

**THE LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION, INC. d/b/a**

**Valparaiso University**

**STAFF EMPLOYEE**

**HANDBOOK**



**Valparaiso**  
University <sup>1</sup>

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## FOREWORD

Valparaiso University is a special place. The scholars gathered on our campus not only commit themselves to excellence in teaching, advising and scholarship, but also to living out the ideals of an institution in the Lutheran tradition, one committed to scholarship, freedom, and faith. Valparaiso University welcomes students, faculty, and staff from all denominations and religious traditions.

This manual contains important information about working at Valparaiso University. In it, you will find policies, procedures, and organizational structures shared among many private colleges and universities in the United States. Our goal is to ensure that all members of our academic community know how to not only maximize their contributions to Valpo, but also to become part and garner the support of our caring community. This manual aims to explain relationships and provide guidance so that our collective experience may be effective and rewarding foreveryone.

The University motto, “In Thy light we see light,” reflects the Christian foundation upon which Valparaiso University has been built. The ethical values and the rigorous pursuit of knowledge, which are components of the Christian intellectual tradition, are important values here. We expect that all University employees will commit and uphold our special mission to prepare our graduates to lead and to serve both church and society in an outstanding academic environment at the nexus of Athens and Jerusalem.

Mark A. Heckler President  
Valparaiso University

## ABOUT VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

Valparaiso University is the nation's largest Lutheran-affiliated institution of higher learning. Founded in 1859 as the Valparaiso Male and Female Academy, it was one of the first coeducational institutions in the United States. In 1873, the school was reorganized as the Northern Indiana Normal School and Business Institute. It was renamed Valparaiso College in 1900 and re-chartered as Valparaiso University in 1907.

In 1925, the University was purchased by the Lutheran University Association, a not-for-profit corporation under whose ownership and control the University now exists. Under this organization's leadership, the University has grown from a relatively small establishment to a nationally recognized institution of higher education.

Within the University there are seven separate units: The College of Arts and Sciences, Christ College (The Honors College), the College of Business Administration, The College of Engineering, The College of Nursing, The School of Law, and The Graduate School.

The University's emphasis on the cultivation of the spiritual nature of men and women is summarized in its motto: "In Thy light we see light." The future growth of the University and its ability to realize fully its goals rest directly on the efforts of its planners and employees.

Valparaiso University is somewhat unusual as an institution of higher education, for the scholars gathered on its campus not only commit themselves to excellence in teaching, advising and conducting research, but also to thinking and acting in a manner which gives expression to the religious values of the Judeo-Christian tradition and the humane values of Western civilization and culture.

The Valparaiso motto, "In Thy light we see light," reflects the Judeo-Christian heritage upon which Valparaiso University stands. The ethical values and the rigorous pursuit of knowledge which are components of that tradition are deemed to be important values by Valparaiso University. It is the expectation of the University that its employees will be supportive of the University's goal of providing a superior educational environment in the context of the Judeo-Christian heritage.

## 1. CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. About this Employee Handbook

This Employee Handbook (handbook) contains important information regarding your employment with Valparaiso University. It generally describes Valpo's employment policies and expectations for its employees. Similarly, it is designed to provide you with information and guidance for making your employment with Valpo a productive and satisfying work experience. As such, this handbook should be referred to on a continuing basis throughout the course of your employment.

The handbook will refer to certain programs or policies which may be subject to specially written plan documents such as health insurance plans or retirement savings plans. To the extent an inconsistency exists between what is described in the handbook and what is written in the plan document, the plan document will always govern.

From time to time policies, procedures, or rules described in this handbook may be changed. Valparaiso University reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate or change any or all such policies, procedures, or rules at any time. The President of the University has exclusive authority to modify the provisions of this handbook. When changes are made to the handbook all employees will receive notice of the changes as soon as practicable.

**This handbook is not intended to create, nor is it to be construed as, a contract of employment. Where such contracts are intended they will be provided as a separate, distinct writing. The employment relationship between Valparaiso University and its staff employees is an "at-will" relationship and may be terminated by either you or the university at any time, for any lawful reason or no reason, with or without notice.**

### 1.2. Employee Relations

Valparaiso University is a community of employees who function within a variety of working relationships which are organized in a traditional hierarchical management structure. Maintaining the quality and integrity of these relationships produces greater job satisfaction, higher employee productivity, and a stronger workforce morale. They are vital to advancing the University's business in meeting both its short- and long-term goals, as well as enriching the work life of all our employees.

Valpo recognizes that a key element in quality work relationships is communication. This handbook is one tool for communicating the Universities policies, procedures, rules, and expectations. Although it cannot cover every possible employment circumstance, it is an important starting point for resolving the most common employment questions or conflicts.

We encourage open, honest, frank, yet always respectful communication between employees. If you have a question or encounter an employment conflict you should first discuss the matter with your immediate supervisor or the head of your department. In most cases the supervisor will be able to resolve the matter appropriately.

One other forum for communication is the Staff Employee Advocacy Council (SEAC). This group consists of hourly and salaried members from various constituencies across the university. The SEAC provides input and feedback on employment issues of general concern to the University community.

## **2. CHAPTER 2 – EMPLOYMENT**

### **2.1. Non-Exempt and Exempt Employment Classification**

Pursuant to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) all jobs at Valpo are classified as either non-exempt (hourly) or exempt (salaried) from the overtime requirements of the Act. Only certain jobs meeting the specific tests provided by the Act may be classified as exempt.

Although there are circumstances in which a job might be reclassified from one classification to the other, those instances are rare. However, an employee might experience a classification change when changing positions through promotion, transfer, or if a job is completely restructured.

Employees in a non-exempt position are paid for all hours worked and will be paid at a rate of 1.5 times the employee's regular rate for all time worked over 40 hours in a one week period.

Employees in an exempt position are paid a weekly wage without regard to the number of hours worked. These positions are often referred to as "salaried" jobs.

### **2.2. Employment Status**

Valparaiso University has adopted the following designations to describe an employee's status:

#### **2.2.1. Regular Full-Time Employees**

Regular full-time employees are employed in positions regularly requiring an average of no fewer than 30 work hours per week for 52 weeks per year. Employees in this status are eligible for all University benefits. Some benefits may be prorated for employees in this status whose standard work hours total less than 40 per week. These benefits may include paid leave time, holiday pay, and bereavement leave. Eligibility and participation requirements in the University's health insurance plans, 403(b) retirement plan, and tuition remission plans are described later in this handbook and are governed by plan documents.

#### **2.2.2. Limited Full-Time Employees**

Limited full-time employees are employed in positions regularly requiring an average of no fewer than 30 work hours per week for up to 44 weeks per year, commonly referred to as the academic year. Employees in this status are eligible for most University benefits, but some benefits may be prorated based on the number of standard work hours. These benefits may include paid leave time, holiday pay, and bereavement leave. Eligibility and participation requirements in the University's health insurance plans, 403(b) retirement plan, and tuition remission plans are described later in this handbook and are governed by plan documents.

#### **2.2.3. Regular Part-Time Employees**

Regular part-time employees are employed in positions regularly requiring a minimum of 20 work hours per week to a maximum of 29 work hours per week for 52 weeks per year. Employees in this status are eligible for many University benefits, but some benefits may be prorated based on the number of standard work hours. These benefits may include paid leave time, holiday pay, and bereavement leave. Eligibility and participation requirements in the



University's 403(b) retirement plan is described later in this handbook and is governed by plan documents. Regular part-time employees are not eligible to participate in the health insurance plan without meeting the threshold number of hours in the previous year.

#### **2.2.4. Limited Part-Time Employees**

Limited part-time employees are employed in positions regularly requiring a maximum of 29 work hours per week for up to 44 consecutive weeks per year. Limited part-time employees are not eligible for University benefits.

#### **2.2.5. Temporary Employees**

Temporary employees are employed in positions for an unspecified number of work hours per week for a limited period of time, often to work on specific projects or as interim coverage for an absent employee. Temporary employees may be engaged directly by the University or more commonly through an agency placement. Temporary employees are not eligible for University benefits.

### **2.3. Employment Administration**

#### **2.3.1. Office of Human Resource Services**

The Office of Human Resource Services (OHRS) is the central business unit responsible for developing, facilitating, or administering Valparaiso University's employment processes and procedures. These include areas such as recruiting and selection; employee development; employee relations; legal and regulatory compliance; leaves of absence, health care insurance, and retirement plans. OHRS plays both a strategic and tactical role in partnership with the University and its employees.

