University of Wisconsin-Superior
Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

March 15, 2017

Q. I received a letter notifying me that I am eligible to apply for consideration and outlining the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program. Am I required to apply for this Program?
A. No, it is a purely voluntary program.

Q. Who is eligible to apply for consideration?
A. Employees that are 58 years of age or older, prior to July 1, 2017, who started at UW-Superior before July 1, 2007, and are vested as of July 1, 2017, and eligible for an annuity in the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) OR employees who are of retirement age based on years of protected service, age 53 or older by 7-1-17, who started at UW-Superior before July 1, 2007 and are vested and eligible for an annuity in the WRS.

Q. Who is excluded from the program?
A. Employees who are younger than 58 years of age as of July 1, 2017 (or age 52 for years of protected service), or have already indicated in writing (prior to March 15, 2017) to Human Resources their intent to retire or resign are not eligible. Student employees, rehired annuitants, university staff temporary, university staff project appointments; staff on an original probationary period, and academic fixed-term, no-intent-to-renew staff are not eligible.

Q. If I don’t apply for consideration, what are the ramifications?
A. A decision to apply or not to apply for consideration is purely voluntary. If an employee, who is eligible, chooses not to apply, work status and benefits remain the same for that employee. The program is intended to supplement the range of budget management options available to the Chancellor in order to achieve specific institutional objectives: reducing salary/wage and benefit costs in anticipation of funding challenges; redirecting positions to the Chancellor to focus on priorities, changing needs or strategic objectives; achieving other cost savings or efficiencies; and minimizing potential involuntary terminations. If sufficient budgetary savings do not result from this Program, other options will need to be explored.

Q. What is the separation incentive payment?
A. Employees selected to participate will agree to a voluntary separation from employment and will receive a one-time payment of 50 percent of their base salary, with a variety of options as to the form of the payment. Base salary will be based on total appointment FTE percentage and will not include overload, stipends, overtime, J term, and/or summer payments; increases due to an interim assignment, or any other payments above base salary.

Q. What options for disbursement of the separation incentive payment are included in the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program?
A. There are three distribution categories available for the separation incentive payment. Employees are
encouraged to contact Employee Trust Funds and consult with their financial planner, tax advisor and/or attorney before selecting the option(s) which is may be most beneficial for them.

1. Lump sum payout.

2. Contributions to a Health Savings Account (HSA)

3. Contributions to a 403(b), 457, or similar plan for which the employee may be eligible at the time of separation.

Q. Can I take a combination of options?  
A. Yes, however no combination of the methods selected can exceed the 50 percent base salary calculation OR exceed contribution limits for each plan.

Q. What must be submitted in the application process for consideration?  
A. The application process entails submitting a one page application form.

Q. What is the deadline for me to submit the application for consideration?  
A. Applications for consideration must be submitted to the attention of Georgette Koenig, Vice Chancellor for Administration & Finance, OM 203, no later than 4:30pm on Friday, April 14, 2017.

Q. If I submit an application for consideration, am I automatically selected for the program?  
A. Individuals are selected based on the potential for cost savings and efficiencies and for the ability to redirect positions to focus on strategic university objectives. Deans, Vice Chancellors, and the Provost will evaluate applications received and will make recommendations to the Chancellor for final action. Because this program is not a benefit or entitlement, there is no expectation that all applications will be selected for participation.

Q. Can I withdraw my application for consideration after submitting it?  
A. Yes, the submitted application can be withdrawn at any time prior to the employee signing a separation agreement. The withdrawal should be in writing and sent to the attention of Georgette Koenig.

Q. When will I be notified if I am selected?  
A. The intent is that the Chancellor’s decision will be communicated to applicants by May 5, 2017. Once your application has been selected, a Separation Agreement will be prepared for you. You will have 45 calendar days to sign and return the Separation Agreement.

Q. Can I change my mind after submitting my signed Separation Agreement?  
A. Once your application has been selected and you have been provided the Separation Agreement form, you have up to 45 calendar days to sign and submit the Separation Agreement form to Human Resources. You then have 7 calendar days from the date you submitted your signed Separation Agreement form to rescind your acceptance and withdraw it. The withdrawal of a signed Separation Agreement form must be in writing and sent to the attention of Georgette Koenig, no later than 7 calendar days after it was submitted.
Q. By what date will I have to be officially separated from employment with UW–Superior?
A. Effective dates of separation will be determined by the Chancellor in the best interest of the university. Dates of separation will be as follows:

1. Faculty and instructional academic staff must separate between June 30, 2017, and January 12, 2018, unless authorized by the Chancellor because of exigent circumstances.

2. All other eligible appointment types must separate between June 30 and August 31, 2017, unless authorized by the Chancellor because of exigent circumstances.

Q. I have accrued leave accumulated; will I be able to use that to extend my last day of employment? What if my accrued leave takes me past the separation date listed above?
A. Selected applicants will be permitted to use accrued leave balances to extend a Voluntary Separation Incentive Program approved date of separation (i.e. vacation, banked leave, personal holiday). However, the last day physically working at UW-Superior must fall within the separation date ranges listed previously.

Q. After separation under the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program, may I be rehired by UW-Superior in any capacity?
A. Participants will not be eligible to be employed by UW-Superior for 2 years from the date of separation unless authorized by the Chancellor because of exigent circumstances. Accepted applicants must adhere to WRS valid termination requirements under Wisconsin Administrative Code § ETF 10.08 and break in service regulations as per Wis. Stat. § 40.26 (5).

Q. What benefits will employees receive after they separate from the university?
A. Employees are eligible for benefits as prescribed through employee participation in Employee Trust Funds and Wisconsin Retirement System which will vary based on years of service of individual employees.

Q. Where do I go to hear more about the specific options that have been presented to me?
A. Human Resources will be hosting a group session(s) for information on the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program separation incentive payment options. Check the UW-Superior Human Resources home page www.uwsuper.edu/vsip for dates, times and locations. Human Resources staff will also be available for individualized counseling sessions to review specific individual options.