The deadline for receipt of applications for Faculty Professional Leaves (FPLs) and Special Assignments (SAs) is February 1 (except in cases where an extraordinary and timely research opportunity presents itself). About this time, the Dean and Director and the Associate Dean will provide budgetary projections indicating how many sections of release time there may be for the next academic year. If this number falls below the total recommended in the Faculty Policy on Workload Reductions, the Dean will explain why. The Associate Dean will also indicate which applications for release time can be granted without necessity of replacement, thus sparing any budgetary cost. With this information in hand, the PDC will prepare a ranked list of the applications.

It is the responsibility of the faculty applicant to prepare a proposal which will adequately explain the timeliness and merit of the proposed project to colleagues who most often are from another discipline.

In order to determine the relative priority of the applications for FPLs and SAs, the PDC will consider the following factors:

1. Normally, at least two years must elapse between consecutive SA's for an individual faculty member. Exceptions may occur when there are fewer applications than available leaves or when a very special case can be made for the uniqueness, importance or urgency of the research opportunity.

2. The faculty member's scholarly productivity as a result of previous leaves/reductions.

3. The merit of the proposal itself and its significance to its respective field. The PDC will evaluate the quality of the proposal. If its significance lacks clarity or if there remain unanswered questions regarding the proposal itself, the PDC reserves the right to consult with department chairs or others referees named by the applicant or the chair for clarification.

4. The impact the prospective leave will have on campus course offerings and other programs, which is important especially in determining the time of the leave.

In examining these criteria the PDC will weight all four factors in an attempt to maximize the total faculty's combined contribution to scholarship as well as the professional growth of individual faculty.

In forming its recommendations for single course reductions, the PDC will consider the following points:

Faculty with current FPLs or SAs may apply, but applications from faculty without such awards will take priority. Applicants with FPLs or SAs must convincingly show the PDC that the requested course reduction are required to take advantage of an extraordinary professional opportunity.

The relief requested must pertain to a project (or projects) that clearly exceeds the normal workload expectation of a faculty member on our campus.

The PDC will attempt to follow a procedure of review that will maintain maximum flexibility and fairness. This includes timely notice of opportunities, procedures, and deadlines. Committee minutes or reports should keep all faculty informed of the final disposition of these matters.

Applications for both types of awards with additional details and specifications are available under the 'Forms' heading of the Faculty/Staff Handbook.

This document is kept current by the Professional Development Committee.

Revised prior to October 2017.