[Staff Official] COVID-19 Leave, Pay and Benefits Update

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To: Faculty Official <faculty_official@unca.edu>, Staff Official <staff_official@unca.edu>

Campus Colleagues,

Thank you for your patience as UNC Asheville learns about the changing rules and guidance regarding leave and benefits. I am writing to provide you with an update regarding North Carolina’s paid administrative leave, extra compensation for on-campus mandatory employees, and new federal laws that impact our leave options and some retirement plans.

**Paid Administrative Leave**

COVID-19 paid administrative leave provisions for employees have been extended through May 8. Please see our campus FAQs to see who may use the COVID-19 paid administrative leave (https://coronavirus.unca.edu/resources/for-employees/). We do not know if the paid administrative leave will be extended after that date, but will let you know as soon as we have guidance.

**Extra Compensation for On-Campus Mandatory Employees**

The UNC System has extended the extra compensation for most employees designated specifically as COVID-19 mandatory employees who are required to work onsite from May 1 through May 8. The UNC System provided flexibility to campuses regarding the compensation rate and UNC Asheville decided on an extra 1/2 hour of compensation (in the form of comp time) for each hour mandatory employees are required to work onsite. Please remember that UNC Asheville continues to limit mandatory employees during the pandemic to only those who absolutely must be on campus.

**FFCRA**

The Families First Corona Response Act (FFCRA) was signed into law by President Trump on March 20, 2020. FFCRA requires that certain employers, including UNC Asheville, provide time-limited allocation of emergency paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave coverage for employees who cannot work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UNC System Office has issued a policy to offer structure and guidance around this new regulation, and UNC Asheville is implementing this policy effective May 1, 2020. The policy is available here: (https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/policy/index.php?section=300.2.15%5B5%5B%5D).

**CARES Act**

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020. The University System Office will adopt the following CARES Act provisions for the UNC System 403(b) and UNC 457(b) Plans for participants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Penalty-free distributions
- Higher plan loan limits
- Deferred loan repayments

These changes do not apply to the UNC Optional Retirement Program (ORP) as the ORP does not permit loans or in-service distributions.

The Cares Act also suspends the requirement to receive a required minimum distribution payment in 2020. This change is applicable to all the defined contribution plans sponsored by the University (UNC System 403(b) Plan, UNC System 457(b) Plan, and the ORP).

The UNC System has issued more detailed information which is available here: https://hr.unca.edu/sites/default/files/UNC-CARES_Act_Memo_for_Retirement_Program_Participants_2020-04-29.pdf

Thank you for all that you are doing for our campus and our community. Please reach out to Human Resources at hr@unca.edu with any questions.
Heather

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Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Institutional Equity and General Counsel