Q&A
Voluntary Furlough

1. What is voluntary furlough? Furlough is leave without pay while maintaining health and life insurance benefits. Voluntary furlough means you are not mandated to take furlough but can help ease the financial burden across the university, if you so choose.

2. What if I can't afford to take furlough or I just don't want to? No one is required to take furlough at this time. The idea of voluntary furlough is to help ease the financial burden of the university where possible.

3. What are the repercussions of not taking furlough? No supervisor or fellow employee can take any sort of retaliatory action against a person who chooses not to take furlough.

4. Can I take furlough during fall, winter or spring break? Yes.

5. How do I take furlough? Furlough is requested from your supervisor, just like any other time away from work per FSH3710. Supervisors will approve furlough in a way to best ensure little to no impact on our students and business operations.

6. Can an employee perform any work during voluntary furlough? No. Employees cannot perform work in any capacity during this time, including answering email and returning calls.

7. Who is not eligible to take furlough? Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, temporary help and H1B employees are not eligible to take furlough.

8. If I want to take more than one day of furlough leave, can I spread the days out or do they need to be consecutive? Furlough can be taken in increments as small as one hour and may be claimed, with supervisor prior approval, through June 13, 2020 for 12-month employees and May 16, 2020 for nine-month employees.

9. Do Non-Faculty Exempt (NFE) employees have to take furlough time in four-hour blocks, or can they take it in one-hour increments? Furlough can be taken in hourly increments beginning with a single hour in a day. However, federal wage laws require the university to treat NFEs and non-teaching faculty as hourly employees during any week in which a furlough is taken. They are limited during that week to a combined work time and furlough time of no more than 40 hours. If a NFE or non-teaching faculty takes four hours of furlough, they can only work 36 hours for that work week. Thus, we strongly encourage NFEs and non-teaching faculty to take furlough in blocks of four hours or greater to limit the number of weeks they must be treated as hourly employees.

10. How will furlough be recorded? A Furlough Leave code is available in VandalWeb Web Time and Leave Entry to enter furlough leave during the regular payroll cycle.

11. What is the financial goal of saving through furlough? The university hopes to recapture $1 million to fulfill the proposed state budget reduction Governor Brad Little has requested for the current fiscal year.
12. What if the state reduction is revoked? The money raised through voluntarily furlough will go into the university’s general reserve account to help address the shortfall.

13. Can the impact of furlough be spread over multiple pay periods? No. The dollar amount equivalent to furlough taken will be removed from the paycheck in the same pay period as the leave is taken.

14. I’ve already taken unpaid leave this year for other reasons. Can this be used as furlough leave? No, prior use of unpaid leave cannot be changed to furlough leave. Furlough leave is available now through June 13, 2020.

15. Will there be other cost-saving measures affecting employee pay? While we intend for voluntary furlough to cover the $1 million reduction, we have not yet decided how we will address the proposed $2 million state cut in 2021.

16. Will furlough leave impact sick and annual leave accrual? Sick and annual leave accrues based on hours worked. There will be no accrual of sick and annual leave balances during furlough hours.

17. Will retirement contributions be affected? Retirement plan contributions to the Public Employees Retirement System of Idaho (PERSI) or the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) administered by either VALIC/AIG and TIAA are based on compensation. No employer or employee contribution will be made for any period of uncompensated time.

18. Will credited state service be affected by furlough leave? An employee accrues one month of service for each calendar month worked as an active member of PERSI. A calendar month is one in which the employee works 15 days or more at ½ time or greater. Employees who chose to take voluntary furlough leave (up to five days) and do not experience other unpaid leave that results in less than 15 days worked in that month will receive service credit for PERSI. An employee must be paid (pay may include wages, holiday pay, sick, annual or allowed leave pay) for at least 20 hours per week. Those on academic appointment must have at least a 50% contract. Overtime does not provide additional credited service or count towards the minimum service requirement. Credited service or vesting is not affected by furlough for those who participate in the ORP.

19. Where should I take concerns about the personal financial impacts I feel? Talk to your supervisor about any specific concerns you have. At this time no mandatory furlough actions are being implemented.