#### **2.3.2. Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health**

Because of the size and complexity of Valparaiso University, occupational and environmental safety and health matters are handled by an independent University Safety Manager reporting to the Associate Vice President for Administration. Where applicable the University Safety Manager works in partnership with the Office of Human Resource Services.

Valparaiso University is covered by the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration (IOSHA) a division of the Indiana Department of Labor, which uniformly adopts the federal Occupational Safety and Health standards.

#### **2.3.3. Employment Records and Personnel Files**

Employment records include all documents relating to an employee's employment with Valparaiso University. All employment records are the property of Valparaiso University.

Wage and tax records are maintained by the Finance Department. Most other employment records are maintained by the OHRS in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements or business purposes. The most common record is the personnel file which is generally comprised of an employee's original application together with other documents submitted for

consideration during the hiring process (resume, writing sample, supplemental answers to questions, etc.); performance evaluations, training records and certifications, disciplinary records, progress notes, and other documentation specifically relating to employment activities.

Records containing protected health information, such as those generated under a federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, the American's With Disabilities Act (ADA), Short-Term Disability insurance claims, or for workers' compensation claims are maintained in insurance and benefits files separate from the personnel file. Likewise, Federal I-9 Forms and their supporting documentation are also maintained separately.

Inaccuracies in personal information can negatively affect both administration of employment and the ability of an employee to use or receive some benefits. It is the employee's responsibility to verify the accuracy of personal information on file with the OHRS and to timely notify OHRS when this information changes. Personal information includes:

1. Legal name
2. Home address
3. Telephone number
4. Emergency Contact Information
5. Names, birthdates, and other personal information of dependents
6. Marital status
7. Names and contact information for beneficiaries
8. Military or draft status
9. Exemptions on your W-4 tax form

Except as described in 2.3.3.2 below, employees may not have additional, self-composed documents included in their personnel files.

#### **2.3.3.1. Access to employment records and personnel files**

Except when required by law, access to employment records is strictly limited to those individuals with a legitimate business purpose relevant to the information being sought. An employee may review his or her individual personnel file, subject to the following guidelines:

1. The employee must request the review in writing.
2. The review must be scheduled during OHRS business hours.
3. The review will be conducted in the presence of an OHRS representative.
4. No documents may be removed from the file.

5. The employee is free to make personal notes during the review, but no documents may be copied without the express authorization of the Director of Human Resource Services or an HR designee.

#### **2.3.3.2. Disagreements involving personnel file information**

All performance review documents, performance improvement plans, and disciplinary records will be entered into the personnel file only after being presented to the employee. If an employee disagrees with the characterization, description, or assessment in any of these documents at the time it is issued the employee may submit a written response within 30 days of the date it is issued. The response must specifically identify the document to which it refers and must address information contained in the document. The employee's response will be maintained together with the document about which the employee disagrees.

#### **2.3.3.3. Statutory Termination Letters**

Pursuant to Indiana law, IC 26-6-3-1, a former employee has a right to a Termination Letter. The letter will contain the employee's name, dates of service, last position held, and *must* include a statement "setting forth whether the employee quit or was discharged from service . . ." The letter must be signed by the Director of Human Resource Services or the Director's authorized designee.

The employee's request for the Termination Letter must be made in writing and be signed by the employee. Verbal, faxed, or email requests cannot be honored. Additionally, Valparaiso University will only provide the letter to the former employee. Valpo cannot provide the letter to third parties, such as prospective employers, on behalf of the former employee.

### **2.4. General Employment Policies**

#### **2.4.1. At-Will Employment**

All staff employment with Valparaiso University is "at-will," which means the employment relationship can be terminated with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either Valparaiso University or the employee, except as otherwise provided by law.

#### **2.4.2. Equal Employment Opportunity**

Valparaiso University maintains a [policy](#) of equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or (as qualified herein) religion or any protected classification under federal, state or local law. This policy applies to all aspects of employment including, but not limited to, recruiting, hiring, training, transfer, promotion, job benefits, pay, dismissal, social and recreational activities in employment and education. An institution committed to its Lutheran traditions, the University reserves the right to promote the teachings of the church and to exercise preferences in employment-related practices in favor of Lutherans.

### **2.4.3. Non-Discrimination Policy**

Valparaiso University willingly and fully complies with all state and federal civil rights laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is the [policy](#) of Valparaiso University that no person will be discriminated against in the terms or conditions of employment based on his or her race, color, gender, age, disability, veteran status, national origin, sexual orientation, or (as qualified herein) religion. The University reserves the right to promote the teachings of the church and to exercise preferences in the terms and conditions of employment in favor of Lutherans where those preferences satisfy bona fide occupational qualifications.

### **2.4.4. Workplace Disabilities**

Valparaiso University complies with state and federal disabilities laws. To facilitate compliance with these laws, the University has adopted the [Disabilities in the Workplace](#). When required the University, through the OHRS, will provide reasonable workplace accommodations to temporarily or permanently disabled employees so long as the accommodation does not create an undue hardship on the employer.

### **2.4.5. Form I-9 Identity and Eligibility for Employment**

Following a conditional offer of employment federal law requires employers to verify the identity and eligibility for employment of their prospective employees. Prospective employees are required to satisfactorily complete a Form I-9 and provide approved, original documents as described on the Form I-9. Information provided by the prospective employee is validated using the Department of Homeland Security E-Verify system.

### **2.4.6. Background Check Policy**

Valparaiso University takes seriously its obligations for creating a safe and secure environment for students, staff, faculty, and visitors, as well as for preserving the integrity of its property. All prospective employees are subject to a background check immediately preceding an offer of employment.

While the extent of the background check may be determined by the nature of the position, all background checks include a criminal conviction report and a driving record report. Certain positions may also require a credit report. All background checks are conducted in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

Except where, as a matter of law, a criminal conviction for a specific offense prohibits employing the person in a particular position, a criminal conviction does not automatically preclude a person from employment with the University. Valparaiso University considers multiple factors in determining whether a criminal conviction affects a person's employability, including the nature of the offense relative to the job responsibilities, the amount of time since conviction, and any encumbrances to performing the job duties as a result of the conviction.

### **2.4.7. Former Employees**

Former Valparaiso University employees who were in good standing at the time of their employment separation are eligible for rehire consideration, but are subject to the established application procedures and meeting the requisite job qualifications.

Former Valparaiso University employees who were deemed ineligible for rehire at the time of their employment separation may be considered for later rehire at the discretion of the University.

Except as provided in the University's [Bridging of Service](#), a former employee who is re-employed by the University, will receive the benefits for which they are eligible as if they are first-time Valparaiso University employees.

#### **2.4.8. University Nepotism Policy**

Valparaiso University encourages current employees to communicate vacant positions on campus with acquaintances, friends, and relatives who possess the skills, experience, and education level for the position. However, the University does not hire, promote, or transfer close family members related by blood, marriage, or adoption into a position that creates an immediate supervisor-employee relationship between the relatives.

For the purposes of this policy, "a relative" applies to the following relationships: spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, or in-law. If such a supervisory relationship occurs, the University may reorganize the personnel within the department or office so as to remove the potential for conflict of interest. ([Board Approved 4.28.12](#))

#### **2.4.9. Outside Employment**

While Valpo does not prohibit most outside employment concurrent with University employment, neither does it consider the outside employment of an employee when making job assignments, work schedules, or evaluating job performance. For this reason, outside employment cannot interfere with the employee's University work or work quality.

The University may prohibit outside employment by an employee when it creates a conflict of interest. After being notified of the conflict, the employee must discontinue one of the two jobs.

#### **2.4.10. Anniversary Date**

The first day of employment with Valparaiso University is referred to as the Anniversary Date. This date marks the official beginning of employment with the University and is used when computing eligibility or availability of various employment benefits. This date remains in effect so long as there is no employment separation.

### **2.5. General Operational Policies**

#### **2.5.1. Work Week and Hours of Operation**

The standard work week for all purposes relevant to employment begins at 12:00 a.m. on

Sunday and concludes at 11:59 p.m. on the following Saturday.

