligible for workers' compensation. If a faculty member is hurt at work and the injuries are within the limits set by law, he or she may be entitled to receive benefits. All work-related injuries should be reported to campus police and the office of human resources for appropriate action by the university's safety program.

### 3. FACULTY LEAVES

3.1 DEVELOPMENT LEAVES (LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITH PAY). Faculty development leaves shall be available to a limited number of faculty members who have had continuous, full-time employment with the institution for at least two years. Requests for development leaves shall be made according to an annual schedule announced by the senior associate provost. Development leaves shall be granted by the Board of Regents upon recommendations made by the Faculty Senate, the provost, and the president. Faculty members may receive development leaves for an academic year, a semester, a summer session, or part of a summer session. Faculty members who are granted a development leave for an academic year shall receive one-half of their base salary. Faculty members who are granted a development leave for one semester or less shall receive a pro-rated share of their base salary.

3.2 BENEFITS AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY. There may be a time when the interests of a faculty member or the interests of the university are best served by granting a leave of absence without pay. Normally a leave of absence without pay shall not extend beyond the end of the fiscal year (August 31). During the leave of absence without pay, additional benefits, such as creditable service toward tenure and promotion, sick leave time, etc., shall not accrue. Employees granted a leave of absence without pay shall retain their classification and all benefits that have been accrued prior to leave.

Employees on leave without pay for less than one calendar month shall continue to have their employer insurance contribution paid by the state; however, when an employee is on leave without pay for a full calendar month, he or she shall be responsible for payment of both the employee and the employer contributions for insurance. Failure to pay these amounts shall result in cancellation of the insurance and a physical exam may be required to have the insurance reinstated.

Upon return from a leave of absence, the employee shall be reinstated in a position that is the same or similar to the position held at the time the leave was granted, with no loss of seniority or benefits. The university abides by the *Family Medical Leave Act* and *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Sex Discrimination Guidelines*. For additional information, contact the office of human resources.

3.3 SICK LEAVE. Faculty members employed half-time (.50 FTE) or more shall earn sick leave benefits beginning the first day of employment and ending the last day of service. Sick leave benefits shall be earned at the rate of eight hours for each month of employment and shall accumulate with the unused amount of such leave carried forward each month, so long as the total does not exceed the amount of sick leave permitted by the state.

Sick leave with pay may be taken when sickness, injury, or pregnancy and confinement prevent the employee's performance of duty, or when a member of the employee's immediate family is ill. For purposes of regular sick leave, *immediate family* shall be defined as those individuals related by blood, adoption or marriage who are living in the same household or, if not in the same household, are totally dependent upon the employee for personal care or services on a continuing basis. A faculty member who must be absent from duty because of illness shall notify his or her chair at the earliest practical time, generally before scheduled responsibilities are missed.

To be eligible for accumulated sick leave with pay during a continuous period of more than three working days, a faculty member absent due to illness shall send to his or her chair a doctor's certificate showing the cause or nature of the illness. Upon return to duty after sick leave, the faculty member shall, without delay, complete the prescribed application for sick leave and submits it to his or her chair.

Exceptions to the amount of sick leave a faculty member may take must be authorized by the president. Such exceptions shall be authorized on an individual basis after a review of the particular merits of the case. A statement of any such authorized exceptions and the reasons for them shall be attached to the university's payroll voucher for the payroll period affected by such authorized exceptions. Leaves of absence for faculty members who have exhausted accrued sick leave shall be granted on an individual basis by the president upon the written request and recommendation of the provost. Each department shall receive a monthly report which reflects the current sick leave balance. Questions concerning sick leave should be directed to the office of human resources.

#### 4. FACULTY BENEFITS & SERVICES.

- 4.1 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PLAN. The Educational assistance plan (the *Plan*) provides faculty with assistance in obtaining additional education and training, and is intended to meet the requirements of *Section 127 of the Internal Revenue Code*. Eligible faculty may be allowed to take one course, tuition-free, per semester provided the course maintains or improves the skills required for the faculty member's current job. For additional information, See Appendix O and contact the office of human resources.

Benefits under the plan shall be subject to the availability of specific funds in the university budget. The university shall not be required to make funds available in any given fiscal year. In the event that available funds in any given year are insufficient to support all applications for benefits, benefits shall be funded in order of receipt of properly completed applications until available funds are exhausted.

