



MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 1, 2023

TO: Potentially Eligible Faculty Members
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FROM: Robin N. Coger, Ph.D.
Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

On behalf of Chancellor Philip Rogers, I am sending this letter to notify you of the University of North Carolina Phased Retirement Program (the "Program"). Our records suggest that you are potentially eligible to participate in the Program at the beginning of Fall Semester 2024 [July 1 for 12-month faculty and August 16 for 9-month faculty]. Please note that information on eligibility is based on the University's records as of August 1, 2023; if you believe the information is inaccurate, please contact one of the Program Officers listed below to correct inaccurate information.

This letter sets out in summary fashion some of the key details of the Program. For important Program information, please consult related documents online at the following web site:

<https://academicaffairs.ecu.edu/personnel/forms-information/>

- The ECU Phased Retirement Policy (approved November 18, 2008),
- Frequently Asked Questions,
- UNC Phased Retirement Program amended September 7, 2007
[300.7.2 \(northcarolina.edu\)](#)
- UNC Phased Retirement Program Guidelines amended November 14, 2017
[300.7.2.1\[G\] \(northcarolina.edu\)](#)
- ECU Phased Retirement Program for Tenured Faculty Continuation of Benefits
- University of North Carolina Phased Retirement Application and Reemployment Agreement,
- University of North Carolina Phased Retirement Program General Release, and
- Chart (both departmental and institutional in scope) containing the number of individuals, by faculty rank, who appear eligible or ineligible for the Program (updated as of August 1, 2023).

Please read all of these materials carefully, as they set forth your rights and responsibilities under the Program.

Eligibility

Only full-time tenured faculty who meet certain age and service requirements ("Eligible Faculty Members") may participate in the Program. Moreover, tenured faculty occupying full-time administrative or staff positions are not eligible for the Program until they vacate such positions. Thus, only individuals under faculty appointment involving teaching, research and service are eligible to participate in the Program.

In general, for participation at the beginning of the 2024-2025 academic year [July 1 for 12-month, August 16 for 9-month], Eligible Faculty Members are full-time tenured faculty who **as of August 1, 2024**:

- Have at least five years of full-time service at East Carolina University;
- Are age **62** or older for members of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System ("TSERS") or **59 ½** or older for participants in the University of North Carolina Optional Retirement Program (the "ORP"); and
- Are eligible to receive retirement benefits through either TSERS or the ORP, as applicable.

Limitations

Subject to ECU approved enrollment caps and the defined application period (beginning September 1, 2023 through January 31, 2024), you may apply to participate in the Program, which commences on the first day of Fall Semester 2024 [July 1 for 12-month faculty; August 16 for 9-month faculty]. You do not, however, have an absolute right to participate in the Program. Rather, ECU may limit participation in the Program in response to a *bona fide* finding that financial exigencies prohibit enrollment in the Program or that further enrollment will substantially weaken academic quality or disrupt program sequence. For ECU and specific unit established caps on participation, please see the ECU Phased Retirement Program Policy.

You should also know that an application is subject to final approval by the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (hereafter "Provost") following evaluation of the conditions referenced above and the development of a mutual "work plan" with an Eligible Faculty Member. That work plan and other terms, if accepted, must then be set forth in a UNC Phased Retirement Program Application and Reemployment Agreement and Release, to be executed by an Eligible Faculty Member prior to participation.

Process

Should you decide to participate in the Program, you would give up tenure and terminate your current full-time position. In return, ECU would contract with you for half-time (or equivalent) service for a period of three years. Upon entering the Program, participating faculty members remain subject to *The Code* and policies of the University of North Carolina and subject to policies of East Carolina University.

You will negotiate individually with your unit administrator (department/unit head) to determine your specific teaching and other faculty responsibilities and the time frame for fulfilling them. Half-time responsibilities and the time frame may vary among academic units. For example, a 9-month faculty member may be contracted to teach a full schedule for either fall or spring semester each year or teach a half schedule for both semesters. In units with 12-month faculty, the half-time responsibilities may be assigned for the year (July 1 through June 30) or full-time during six months of the year. All enrollments in the Program commence with the start of the academic year (August 16 for 9-month faculty or July 1 for 12-month faculty). For 9-month faculty, summer school academic duties are not included in the phased retirement contract.