The regular business hours for the University are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, many offices, divisions, and University events operate outside of these hours and days to meet the University's objectives.

### **2.5.2. Regular Work Schedules**

A regular work schedule consists of the established days and hours during which employees are expected to perform work tasks.

While regular work schedules will be maintained as consistent as possible, they are subject to change at the discretion of the department head or supervisor in order to meet the needs of the University. From time-to-time some temporary modifications may be necessary and appropriate, such as to cover for an absent co-worker. Reasonable efforts will be made to notify hourly paid employees at least two weeks in advance of changes or modifications to their regular work schedules.

Work assignments which temporarily or occasionally add to or extend the regular work hours or work days in a week are not considered changes to the regular work schedule.

**Note:** Some hourly paid job positions, usually in limited part-time or temporary roles, do not permit establishing a permanently consistent work schedule. Employees in these positions should be notified prior to the time of hire that their work schedules may fluctuate week over week.

#### **2.5.2.1. Overtime**

Overtime refers to time worked by non-exempt employees in excess of 40 hours in a work week. Only actual work time is used in calculating overtime. That time is calculated at a rate of 1.5 times an employee's regular rate of pay. Supervisors are expected to manage their direct reporting hourly employees' workloads, including the scheduling of work assignments, within the framework of the employees' regular work schedules. In this regard, supervisors are expected to anticipate and authorize overtime in a deliberate manner as circumstances require and within their discretion.

### **2.5.3. Flexible Work Scheduling**

Valparaiso University recognizes that occasionally personal circumstances will arise for which employees may desire a temporary change in schedule to accommodate their personal needs. Valpo has adopted a [Flexible Working Schedule Policy](#) which authorizes department heads or their supervisors to make incidental changes within a work week to work schedules or assigned working hours on a case-by-case basis as may be provided without affecting productivity. Flexible work scheduling should not be confused with scheduling changes made for purposes of the Family and Medical Leave Act, American's with Disabilities Act accommodations, or managing Workers' Compensation claims.

Flexible work scheduling is only available to staff employees who work under an established, regular work schedule. Although department heads or their supervisors are encouraged to make flexible work time and flexible work schedules available when feasible, these arrangements are exclusively in their discretion.

#### **2.5.4. [RESERVED]**

#### **2.5.5. Meal Periods and Break Periods for Hourly Employees**

Meal periods and break periods are generally factored into the established regular schedules of Regular and Limited Full-Time hourly employees or those hourly employees scheduled to work six or more hours in any day. Shorter work schedules may or may not provide for a break or meal period.

Individual departments and supervisors are responsible for scheduling and coordinating break and meal periods.

Break periods may be scheduled or limited to certain times of the day at the supervisor's discretion. Break periods of less than 20 minutes are paid time. As such, the employee may not be completely relieved of all work responsibilities while on break.

#### **2.5.6. Time-keeping Management**

Valparaiso University uses the Kronos time-keeping system for hourly employees to record their hours worked. All hourly employees are required to utilize this system to record work start times and end times, including meal periods or when leaving the University for non-work related business.

Hourly employees are generally expected to be at their appointed work stations ready to work at their scheduled start time. To account for the practical realities involved with time-keeping, employees have a twelve minute window in which to record their start times, from 6 minutes before their scheduled start time to 6 minutes after their scheduled start time. This also applies to a scheduled end time if one is established.

Hourly employees are not permitted to begin work prior to their scheduled start time or continue working past their scheduled end time without the express approval of the supervisor. All work start and end times are expected to be recorded in the electronic timekeeping system. Supervisors are responsible for reviewing and approving time records submitted by their employees. **See also Tardiness at 2.6.7.1**

### **2.6. Standards of Conduct and Performance**

Valparaiso University expects all employees will reflect the high standards of conduct and performance established to maintain Valpo's quality and integrity in fulfilling its mission to produce "*a community of learning dedicated to excellence and grounded in the Lutheran tradition of scholarship, freedom, and faith that prepares students to lead and serve in both church and society.*"

#### **2.6.1. General Standards**

While specific conduct or performance expectations may vary among different departments or different disciplines, the following general standards are applicable to all University employees in their conduct and the performance of their work duties:

1. Employees are expected to act with a high degree of professionalism, which is reflected by a concern for timeliness in completing work tasks, the quality of the final work product, and the appropriateness of the methods or processes used to achieve the results.
2. Employees are expected to work cooperatively with co-workers and colleagues, which is reflected by thoughtful, respectful, and empathetic communication even during issues of conflict, and; not unreasonably withholding contributions of time, talents, or energies in aiding others in their work efforts on behalf of the University.
3. Employees are expected to act ethically and with integrity, which is reflected by adherence to the University's policies, rules, and procedures, and not engaging in retaliatory behavior against others for doing the same.
4. Employees are expected to accept growth in and changes to job tasks and responsibilities, as reflected by willingly accepting new work assignments, adopting new processes, and undertaking training opportunities determined by the department or the University to be necessary for success in the job.

#### **2.6.2. Harassment and Sexual Harassment Prohibited**

The University prohibits behavior which constitute discriminatory harassment and sexual harassment as described in the [Non-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy](#).

Harassment is any conduct directed toward an individual or group based on membership in a protected class which is severe or pervasive and creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment. Protected class characteristics include race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, or veteran status.

While Sexual Harassment uses the same basic definition as other forms of harassment, it also includes a distinct form of harassment called quid pro quo (*this for that*) which can only occur between a supervisor or other person in authority and a subordinate employee.

Pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 the prohibition of harassment and sexual harassment extends to all students and not just student-employees.

#### **2.6.3. Prohibited Consensual Relationships**

Staff members who have direct or indirect supervisory authority over other employees or students are prohibited from engaging in dating, intimate, or sexual relationships with any of those employees or students. This policy extends to supervisory staff members engaging in those types of relationships with employees or students who are reasonably likely to come under their supervision.



#### **2.6.4. Drug Free Workplace**

In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 Valparaiso University has adopted a [Drug and Alcohol Policy](#). The policy prohibits any employee while on University property or at University events from manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, or unlawfully possessing and/or using a controlled substance. Valpo seeks to make employees aware of the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace as well as various treatment and counseling opportunities through periodic training initiatives.

#### **2.6.5. Tobacco Free Campus**

Valparaiso University is a [Tobacco free](#) environment. Tobacco use is not permitted on campus or in University vehicles. This policy also applies to smoking substitutes, such as herbal cigarettes and vapor or e-cigarettes.

#### **2.6.6. Ethics**

Valparaiso University takes seriously the trust vested in it by students, employees, and the public. The concepts of ethics and unethical behavior in our campus community are defined by the social, cultural, and legal expectations of these stakeholders and not merely by individual concepts of right and wrong.

To encourage reporting suspected unethical behavior Valparaiso University has contracted with EthicsPoint which provides a means for anonymously notifying the University of such concerns. Unethical behavior commonly involves fraud; theft; self-dealing for personal gain, or; falsifying business records. This guidance is not intended to limit the subjects of reporting through EthicsPoint. However, EthicsPoint should not be a substitute for addressing common employment issues more appropriately resolved with the supervisor or through consultation with the OHRS.

Once a report is filed it is forwarded to the University for resolution. At the time the report is submitted EthicsPoint generates a reference number called a “report key” known only to the person submitting the report. The reporting person should check back through EthicsPoint in 5 to 7 days using the report key for feedback on the report or for clarifying questions about the report. Once evaluated and as appropriate the report will be referred to the responsible University officials.

To file an ethics complaint:

Call Toll Free: (800) 445-7078, or

Visit online at [www.ethicspoint.com](http://www.ethicspoint.com). (*Follow the link and enter Valparaiso University*)

#### **2.6.7. Attendance**

Every employee’s prompt, regular attendance at work and adherence to the regular, assigned work schedule is essential for the University to achieve its mission. In addition to certain statutorily protected absences, Valpo provides to its employees generous leave time benefits to help facilitate circumstances when an employee is unable to be at work. Employees are responsible for managing their work attendance, including timely notification to their supervisor when an absence from work is necessary or desired.

Although the policies often work together, attendance is a distinct policy from leave time

policies, meaning that the notice requirements to supervisors and whether or not an absence is excused or unexcused are not determined by availability of sick or vacation time or the willingness of the supervisor to provide “flex time” scheduling.

