Appendix H: Guidelines for Classified Exempt Paid Educational Leave Program

§100: PURPOSE

¶1 The purpose of the Exempt Paid Educational Leave Program is to provide classified Exempt employees an opportunity to further their career and employment goals through the completion of a Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctoral Degree from an accredited institution or a certification recognized by the industry or a professional organization.

§200: ADMINISTRATION

¶1 The Exempt Professional Development Work Group, with the approval of the Chancellor, or his/her designee, shall implement and administer this program.

¶2 In the event that the program herein stated does not address itself to specific procedures, the decisions of the Exempt Professional Development Work Group as approved by the Chancellor, or his/her designee, shall be final and binding.

§200.1: WORK GROUP COMPOSITION

¶1 The Work Group shall be composed of the Exempt Professional Development Work Group.

¶2 The ACES Treasurer and one Member-At-Large shall serve as Work Group Co-Chairs. A Work Group Co-Chair shall preside at all meetings.

§300: PROGRAM FUNDING

¶1 Funding for the Exempt Paid Educational Leave Program shall be allocated by Pima Community College to support the paid leaves granted. This funding to support leaves, in the aggregate, will total no more than twelve (12) months per fiscal year.

¶2 Funding will be allocated to the department of the employee granted the professional development leave. The amount will be equal to the cost of a replacement for that employee during the leave time.

§400: WORK GROUP DUTIES

¶1 The duties of the Work Group shall be to:

A. Determine and establish appropriate procedures and guidelines regarding the governance, operation and accountability of the Work Group and Recipients;

B. Prepare and distribute application forms;

C. Screen and select applicants; and

D. Make a recommendation to Human Resources.
§500: ELIGIBILITY

¶1 Paid educational leave may be granted to a classified exempt employee who:

A. Has been a regular, full-time employee for Pima Community College for five (5) consecutive years;

B. Can provide evidence that the stated degree program can be completed at an accredited institution during the time of the leave which in any case will not exceed four (4) months; and

C. Can demonstrate the relationship of the degree being sought to his/her current employment or to another career goal.

¶2 For the applicant who is attending school in a nontraditional program, it must be demonstrated that, in addition to A and C above, his/her educational program will require time that would constitute the equivalency of a full-time student as determined by the Work Group. Time granted would be for the period that this program requires for completion, and will not exceed four (4) months.

§600: GENERAL GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATION

¶1 An eligible exempt employee may be granted up to four (4) months of paid leave at one time. Subsequent leaves may be granted to complete other degrees but the total time granted an eligible exempt employee may not exceed twelve (12) months.

¶2 Each applicant will be required to submit a fully completed and signed Classified Exempt Staff Request for Paid Educational Leave form which:

A. Is signed by the applicant’s supervisor and Campus President or appropriate District Administrator.

B. Has attached a copy of the degree program advisement sheet completed by a university/institution advisor which shows the course work completed and the course work remaining to obtain the degree.

§600.1: SELECTION CRITERIA

¶1 The criteria for selection will include, but not be limited to:

A. Eligibility as outlined in §500 and the satisfaction of the Work Group based on a review of the information required in §600;

B. The date of receipt of the initial completed application form;

C. The availability of paid educational leave time; and
D. The applicant’s past academic performance.

¶2 In the event that two (2) or more applicants are deemed by the Work Group to be equal in qualifications but the time or funding provided by the College for the program is inadequate, the final determination may be based upon personal interviews. The Work Group’s recommendation shall be final and binding.

§600.2: COMPENSATION AND RETURN TO WORK REQUIREMENTS

¶1 Employees granted a paid educational leave will continue to receive compensation and all current benefits including:

A. Full pay in accordance with the normal pay periods and procedures;
B. Medical, dental and other benefits;
C. Normal progression on the salary scale;
D. Continued vacation and sick leave accrual; and
E. Continued accumulation of employment time for purposes of state retirement and College recognition.

¶2 The following provisions shall govern upon an Exempt employee’s return to work from a Paid Educational Leave:

A. For placement upon return to work, in order, the employee will be assigned to:
   1) His/her previous position if that position has not been eliminated;
   2) A position of equal grade and step with similar job requirements; or
   3) To a position agreed upon prior to the beginning of the leave.

   The determination of any change in position shall be the responsibility of the appropriate College Administrator working with the Human Resources department and in consultation with the employee prior to the Educational Leave, or as soon as a determination has been made.

B. Upon returning from leave the employee will, submit to his/her supervisor and Human Resources, within sixty (60) days, evidence that the degree sought has been awarded.

C. The employee shall return and work for the College an equal amount of time for which they were granted leave. This, however, shall not prevent the employee from applying for other employment opportunities within the College.

§600.3: RECIPIENT NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

¶1 Within thirty (30) days of the semester/term start date the employee must provide to the
designated Human Resources Officer written notification and verification of enrollment. **Failure to comply with this provision will result in the suspension of the employee’s salary.**

¶2 If a recipient is unable to complete the stated degree program because of an accident or illness, the employee will be removed from Paid Educational Leave. Human Resources will work with the employee to identify forms of eligible leave so that the employee will continue to receive benefits as appropriate.

¶3 **Failure on the part of a recipient to complete his/her degree, make the agreed upon progress during the granted leave or to return to work at the College for the required period after the granted and exercised leave will result in the following action:**

A. Human Resources will conduct an investigation, and, based upon the findings, determine the appropriate action to be taken which may include:

1) Requirement to pay the College the cost of the salary and benefits given the employee during the leave period and suspension of the employee;

2) Requirement to utilize an alternate form of leave during the leave period;

3) Other disciplinary actions as indicated in the Personnel Policy Statement.

B. Human Resources will notify the Exempt Professional Development Work Group of successful and unsuccessful completions of Paid Educational Leave.