

SHARED SICK LEAVE POLICY

The purpose of the Shared Sick Leave Policy is to provide a means for University employees to donate sick leave to a leave pool to be used by University employees experiencing a serious health condition or whose immediate family member is experiencing a serious health condition and who has used all of their accumulated paid leave.

Applicability

This program applies to all employees of the University who earns or accrue sick leave.

Definitions

Employee means University personnel who earns or accrues shared sick leave as a benefit of his/her employment by the University, including part-time employees, whose leave transfer amounts will be pro-rated based on their percent time worked at Savannah State University during either the past twelve months or their entire time in service at Savannah State University, whichever term of service is shorter.

Leave donor means an employee making a voluntary written request for irrevocable transfer of shared sick leave to the leave pool. Once leave has been transferred to the leave pool, it may not be used by the donor for any other benefit purposes.

Leave recipient means a current employee who has completed the employment provisional period and for whom the University Shared sick leave Certification Committee has approved an application to receive leave from the leave pool. The recipient may use donated leave for any purpose authorized under the Board of Regents Policy Manual Section 802.0802 and Savannah State University Policies which meets the definition of life- threatening or emergency medical condition as defined:

Serious Health Condition means a health condition involving a serious, extreme, or life-threatening illness, injury, impairment, or condition that is likely to require an employee's absence from duty for a period of time longer than the amount of sick and annual leave available to the employee, and the health condition is such that it is not medically appropriate for the employee to delay the absence in order to accrue additional sick or annual leave prior to the absence. Some examples of such conditions include: advanced or rapidly growing cancers, acute life-

threatening illnesses, chronic life-threatening conditions in need of immediate care, life-threatening infections, severe injuries arising from automobile or other serious accidents and severe or life-threatening conditions involving failure of bodily organs or systems (e.g., heart attack). The absence may be continuous, as in hospitalization following surgery or an accident, or intermittent, as in periodic absences for chemotherapy or other procedures.

Leave pool means accumulated shared sick leave donated by employees to be used in accordance with this policy. A minimum donation of 8 hours' leave per calendar year is required to become a member of the leave pool.

Should the Shared Sick leave pool reserve drop to less than 120 hours, the pool will be considered depleted. All donors will, in this situation only, and upon notification of the depleted status of the pool, are automatically charged 8 hours per donor, unless the donor wishes to withdraw from the program. Leave requests will be honored in the order in which they were placed when the pool is replenished. The automatic charge to replenish the pool may occur only one time per calendar year. Should the pool be depleted a second time in a given calendar year, no further requests for donated leave will be accepted.

Shared Sick Leave Committee means a group consisting of one twelve month faculty member, and one twelve month staff member appointed by the President, and one ten month faculty member appointed by the Faculty Senate all who has elected to participate in the pool and the Benefits Manager. The AVP of Human Resources will serve as ex-officio member of the committee. Each appointed member will serve alternating terms not to exceed two-years. A fifth member shall be appointed each year by and from the membership of the Staff Advisory Council to serve for one year. Each term will commence on January 1st and end on December 31st.

If a member of the Shared Sick Leave Committee becomes ineligible or unable to continue as a member of the committee, the President shall appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired term of a presidential appointee. The Staff Advisory Council shall appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired term of a Staff Advisory Council appointee. The faculty senate shall appoint a replacement to fill the unexpired term of a ten month faculty member.

Donation of Leave

Employees will be given the opportunity to donate a specified number of hours of shared sick leave (in 8 hour increments up to a maximum of 80 sick leave hours per enrollment period) from their shared sick leave accounts to the shared leave pool during the annual open enrollment period for other benefits by completing a Shared Sick Leave Enrollment Form. The donated leave will be transferred to the Shared Sick Leave pool at the same time other benefit elections are effective (normally January). An employee who donates leave must retain a combined total

of 40 hours of leave in his/her own annual and sick leave accounts (pro-rated for part-time employees). Employees who do not accrue annual leave must retain 40 hours of shared sick leave.

Once an employee has transferred a minimum of 8 hours' leave into the leave pool, (i.e. has become a "member" of the pool), a minimum of 8 hours' leave will be automatically transferred during each subsequent yearly benefits open enrollment period. An employee may opt out of the pool prior to the yearly automatic transfer by informing Human Resources in writing to no longer transfer leave into the pool. If an employee opts out of the leave pool, the employee will no longer be eligible to apply for donated leave for that year. The employee may re-enroll in a subsequent year at open enrollment for benefits and once again become eligible to apply for donated leave.

Program Participation

Participation in this program is voluntary. Employees receiving compensation from the Shared Sick Leave Pool will continue to accrue annual and sick leave during their absence as long as they are paid at least one half of their monthly salary. Accrued annual leave and sick leave will be applied before Shared Leave.

A Shared Sick Leave recipient cannot receive shared sick leave along with other short term or long term income protection benefits (such as SSI, Disability, Worker's Compensation, etc.)

Participation eligibility shall cease upon employment termination (including retirement). Separating employees may not donate any additional unused sick leave to the pool at the time of separation.

Membership Termination

An employee may withdraw from the pool at any time by sending a written request to the Shared Leave Program Administrator. Any leave contributed to the pool prior to withdrawal shall be forfeited.

Eligibility for Benefits

In order to be eligible to receive donated leave, the employee must:

- be a member of the leave pool, and
- have completed the initial provisional period of employment, and
- provide certification from a licensed physician, and
- have exhausted all sick and annual leave (or provide credible medical evidence that he or she will have exhausted all sick and annual leave before the medical condition is resolved).

No employee shall be denied membership in the shared sick leave pool if the membership criteria are met.

Application for Benefits

An eligible employee may request donated leave by completing the Shared Sick Leave Request form, obtaining a completed Physician's Certification Form and submitting these documents to the Shared Sick Leave Certification Committee in care of Human Resources.

A potential leave recipient may request up to 160 hours of donated leave at one time, and may make up to two additional requests for donated leave within a calendar year, for a maximum total of 480 hours (12 weeks) per year. The requests may be consecutive.

If the employee is not capable of making application on his or her own behalf, a personal representative, having documented power of attorney for the employee, may make written application on behalf of the employee.

Confidentiality

Any medical information provided to the Shared Sick Leave Committee will remain confidential and will not be shared except with employees in Human Resources on a need-to-know basis.

Approval Process

Each request will be reviewed by the Shared Sick Leave Committee.

The committee's decision to approve or disapprove a request for donated leave will be by simple majority vote and may be the result of communication by email, telephone, or other means in lieu of meeting together in one location.

If the request is approved, the Benefits Manager will notify the applicant (or the personal representative who applied on behalf of the employee) within 10 working days after the date the completed request for donated leave is received by the committee (or the date that the University makes changes to these policies or procedures, if that date is later) that:

- the request has been approved; and
- the employee may begin drawing leave from the pool, and
- if the employee has entered the status of leave without pay, the approved donated leave may be substituted retroactively to cover the period of leave without pay.

Or

- the request has been denied; and
- the reason for the denial.

Appeal

Requests which have been denied may be appealed in writing to the Chief Human Resources Officer up to the President.

FORMS:

Shared Sick Leave Enrollment Form

Shared Sick Leave Request Form

Physician Certification Form

Shared Sick Leave Termination of Membership Form