#### **2.6.7.1. Tardiness**

Employees are considered tardy when arriving to work more than 6 minutes, but fewer than 30 minutes beyond their scheduled start time without prior authorization. Late arrivals more than 30 minutes beyond the scheduled start time are considered an absence. Employees who unexpectedly find they are going to be late to work should make a reasonable efforts to contact their supervisor or department head to notify them of the late arrival.

Although a few isolated instances of tardiness do not in most cases warrant disciplinary action, chronic tardiness, defined as more than two unapproved late arrivals in a 30 day period, or a pattern of tardiness, for example regular late arrivals on Mondays, may result in disciplinary action.

#### **2.6.7.2. Absences**

An absence is any time an employee is not at work during the employee’s regular, assigned work schedule or during a specially assigned work schedule such as may be required for a project or University event, but excludes approved break or meal periods.

Absences are either planned or unplanned and are either excused or unexcused. A planned absence is one for which the employee anticipates being away from work and provides appropriate advanced notice to the supervisor.

An unplanned absence most often occurs under emergency circumstances when the absence cannot be anticipated. An unplanned absence does not remove the employee’s responsibility to contact the supervisor at the earliest reasonable opportunity to notify them of the reason for the absence. Unplanned absences should be a rare occurrence and, except where otherwise required, employees are limited to three unplanned absences or “call offs” in the fiscal year without providing supporting documentation to validate the absence. See also Vacation, Section 5.4.1 and Sick Leave, Section 5.4.2. Available vacation and/or sick leave must be used toward planned and/or unplanned absences. If vacation or sick leave is not available unpaid leave may be approved with supervisor and/or Human Resources discretion. Please see Unpaid leave of absence policy 5.4.7.

An excused absence is one either protected by law, such as for jury service or under the Family and Medical Leave Act, or one for which a supervisor has discretion to approve the absence in advance of it being taken and has approved it. Depending on the circumstances some unplanned absences may be excused by supervisor approval after the fact.

An unexcused absence is one for which no prior request was provided to the supervisor, or the lack of notice was unreasonable, or the requested absence was denied by the supervisor. Please note that the availability of vacation or sick leave does not determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

An absence of three consecutive days without notice is considered job abandonment and may result in termination.

### **2.6.7.3. Discipline for Absenteeism**

Unlike most other conduct for which disciplinary actions are assessed, absenteeism at Valpo is generally addressed through a progressive discipline process and takes into consideration the cumulative instances of unexcused absences in a one year rolling-calendar period. The following schedule of discipline is provided as a basic guideline:

1. First occasion in a rolling calendar year -- Incident report
2. Second occasion in a rolling calendar year -- Written warning
3. Third occasion in a rolling calendar year – Final Warning
4. Fourth occasion in a rolling calendar year -- Termination of employment

Disciplinary consequences may be assessed against an employee for chronic or excessive tardiness in the same way as for unexcused absences. Chronic or excessive tardiness may also be factored into a disciplinary action for an unexcused absence, moving it to a higher consequence level:

Example: Employee A misses work without an appropriate absence request to the supervisor. This is the employee's first unexcused absence. However, the employee has also been tardy on eight occasions over the last 30 days. The supervisor, taking both attendance issues into consideration, may assess a written warning level of discipline against the employee.

### **2.6.8. Performance Improvement Plans**

Valparaiso University values every employee and every employee's potential for contributing to fulfillment of the University's mission. Valpo also recognizes that staff employees want to contribute value to the University and be successful in their work. In this spirit, the University makes every effort to place qualified and motivated staff employees in positions where both objectives can be achieved. The University seeks to provide appropriate tools and support to make those objectives a reality. Despite these efforts occasionally a staff employee will struggle to meet conduct or performance expectations.

Where appropriate, supervisors and department heads are encouraged to work with the Office of Human Resource Services to develop and institute a performance improvement plan for the benefit of the staff employee.

A Performance Improvement Plan consists of 5 key elements and is designed to serve as a game plan for returning an employee's performance to an acceptable level. The 5 elements include:

1. Notice to the employee of a performance deficiency, including a specific description of the unacceptable behavior or performance.
2. A description of the standards and expectations for what the behavior or performance should be.
3. The methods or tools which may be used by the employee to achieve an acceptable level of behavior or performance.
4. The time frame for achieving an acceptable level of behavior or

performance.

5. The consequences for not achieving and sustaining an acceptable level of behavior or performance.

### **2.6.9. Disciplinary Action**

Disciplinary Action may result when an employee's conduct or performance does not meet the University's standards or reasonable expectations.

The consequence of a disciplinary action may be determined by the nature of the offense; the employee's knowledge and experience; the employee's disciplinary history; other factors determined to be relevant in the particular circumstance, or; any combination of these factors.

All disciplinary actions will be documented in writing and presented to the employee before being sent to the Office of Human Resource Services for inclusion in the employee's personnel file. A disciplinary action which may result in a suspension or termination must first be discussed with the Director of Human Resources prior to presenting the discipline to the employee.

Supervisors and department heads are encouraged to first address minor performance issues through informal discussions with the employee before moving to a more formal disciplinary action.

As discussed in Section 2.3.3.2, employees may submit a written response to a disciplinary action within 30 days from the date it is presented to them. An employee subject to a disciplinary action who feels the disciplinary action is inappropriate under the circumstances it was issued may informally challenge the discipline through the Office of Human Resource Services before submitting a written response.

Employees who are subject to a disciplinary action with the consequence of suspension without pay or termination, may appeal that decision through the appeal process outlined in 2.6.9.1. Employees subject to disciplinary action involving suspension without pay or termination may not appeal those decisions when such actions are taken to enforce regulatory compliance or where the University deems it essential to protecting the health, safety, or welfare of its employees, students, and/or visitors.

#### **2.6.9.1. Appeal to Human Resource Services Panel**

An employee may appeal the University's determination of suspension without pay or termination to the Director of Human Resource Services for review by a Human Resource Services Panel.

The appeal must be presented, in writing, to the Director of Human Resource Services within five (5) business days of the employee's suspension without pay or termination. The appeal must be dated, signed by the employee and set forth reasons why the employee disagrees with the University's determination.

A copy of the determination must be attached to the appeal. Additional evidence may be attached to the appeal if it was unavailable prior to the action being taken.

The Human Resource Services Panel will consist of the following individuals:

- Director of Human Resource Services;
- One Co-Chair from the Staff Employee Advocacy Council;
- A person from the Staff Employee Advocacy Council (who is not from the same area as the complainant) to be selected by the complainant.
- A person from the Staff Employee Advocacy Council (who is not from the same area as the complainant), to be selected by the complainant's department head; and
- A full-time staff member or faculty member to be selected by the Director of Human Resources Services.

Both the complainant and the complainant's department head will be permitted one preemptory challenge to an assigned Panel member, excluding the Director of Human Resource Services and the SEAC Co-Chair serving on the committee. If either or both parties invoke a preemptory challenge, the Director of Human Resource Services and the serving SEAC Co-Chair will identify the replacement Panel member, and that member will not be subject to a preemptory challenge.

A Panel review will take place within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the appeal. Witnesses at the hearing will be the following individuals:

- The complainant;
- The complainant's immediate supervisor;
- At the discretion of the Human Resource Services Panel, additional parties who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the appeal may be called to appear whether at the request of the complainant, the complainant's supervisor, or by the Panel itself.

The Human Resource Services Panel shall meet *ex parte* with the witnesses at the Panel review. Character or hearsay witnesses will not be permitted to speak before the Human Resource Services Panel.

Any member of the Panel may ask any witnesses factual questions relating to or concerning the complaint.

A written determination shall be rendered by a majority vote of the Human Resource Services Committee within five (5) working days of the hearing. The determination will state whether or not the University's action was appropriate or not-appropriate based on the testimony and evidence presented to the Human Resources Services Panel.

The decision will be co-written by the Director of Human Resource Services and the serving Co-Chair of SEAC and signed by each Panel member stating that a majority of the Panel supported the determination.

A copy of the Human Resource Services Panel's written determination will be provided to the complainant, the complainant's supervisor, the complainant's department head, and in a Resolution File maintained by the Office of Human Resource Service

#### **2.6.9.2. Appeal to Division Head**

The complainant or the complainant's department head may appeal the determination of the Human Resource Service Panel by submitting a written appeal to the responsible Division Head within five (5) working days from the date of receipt of the Human Resource Service Panel's determination.