Compensation

If the application for Program participation is approved, compensation during the period of phased retirement shall be one-half of the full-time base salary (excluding temporary stipends or supplemental compensation) that the faculty member was earning immediately prior to phased retirement based on the last 9- or 12-month contractual term of full-time employment, as applicable. Your salary would be paid over a twelve-month period irrespective of the pattern of duties/service under your agreed-to work plan. Subject to any limitations imposed under the State Retirement System, you would also be eligible for salary increments and merit pay in subsequent years of Program participation based on annual evaluations and established university policies.

IMPORTANT: Faculty in TSERS must be very careful not to exceed the annual statutory limit on State employment income (the “earnable allowance”).

Faculty who are appointed to full-time administrative positions are not eligible to participate in the Program until they vacate the administrative position. For nine-month academic appointments, the salary upon which Program compensation is determined will be the nine-month faculty base salary as specified in the administrator’s contract; if such is not specified in the contract, the salary will be consistent with applicable university policies. For an administrator whose academic appointment is based on twelve months, compensation will be one-half of the faculty base salary rate as specified in the administrator’s employment contract. If the employment contract does not specify a faculty base salary rate, then applicable university policies for establishing faculty compensation will govern the half-time salary rate for Program participation.

If you choose to enroll in the Program and are approved, you may also participate in all employee benefit programs for which you are eligible. These benefits are contained in the *ECU Phased Retirement Program for Tenured Faculty Continuation of Benefits* document located on the web site noted above.

In addition, Eligible Faculty Members who enroll in the Program may elect to begin receiving benefits they have accrued under either TSERS or the ORP, as applicable, but they are not required to do so. However, so long as a participating Faculty Member does not receive a monthly retirement benefit, that individual will not receive the University-paid State Health Plan benefits to which they would otherwise be eligible. Please note that the existing full-time appointment salary must be paid out prior to entering the Program; therefore, all final appointment salary payouts must occur no later than July 31, with a retirement date effective no later than August 1 (for nine-month faculty). Twelve-month faculty must retire on July 1 and will receive their last full-time faculty salary payment on June 30.

Note: If a faculty member does not elect to receive a monthly retirement benefit from TSERS or ORP, upon entering phased retirement he/she may continue participation in the State Health Plan as a permanent half-time employee on a fully contributory basis. In that case, the faculty member would not be eligible to receive the University contribution.

Meeting and Other Conditions

You are not required to apply for or participate in the Program. However, if interested in potentially pursuing this retirement transition option, it is essential that you review Program policies and materials at the web site noted above. In addition, you are strongly encouraged to schedule a

meeting with one of the Program Officers who have been designated to provide information to Eligible Faculty Members and are available as a resource to answer questions you might have about the Program. These officers are available as a resource at any time.

The Program Officers are:

Linda Ingalls (general program information)
Associate Vice Chancellor for Personnel Administration
Division of Academic Affairs
252-943-8584 or ingallsl@ecu.edu

Lee Ann Goff (benefits information)
Director of University Benefits
Department of Human Resources
328-9825 or goffle@ecu.edu

If you then decide to participate in the Program, you must sign an Agreement and a Release as a condition of your entering the Program. You are encouraged to consult with your attorney and financial advisors before making such a decision. A decision to enter the Program is irreversible once made. However, the faculty participant may resign from the Program before completing the period of phased retirement by submitting a written letter of resignation.

Applications for participation commencing Fall Semester 2024 [July 1 for 12-month and August 16 for 9-month faculty] may be submitted only after September 1, 2023, and not later than February 1, 2024. Applications for participation in the Phased Retirement Program from Eligible Faculty Members will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. All applications received prior to September 15, 2023, will be deemed to have been received on September 15, 2023 for first-come, first-served priority. If on September 15, 2023, a department, college, school, or the university receives more applications for the Program than it has available spaces due to limitations stated in the Program, eligibility will be determined based on institutional seniority; that is, the faculty member with the most institutional seniority will have priority to participate in the Program.

We know that decisions regarding retirement can be difficult. The Phased Retirement Program is intended to make the process easier and to facilitate difficult decisions by allowing individuals to continue to participate in academic life and the mentoring of students while preparing for the future. We believe that the Program is a beneficial one and hope that you will agree. Please do not hesitate to contact a Program Officer at any time for assistance with your questions.

cc: Dr. Philip Rogers, Chancellor
Dr. Jason Higginson, Executive Dean, Brody School of Medicine
Dr. Anne Ticknor, Chair of the Faculty
Ms. Lee Ann Goff, Director of University Benefits, Human Resources