Discretionary Leave Guidelines
Recognition for Noteworthy Achievement and Effort

Definition
Discretionary Leave is paid time off work that a supervisor may award to a professional staff employee to recognize noteworthy achievement and work effort that have significantly contributed to the unit’s mission, goals and/or objectives. Discretionary leave should be awarded for extraordinary performance, for going the extra mile, when an employee “goes above and beyond the call of duty,” etc. Discretionary Leave is not intended for “business as usual” or for doing your job well. Doing your job well is the expectation; discretionary leave may be awarded for going beyond that.

Up to six days of discretionary leave may be awarded per calendar year.

Examples of appropriate Discretionary Leave use
- An employee completed a significant project that improved the way certain things were processed in the department. The improvements impacted faculty and staff who were involved in the process. The project lasted several months and required significant time after hours (for no compensation). The employee continued to complete all regular assignments and responsibilities during the project.
- A department had a temporary vacancy while an employee was on leave or during a search. Another employee in the department took on the responsibilities of the vacancy while continuing to fulfill his/her regular responsibilities (wearing more than the normal multiple hats). Working extra hours was required to fulfill the responsibilities of both positions, and there was no additional compensation for the additional duties.
- A department experienced a fire and had to move all their offices. This required an extraordinary effort and considerable time spent after normal work hours. Several employees who took on this significant extra effort were rewarded with discretionary leave.

Authorization and Record Keeping
1. The supervisor prepares a written request to the Program Director that explains:
   - The nature and duration of the assignment for which discretionary leave is to be awarded; AND
   - The number of days of discretionary leave that are recommended.
2. The Program Director reviews the request and approves, denies or modifies the discretionary leave award.
3. If approved, the request should be submitted to the appropriate Vice Chancellor for final review/approval. [Note: If a Program Director is the supervisor recommending the award, the request should go to the appropriate Vice Chancellor for the first level of review/approval, and then to the Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services for the second level of review/approval.]
4. A copy of the approval is retained in employee's department file to support entries in the Online Work Leave System (OWLS).

Discretionary Leave Use
Discretionary leave should be used soon after it is awarded and it must be used before vacation leave. Discretionary leave must be used by December 31 of each year, or it will be lost and deducted from the record unless an extension is pre-authorized by the Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services. An extension may not exceed 90 days. Unused discretionary leave may not be paid, and does not transfer to a new organizational unit.