The appeal must be dated, signed by the complainant or the complainant's department head, and set forth reasons why the Panel's determination is inappropriate. A copy of the original complaint, University's written determination, and the Panel's determination must be attached to the appeal.

The Division Head has the discretion to review the determination of the Human Resource Services Panel on any basis he/she deems appropriate, and render any decision on the appeal that he/she deems appropriate. The Division Head will communicate a final determination to the Director of Human Resource Services within fifteen (15) days of the appeal at which time the Director of Human Resource Services will issue a final written determination to the appealing party. A copy of the decision will also be provided to the opposing party, and to the serving Co- Chair of the Panel making the original decision. All decisions of the Division Head will be final and binding.

### **2.6.9.3. Common Conduct and Performance Violations**

Although it is impossible to identify all possible behaviors which could result in disciplinary action, the list identifies the most common conduct or performance issues which violate the general standards established by Valparaiso University:

- Insubordination, which is defined as the unreasonable refusal to carry out the legitimate direction or instructions of a supervisor, or; undermining to others the authority of a supervisor to give legitimate instructions or direction.
- Using profanity or obscene language or engaging in immoral or obscene behavior while on University property or at University events. Immoral or obscene behavior includes any conduct directed toward prurient interests, such as possession of or sharing pornographic materials.
- Negligent or careless work performance, which is measured circumstantially against previous work results. Although an inability to effectively perform a job function or job task might result in termination, negligence or carelessness assumes an employee knows how to perform the work and what represents a quality outcome.
- Falsifying any record or business document or providing false or misleading information used in the operations and decision-making of the University. The false or misleading information must be provided intentionally or with a reckless disregard for the truth. This is an ongoing violation, meaning that a violation is subject to discipline whenever the falsification is discovered. Falsification can also occur by omission. For example falsifying a time record also includes repeatedly failing to enter work start or stop times.
- Entering another employee's work start or stop time in a time record or on a time keeping system. The violation exists whether or not the employee whose start or stop time was entered did in fact start or stop work at the time recorded or was on-

site at the time the entry was made.

- Excessive violations of the attendance policies. See 2.6.6 for further clarification.
- Absence from work for three consecutive days without providing notice to the supervisor.
- Fighting, including threatening, attempting to, or inflicting bodily harm to anyone on University property or at any University function.
- Possession or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs while on University property or at University events. Also included is working while under the influence of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs. Use of prescription drugs may be permitted when required to comply with an accommodation under the American's With Disabilities Act.
- Theft of University, employee, or student property.
- Unauthorized possession of weapons or explosives on University property or at any University function.
- Misusing, damaging, defacing or destroying University property or the property of others.
- Gambling on University property or at any University function.
- Violations of safety rules or practices.
- Any hostile, intimidating, or offensive behavior including both words and actions, directed toward individuals or groups based on their membership in a protected class.

#### **2.6.9.4. Retaliation Prohibited**

Disciplinary actions are reserved for conduct or behaviors which are, by a preponderance of the evidence, adverse to the business interests or operations of the University. Disciplinary action will not be used to retaliate against employees for questioning the appropriateness of a business decision by the University, reporting misconduct, or appropriately availing themselves of a legally protected right.

### **2.7. General Workplace Policies and Practices**

#### **2.7.1. [RESERVED]**

#### **2.7.2. Work Attire**

Employees are expected to dress appropriately for their work environment, keeping in mind the professional image Valparaiso University seeks to present to students, parents, and visitors. Generally office staff should dress in business casual or professional business attire.

Some positions may require uniforms or other designated work clothing. Uniforms or other specialized work apparel may be provided to employees at no charge. In those circumstances employees are responsible for returning those items for cleaning, maintenance, or at the conclusion of their service with the University. Where specialized footwear is required, some departments provide a monetary allowance for purchasing appropriate footwear. Where required or as appropriate, changing facilities will be provided for employee use.

Occasionally supervisors may permit “casual dress” days. All attire is expected to be clean, well maintained, and tasteful.

### **2.7.3. Work Areas and Work Stations**

Work areas should be orderly and well organized. Employees are expected to protect the security and integrity of documents, files, and other University materials in their possession.

Employees are encouraged to display or incorporate personal items in their work areas where appropriate and within the bounds of good taste.

#### **2.7.4.1. Pets**

Except for service animals as defined by the American’s with Disabilities Act or similar state laws classifying service animals to accommodate a disability, Valparaiso University prohibits bringing or maintaining pets of any kind in any University owned or leased facility or at any outdoor event.

Any dogs or other domestic animals brought to campus must be in the control of its handler. A handler is in control of a pet if the animal is on a leash held by the handler or caged. Click here to see the University’s [Pet Policy](#).

### **2.7.5. Personal Property**

Employees are responsible for the security and maintenance of personal property brought to campus. Valpo assumes no responsibility for the loss, damage, or theft of personal property.

### **2.7.6. Personal use of University Property and Services**

Valparaiso University provides all necessary equipment and supplies to perform university business functions. Employees are expected to use these resources to perform their work activities for the University.

Except as otherwise permitted by policy or authorized by an employee’s supervisor, employees are not allowed to use University equipment and resources for personal activities. Use of any University equipment or resources for political activities or personal, for-profit ventures is strictly prohibited.

Employees are prohibited from removing University equipment or resources from campus, except in the course of their employment, without the express, written permission of the Vice



President for Administration and Finance.

### **2.7.7. Email and Computer Use**

All employees are provided an email address and computer access at the time of hire, although access to specific programs or web systems may be limited to authorized employees. Computer kiosks are provided throughout the University for employee use, particularly for those employees who do not have regular access to computers.

Email is the University's primary and preferred method for communicating important information relating to employment, benefits, and University activities. Although state or federal law may require dissemination of some particular types of information through other methods, where appropriate the University may provide this information via email in addition to the prescribed method. See also Valparaiso University's policy on [Email Communication](#).

While the University generally expects employees primarily will use their computer access to conduct University business or activities related to employment, we also recognize the benefit to both employees and the University in allowing some incidental use of computers and the internet for personal activities. Indeed the University encourages this activity within the limits established by the [Acceptable Use Policy](#).

### **2.7.8. Parking and Driving on Campus**

All employees who will be driving personal vehicles to campus and parking those vehicles on campus during their work shifts are required to obtain and display a vehicle registration sticker. Registration stickers are free of charge and available from the Valparaiso University Police Department. Each employee is limited to registering one vehicle on campus.

Faculty and staff parking areas are designated and clearly marked. Parking in these areas is limited to vehicles with registration stickers. Faculty and staff are not permitted to park in areas designated for visitor parking

Operating a motor vehicle on the Valparaiso University campus is not much different from operating and parking on public streets. Valparaiso's campus community is a busy place, with pedestrians and bicyclists crisscrossing campus streets at all hours of the day and night and during all kinds of weather conditions. As such, drivers need to be particularly cautious when driving on campus. All motor vehicle operators are expected to yield the right of way to pedestrians whether or not they are crossing at a designated cross-walk.

Driving on campus is a privilege, not a right. Drivers are expected to obey all traffic regulations, speed limits, and traffic control devices.

### **2.7.9. Building Access, Restricted Areas, and Security**

Building access is regulated by Valpo's Facilities Management (FM) department. In most cases buildings are open during regular business hours. Access to buildings and work areas outside the regular business hours may be limited to authorized employees.

Assignment of keys or other means of accessing buildings and work areas are carefully managed and regulated by FM. Please see the Key Control Policy on the FM website at

[www.valpo.edu/facilitiesmanagement/](http://www.valpo.edu/facilitiesmanagement/).

Employees who are assigned keys allowing access to buildings and work areas are responsible for maintaining the security of those areas. Computers, valuables, and confidential information should be secured before leaving an office or work area. Offices should be locked when leaving for an extended period of time or at the conclusion of a work day.

When accessing a building outside of normal business hours a locked access door should be relocked after entry and checked to make sure it is securely latched.

#### **2.7.10. Environmental Controls, Waste, and Recycling**

Valpo is committed to protecting the environment and reclaiming recyclable materials to promote sustainable business practices. Employees are asked to assist in these efforts by appropriately segregating waste items prior to disposal and placing them in appropriate containers. Recycle bins are available in most office and work areas, as well as many common areas across the University. To request a recycle bin, please contact Facilities Management.