- 4.2 SALARY CHECKS. Salary checks shall be issued by the payroll office and either delivered to faculty members through department chairs or deposited in local banks or credit unions. Automatic deposit in a local bank or credit union requires written authorization of the faculty member. Payment stubs are available online through Web for Faculty. The first salary check of each contract year shall be dated October 1 and monthly checks shall be available on the first working day of each subsequent month. New faculty members shall have their salaries paid over 12 months unless they request a change in the salary payment method prior to September 15 with the office of human resources. A change in payment method shall not be permitted after that date.
- 4.3 CREDIT UNION. Faculty members are eligible for membership in the Education First Federal Credit Union. A branch office is located near campus at 4695 Rolfe Christopher Drive.
- 4.4 FACULTY MAIL. Each academic department shall be assigned a university post office box number which should be used as the return address for faculty mail. Members of the faculty may rent personal mail boxes for delivery of mail at the Lamar University Post Office (880-8485).
- 4.5 FACULTY USE OF TELEPHONES AND E-MAIL. Telephones for local use shall be available to faculty on an unrestricted basis. Faculty members must have the approval of the department chair before placing long distance, business-related calls. Under no circumstance shall personal long distance calls be charged to university telephones. Telephone and e-mail for personal reasons should not interfere with one's assigned duties and should be restricted to incidental use.
- 4.6 SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DIVISION OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT. Many services to faculty are offered by the office of university advancement (880-8419). Among these are assistance in seeking funds for, or producing public relations programs with, the university's various constituencies; advertising and other promotional services for all university activities, programs, and personnel; media relations and news coverage for university events and activities, and graphics support for official university publications.

- 4.7 **DUPLICATING SERVICES.** Faculty materials may be duplicated by departmental offices or by the Copy Center (880-8875). The Quick Copy Center internally charges departments for services. Materials to be duplicated should be presented
- 4.8 **SUPPLIES.** Faculty shall obtain needed classroom supplies through their departmental office. Many supplies and materials are available through Lamar's Supply Center (880-8486) and be requested by the department chair.
- 4.9 **FACULTY PARKING.** Automobiles and other motor vehicles parked on the university's campus must be registered and display an appropriate university permit. Reserved parking areas are available to faculty members and may be obtained by the payment of an annual parking fee. The parking office shall be responsible for these services (880-8696).
- 4.10 **SPORTS PROGRAMS & TEAMS.** Recreational sports programs shall be available to faculty. Programs include weight control, swimming, tennis, golf, handball, racquetball, volleyball, basketball and other activities. These programs shall be provided through the office of recreational sports (880-2306). Faculty members are encouraged to support Lamar athletics. Admission to intercollegiate athletic events is free with a faculty identification card.
- 4.11 **BOOKSTORE.** The University Bookstore, located in the Setzer Student Center, is a Barnes and Noble retail store offering textbooks, supplies, convenience items, and a rental service for commencement regalia. Faculty and staff are eligible for a ten percent discount on all purchases. Off-campus bookstores are available as well.
- 4.12 **CAMPUS FOOD FACILITIES.** Food services are provided in several campus locations and faculty may dine in any of these locations. The Dining Hall, the Nest and Mirabeau's offer meals and snacks for faculty, students and guests. Catering is available also (880-8005).
- 4.13 **CAREER CENTER, COUNSELING SERVICES AND TESTING.** Career counseling, advising, and testing services are provided by the Career Center, located in the Galloway Building (880-8878). Professional staff members are available to assist students with career concerns.

Through the Student Health Center (880-8466), personal and crisis intervention counseling are available. The Health Center staff members are unable to address problems of a long-term therapeutic nature; however, initial consultation is available and, if necessary, off-campus referrals can be made. Students are not charged for counseling sessions and all counseling contacts are confidential.

The office of testing services (880-8444) coordinates testing required by the university; provides individual interest, aptitude, and personality assessment; and, as a National Testing Center, administers the following: the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the American

College Testing Program (ACT), the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), the Miller Analogies Test, and the Texas Success Initiative Program (TSI). These tests are administered on scheduled testing dates and require an application and fee payment in advance of the testing day. Information and application forms may be obtained from the Center.

- 4.14 **SPEECH AND HEARING CENTER.** The Lamar University Speech and Hearing Center (880-8494) is operated as a clinical laboratory for students and as a service for the southeast Texas area. Faculty members and their immediate families may use the center. Benefits—provided at no charge to Lamar University faculty/staff and their immediate families—include audiological (hearing) evaluation, hearing aid evaluation, communication evaluation, and therapy for correction of communication disorders.
- 4.15 **UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE FACULTY.** Numerous university organizations provide social, educational, and cultural activities to faculty. Among these are the Cardinal Club, which provides support for athletic programs of the university; the Friends of the Arts, which provides support for artistic and cultural activities of the university; and the Friends of the Library, which provides support for the Mary and John Gray Library. Faculty members and members of their family are invited and encouraged to join these organizations. New faculty members are encouraged to join the Association of New Faculty.