**Appropriate materials for recycle bin collection include:** paper; cardboard, including boxes broken down flat; magazines, newspapers, catalogs, and books; rinsed glass containers such as drinking bottles or food jars; aluminum and steel cans and lids, and; plastics marked with a recycle symbol, including bags.

In addition, some materials appropriate for recycling require special handling and must be placed in designated containers including batteries, electronics, and scrap metal.

**Inappropriate materials for recycle bin collection are:** window glass; ceramic or pottery dishes; rubber products; vinyl plastics, photographic film, food; fabric; yard waste; wood; office products containing chemicals, such as rubber cement or Liquid Paper dispensers; pens, three-ring binders; facial tissue, or; feminine hygiene products.

**Chemical disposal**, including such items as paints; solvents; motor oils; lubricants; laboratory materials, etc. requires special handling. Contact Facilities Management or the University Safety Manager to schedule collection and removal.

#### **2.7.11. Accident Reporting**

Employees are required to report all workplace accidents, injuries, or illness immediately or as soon as practical without regard to the apparent seriousness of the injury or illness. Reports must be made to a supervisor or manager, who is then required to notify the University Safety Manager. All employees are expected to cooperate fully in the investigation of any accident.

In the event of a catastrophic accident or one in which the injured employee is unconscious or immobile, summon medical help immediately by dialing 911.

### **3. CHAPTER 3 – TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Valparaiso University not only seeks to hire the most qualified employees for positions with the University, but provides various resources toward training and developing those employees to our mutual benefit.

#### **3.1. Department and Function Specific Training**

Valpo encourages supervisors and department heads to provide opportunities for employees to engage in educational and development programs related to their specific functions.

Webinars, off-site seminars, conferences, and memberships in professional organizations when relevant and appropriate provide excellent career advancement opportunities and usually increase the value of employee contributions toward achieving the objectives of the department.

#### **3.2. Individual Development Plans**

Occasionally staff employees undertaking a new role or new job tasks will struggle to achieve effective or desired outcomes due to a lack of experience with or exposure to a particular subject, process, or tool.

In these circumstances supervisors should create a Individual Development Plan (IDP) for the staff employee. This approach should not be confused with a Performance Improvement Plan, which addresses concerns with a staff employee's performance after having demonstrated a capacity to successfully perform the work or when the employee's actions are contrary to the established expectations.

IDPs are designed in collaboration with the employee and should take into consideration the availability of any special resources necessary to the employee's development; the time commitment necessary on the part of the employee; the costs; and, the reasonable amount of time permitted for the employee to master the subject.

The availability of an IDP is not considered a substitute for minimum skill or experience requirements as identified in the Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ).

#### **3.3. Performance Evaluations**

All employees receive performance evaluations at least annually. Some departments may require performance evaluations more frequently, at the supervisor's or department head's discretion.

Performance evaluations provide a critical opportunity for supervisors to engage with their direct reports. The process is interactive to afford both supervisor and direct reports an opportunity to discuss performance, establish goals, and provide feedback.

While performance evaluations are tailored to meet specific department objectives or individual employee goals toward fulfilling the University's mission, all performance evaluations include at a minimum the expectations described in Section 2.6.1 General Standards as performance components.

Performance evaluations may be a factor in determining merit pay increases, but are not a factor in determining whether or not a pay increase is authorized.

Performance evaluations must be written. Employees will be requested to sign their performance evaluations. As discussed in Section 2.3.3.2, if an employee disagrees with a substantive assessment of performance the employee may provide a written response within 30 days of the evaluation. All performance evaluations must be submitted to the Office of Human Resource Services after being delivered to the employee and will become a part of the employee's personnel file.

## **4. CHAPTER 4 – COMPENSATION**

### **4.1. Compensation Plan**

Valparaiso University seeks to pay competitive wages to those paid by similarly situated employers within the higher education marketplace. Certain other factors, such as regional economics, industry custom, and regulation may influence the compensation plan.

Valpo relies on recognized compensation data providers such as the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics and the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR), for benchmarking its compensation plan. From time to time the University may engage consultants to assist in auditing or reviewing the plan.

Valpo's compensation plan assigns each position to a grade level which has a corresponding wage range (for exempt employees) or pay rate range (for non-exempt employees) often referred to as a "pay band."

Grade levels are determined based on two organizational factors: (1) The scope, complexity, or functions of the job; and, (2) The authority and responsibility of the job within the organization's structure and framework.

To account for varying degrees of experience and skill levels, wage and pay rate ranges extend below and above the established compensation midpoint for a job. The midpoint is determined from analyzing the compensation data and other relevant factors. As a result wage or pay rate ranges for positions in the grade levels above and below any particular job may overlap to some degree.

### **4.2. Pay Periods, Pay Dates, and Manner of Payment**

A pay period or pay cycle at Valparaiso University begins at 12:00 a.m. on Sunday and concludes fourteen days later at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday. Employees are paid bi-weekly. Non-exempt employees are paid one week in arrears. Exempt employees are paid current to the pay period. If the pay date falls on a holiday employees will be paid on the last work day preceding the holiday. An annual payroll calendar is available from the Human Resource Services office or on the OHRS website.

All employee compensation must be processed through the University's payroll system. University policy prohibits delivering compensation in cash, paying compensation by way of any mechanism other than the University's payroll system, or issuing pay advances. All employees are required to receive their pay via direct deposit. Employees may download or print a pay advice (pay stub) online at <https://datavu.valpo.edu>.

### **4.3. Deductions from Pay**

Two types of deductions may be taken from an employee's pay: mandatory and voluntary. Mandatory deductions are required by law, whereas voluntary deductions require an authorization by the employee.

Additionally, some voluntary deductions may be taken pre-tax, that is before mandatory payroll taxes are deducted or post-tax, taken after mandatory payroll taxes are deducted.

Whether a deduction is taken pre- or post-tax is a consideration relating to certain benefits and will be discussed more fully in the applicable benefits section.

Mandatory and approved, voluntary deductions are the only deductions available through payroll. Special, individualized deductions are not authorized by the University.

#### **4.3.1. Mandatory Deductions**

Federal and state laws require certain deductions from employee pay. These “withholdings” cover federal income tax; the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) collections for Social Security and Medicare; state income tax; and, where applicable, county or city income tax assessments. The amount of both federal and state income tax deductions may be affected by elections made on the employee’s W-4 form.

##### **4.3.1.1. Garnishments**

A garnishment is a court ordered withholding to satisfy an employee’s outstanding debt. These debts can be between the employee and a private party, such as a bank, a retail business, or another individual, or between the employee and a governmental body such as the IRS or a municipality.

Because garnishment is a court order, the University is obligated to comply with it. Resolving the matter and securing a release from the garnishment is the exclusive responsibility of the employee. The garnishment will remain in effect until the University receives notice from the court that the garnishment is concluded.

#### **4.3.2. Voluntary Deductions**

Voluntary deductions are those authorized by employees to be deducted from their pay. Voluntary deductions are available for various University sponsored programs, including such things as health insurance premiums or contributions to University sponsored, charitable fundraising efforts.

Although participation in these programs is voluntary, the University reserves the right to require employee contributions for participation in these programs be made through payroll deductions.

#### **4.4. Errors in Pay**

Every effort is made to insure the accuracy of compensation payments to employees. If an employee believes an error has been made in his or her pay the employee should immediately report the issue to the Payroll Department. The necessary steps will be taken to research the question and if an error is determined to have occurred it will be corrected as quickly as practicable.

#### **4.5. Special Pay Circumstances for hourly Employees during a University Emergency Shutdown or Closure (University Closure)**

The purpose of this policy is to assure no hourly employee loses pay as the result of a University Closure (i.e. a snowstorm) and to reward those hourly employees whose job it is to address and abate the adverse effects to the campus caused by whatever gave rise to the University Closure. Its purpose is not to relieve an employee from work;

consequently, employees who are capable of working remotely during a University Closure may be required to do so by their supervisor. Therefore, Valpo has established the following pay practices for hourly employees during a University Closure:

#### **4.5.1. Hourly Employees Who Address the Effects of a University Closure**

Hourly employees who work to abate the negative effects that resulted from the University Closure will be paid at 1.5 times their regular pay rate from the time they begin to labor after the declared University Closure, whether or not they were scheduled to work during that time or were called in to work during that time. All other hourly employees scheduled to work at that time will be expected to stay home and, if possible, work remotely at the request of their supervisor.

Hourly employees who are called to the University to during a University Closure will receive a minimum of 2 hours pay for responses on Monday through Saturday or 3 hours pay for responses on Sunday or holidays, at the special pay rate even if the actual response takes less time.

##### **4.5.1.1. Policy on Pay for University Closures**

Only the President or the President's authorized designee can order a University Closure. **Please note that cancellation of classes does not constitute a University Closure.**

Notification of any University Closure may be made through a variety of methods, including University email, the Valpo/alert web page, University-sponsored social media or other recognized or accepted methods such as area radio and television stations. If there is a question about a University Closure an employee may call his/her immediate supervisor for further details.

*Essential personnel* refers to those employees necessary to perform work activities during a University Closure, including those with emergency response duties or who have been specifically called to support a response to a University Closure; those who have operational responsibilities for continuity of student services; management personnel who may be required to make tactical operational decisions due to the circumstances that result from the University Closure; or employees who have been specifically contacted by their supervisor to come to campus and support a response to a University Closure.

The following rules govern hourly employee pay during a University Closure:

1. If all or part of the University's operations are shut down as a result of a University Closure, affected hourly employees who are scheduled to work, but are unable to work due to whatever gave rise to University Closure (i.e. a snowstorm), will be paid for their regularly scheduled work hours which are lost.

This provision only applies to employees who are scheduled to work during a University Closure. Employees who have previously scheduled

vacation time which happens to fall on a day of the University Closure are not entitled to pay for lost work hours nor are they entitled to receive vacation credit for the vacation time used during the closure.

2. Only Essential Personnel, as defined by this policy and appropriate to the nature and scope of the emergency, are expected to report to work as instructed. Supervisors and department heads who make unilateral decisions to report for work should refrain from requesting non-essential personnel also report to work. If non-essential, hourly employees are requested to work during, or report to work after a University Closure and do in fact work or report to work, they will be paid consistent with provisions in Section 4.5.1.

Any hourly employee that does not show up for work as scheduled, due to significant weather-related circumstances that were not significant enough to result in a closure will not be paid for those scheduled hours. However, their absence will be excused upon their immediate notification to their supervisor. The employee may elect to use vacation time if available in lieu of not receiving pay.

#### **4.5.2 Emergency Call Back Procedure**

Special Pay Circumstances for hourly Employees during a University Emergency:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that hourly employees are compensated for performing work due to emergency situations that may arise on campus. These emergency events would not include a campus closure. Please see section 4.5.1. for campus closure guidelines.

Upon emergency callback notification, travel to the worksite and time actually worked shall be included in hours worked for determining compensatory hours. Management shall determine a reasonable time for which preparation and travel to the worksite shall be compensated. Mileage travel expense shall not be paid to employees traveling back to the work site in response to an emergency callback.

Employees returning to work shall receive a minimum of four hours compensation for each occasion of callback. Callback time not worked does not count toward determining overtime. The remainder is paid at time and half. For example, if travel and task completion take one hour, that hour is paid at an overtime rate. Hours 2-4 is recorded as straight time. If call-back time is more than four hours, the employee is compensated for actual time worked at an over-time rate. This rate will not apply to personnel already on campus working in the event of an emergency.

Generally employees that are called back for emergency purposes are Essential personnel. Essential personnel refers to those employees necessary to perform work activities during a University Closure, including those with emergency response duties or who have been specifically called to support a response to a University Closure; those who have operational responsibilities for continuity of student services; management personnel who may be required to make tactical operational decisions due to the circumstances that result from the University Closure; or employees who have been specifically contacted by their supervisor to come to campus and support a response to a University Closure.



## 5. CHAPTER 5 – BENEFITS

Benefits include a variety of programs and offerings Valparaiso University makes available to eligible employees. Although some benefits are actually entitlements required by federal or state law, most benefits are voluntary even if regulated. The Board of Directors of the Lutheran University Association, Inc., d/b/a Valparaiso University reserves the right to add, amend, or terminate any voluntary benefits offered at any time, consistent with applicable laws.

***Please read these sections carefully.*** Eligibility requirements are described where appropriate and control the availability of the benefits. Additionally, most benefits place obligations or expectations on the participating employee to receive the full benefit. Temporary employees are not eligible to participate in Valpo's benefits plans.

### 5.1. Statutory Entitlements

#### 5.1.1. Social Security and Medicare

All employees contribute to Social Security through payroll taxes. Social Security is a complex federal insurance program, generally providing three types of benefits: supplemental retirement income, retiree medical insurance, and certain disability insurance. These programs usually become available when a person reaches a certain age or, in the case of disability, when a certain condition occurs. Although Social Security is a federal program, the availability of its benefits may impact participation in or coverage of certain voluntary benefits offered by Valparaiso University.

#### 5.1.2. Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment insurance is administered through Indiana's Department of Workforce Development. Employees who separate from employment with Valparaiso University may be entitled to temporary, substitute compensation through Indiana's unemployment insurance program. Generally the separation must be "no fault" of the employee, which precludes most resignations, retirements, or other so called *voluntary quits*, as well as a number of involuntary discharges.

It is the practice of Valparaiso University to respond to all agency requests for information regarding employment separations and to protest, where it deems appropriate, claims for unemployment insurance compensation.

#### 5.1.3. Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation is a "no-fault" insurance system administered by Indiana's Workers' Compensation Board. Workers' Compensation generally provides compensation for lost income and coverage of medical expenses for injuries or illnesses "arising out of and in the course of employment." With few exceptions workers' compensation is the "exclusive remedy" for an employee injured at work.

Although workers' compensation claims may be administered in coordination with other benefit or entitlement programs, payments under workers' compensation may limit or preclude payments under other benefits plans. See also [Valpo's Workers' Compensation Policy](#).

## **5.2. Insurance Benefits**

### **5.2.1. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

Pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Valparaiso University is limited in its access to and use of protected health information (PHI).

PHI is *any individually identifiable* health information transmitted or maintained by a covered entity or its business associates and includes among that information demographic or genetic data, any physical or mental health data, and health billing or payment records. Limited exclusions apply to health information used in administering other statutory obligations of the University such as workers' compensation, the Family and Medical Leave Act, or compliance with the American's with Disabilities Act.

Consistent with HIPAA requirements, it is the policy of Valparaiso University to limit its PHI exposure to the extent practical. Employees who, by virtue of their job duties, are or may be exposed to PHI receive training on HIPAA compliance and are prohibited from the unauthorized sharing or discussing of such information with other parties inside or outside the University. This prohibition applies even in circumstances where an employee self-discloses such PHI to other employees of the University. The Director of Human Resource Services is the primary HIPAA compliance officer for the University.

### **5.2.2. Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance**

Valparaiso University has established comprehensive health insurance benefits covering medical/prescription, dental, and vision services. These benefits are available to Regular and Limited Full-Time employees.

Under provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) certain Regular or Limited Part-Time employees may become eligible to participate in these plans, if their cumulative hours worked, measured in a one-year look back period, meet or exceed the average number of weekly hours necessary to qualify.

Initial plan elections must be made within 30 days from the date of hire or eligibility. Insurance coverage may only be modified during the open enrollment period or within 30 days of a qualifying event. The only qualifying events for which coverage may be changed are:

1. Marriage;
2. Divorce
3. Birth or adoption of a child (or court ordered coverage of a foster child); or,
4. Loss of exclusive health insurance coverage under another policy.

Dental and vision benefits are available through stand-alone plans and are separate elections from the medical/prescription plans.

As an enhancement to the medical/prescription plans Valparaiso University offers a voluntary wellness program, participation in which provides for a reduction in employee premium costs. Please note, to receive the premium cost reduction covered individuals must **fully comply** with all requirements of the program including meeting established participation deadlines.

### **5.2.3. Section 125 Flexible Spending Account (FSA) and Limited Purpose Flex Spending Account (available to HSA participants)**

Valpo offers participants in the health insurance plans an opportunity to enroll in a Flexible Spending Account. FSAs allow employees to contribute pre-tax dollars to an account from which they may pay for specific medical expenses (PPO participants only), dental, and vision not covered by insurance. FSAs may also be used to fund dependent daycare expenses.

A Flexible Spending Account should not be confused with a Health Savings Account which, although similar in function, is governed by different rules.

### **5.2.4. Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)**

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, commonly referred to by its acronym COBRA, provides to employees and their dependents who are participants in a group health care insurance plan the right to continue that coverage following certain events that would otherwise cause the coverage to be lost.

The qualifying events which trigger COBRA rights are:

1. Employment termination (except for gross misconduct) or a reduction in work hours sufficient to cause the loss of coverage;
2. Death of the covered employee;
3. Divorce or legal separation of the covered employee from the employee's covered spouse;
4. The covered employee becomes entitled to Medicare; or,
5. A dependent child ceasing to be an eligible dependent under the plan.

Coverage continuation begins from the date of the qualifying event. The duration of coverage continuation will depend on the nature of the qualifying event.

It is the employee's responsibility to notify the University **within 60 days** of any qualifying event except employment termination. Failure to notify the University within this period of time may affect or foreclose the availability of coverage continuation.

Once notified, the University will respond to the employee within 14 days to explain specific rights and responsibilities, as well as describe costs associated with coverage continuation. The employee will then have 60 days from the date of the University's notice to make election decisions.

### **5.2.5. Healthcare Advocacy Service**

The University has established a relationship with Health Advocate, a case management service, to assist employees in understanding and managing their own and their family's healthcare questions, as well as helping them to resolve most issues arising between them and their health insurance companies.

Health Advocate is a third-party group which is not affiliated with any insurance company or Valparaiso University. As a result, employees can be assured their personal health information remains confidential.

### **5.2.6. Employee Assistance Program**

Everyday issues and stressors in the private lives of employees can have a significant effect on their work performance and working relationships here on campus. Valparaiso University offers through CIGNA insurance an Employee Assistance Program which may provide resources to help employees cope with these situations. Please contact the Benefits Manager if you wish to confidentially explore these services.

### **5.2.7. Marathon Clinic at Valparaiso University**

All employees *who are eligible for coverage* under Valpo's medical insurance plans and all employees and their eligible dependents who are actively participating in a Valpo medical insurance plan can take advantage of free medical and wellness services, as well as low or no cost pharmaceuticals, at our University sponsored health clinic.

### **5.2.7. Short-Term Disability Benefit**

In lieu of offering a short-term disability insurance plan, Valparaiso University has established a short-term disability benefit (STDB) program, fully funded and administered by the University. Regular and Limited full-time employees are eligible to participate in the program. A number of the provisions governing access to this benefit are similar to those which would otherwise be required by short-term disability insurance plans, but there is no premium cost to the employee. Because this is not an insurance plan its rules and administration are exclusively within Valpo's discretion.

Excluding workers' compensation claims, the STDB provides partial income replacement for Regular and Limited full-time employees who are completely disabled from work for up to 26 weeks.

Under the program, *Disability* means a personal health condition not attributable to a work related injury or illness for which the employee is being actively treated by a physician and which prevents the employee from performing essential functions of the job.

The eligible employee, or the employee's designee, must notify the Office of Human Resource Services that an absence is due to a non-work related personal health condition which disables the employee from performing essential job functions. In addition, sufficient documentation from the treating physician must be provided to support the claim of disability. If an eligible employee under the program is also eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and has complied with notice provisions of the Act, the notice requirements under the STDB will have been met.

To maintain eligibility under the program, the employee must report to the appropriate Human Resource Services representative at least every 15 days on the employee's progress toward recovery. In addition, the employee must provide to the Human Resource Services representative medical documentation at least every 30 days which supports the claim that the employee is still disabled. Failure to provide supporting documentation may result in the

University suspending or stopping payments under the program. This provision does not apply to participants who are absent due to an uneventful postpartum recovery, except when such recovery extends beyond 8 weeks.

Although the STDB will run concurrent with certain specific leaves under the FMLA it is a distinct program. No provision of the STDB interferes with or diminishes an employee's rights under the FMLA, nor does it alter Valparaiso University's obligations under the Act. An employee's failure to fulfill the obligations necessary to receive the Short-Term Disability Benefit payments has no impact on the availability or operation of leaves under the FMLA. The following limitations and schedule of payments apply to the Short-Term Disability Benefit.

- **The maximum wage payment under the program is \$1200.00 per week.** Employees who would otherwise earn more than \$1200.00 during either the 100% payout period or the 60% payout period may apply unused vacation or sick time to supplement the benefit, not to exceed 100% of normal pay.
- **The maximum coverage period is 26 weeks for disabilities and 8 weeks for uneventful postpartum recoveries.**

Day 1 to 7	\$0	The employee will not be paid for any scheduled workdays during the first seven calendar days of disability. Employees may use vacation or sick time to offset this loss of pay up to 100% of regular pay.
Day 8 to 31	100%/max	The employee will be paid 100% of lost wages to a maximum of \$1200.00 per week for any scheduled workdays during calendar days eight through thirty-one. Employees may use vacation or sick time to offset any loss of pay during this period up to 100% of regular pay.
Day 32 to 182	60%	The employee will be paid at 60% of lost wages to a maximum of \$1200.00 per week for any scheduled workdays during calendar days thirty-two through one hundred eighty-two. Employees may use vacation or sick time to offset any loss of pay during this period up to 100% of regular pay.

**5.2.7.1. Parental Leave Policy**

This policy applies to all benefits eligible employees who become legal parents, either through birth or adoption. Upon written request to the Office of Human Resource Services, eligible employees will be granted leave from any scheduled workdays within the approved leave period. Evidence of eligibility to receive the benefit may be required before the benefit begins paying out.

The approved leave period for eligible faculty are the fifty-six (56) consecutive calendar days immediately following the birth of the child or, in the case of adoption, placement of the child in the faculty member's home, the date of legal adoption, or the date when the faculty member must travel to secure the adopted (or soon to be adopted) child, whichever comes first.

The approved leave period for eligible staff are the forty-two (42) consecutive calendar days immediately following the birth of the child or, in the case of adoption, placement of the child in the staff member's home, the date of legal adoption, or the day when the staff member must travel to secure the adopted (or soon to be adopted) child, whichever comes first.

The leave period does not pause during any periods of time when the eligible employee is not obligated to work, including University closures such as for holidays, summers, or during other break periods. This benefit only replaces income which would otherwise be lost due to absence from work during the approved leave period, serves as a supplement to make the employee financially whole when used in conjunction with any applicable University provided income replacement benefits, and cannot result in a wage greater than an employees' normal wage.

This benefit will, to the extent possible, run concurrently with other applicable University benefits triggered by the birth or adoption of a child, including but not limited to the Family and Medical Leave Act, Short Term Disability Benefits, Faculty Salary Continuance Leave Plan and Disability Benefits.

#### **5.2.7.2. Long Term Disability Insurance**

Employees who are participating in Valparaiso University's STDB and whose disability from work will continue beyond the 26 weeks may apply for Long Term Disability (LTD) Insurance coverage. LTD coverage is made available to employees through an independent insurance company under a plan sponsored by Valpo. Although the University pays the premium on this plan, it is administered entirely by the independent insurance carrier.

Because it can take some time to receive approval for coverage under the LTD plan, an employee who needs to apply for this benefit should begin the process three to five weeks before the expiration of the STDB. Please contact the Office of Human Resource Services for more information and guidance.

#### **5.2.8. Term Life and Accident Insurance and Valparaiso's Death Benefit**

Valpo offers its Regular and Limited full-time employees an opportunity to participate in a Term Life and Accident Insurance plan at group rates, for a nominal premium fee. The basic policy pays \$50,000.00 in the event of the employee's death. Other coverages include specific losses due to accidents.

Additional coverage for spouse and dependent children, as well as higher payout amounts are available at established group premium rates after meeting approved criteria established by the carrier. Reductions in payout amounts will occur concurrent with attaining certain ages as described in the policy.

In recognition of its employees' service to the University, Valparaiso University provides a death benefit to active Regular and Limited full-time employees who die while employed with the University. These payments will be made to the employee's designated beneficiary(ies) or to the employee's estate in four regular biweekly installments equaling the employee's regular 40 hour per week wage or pay rate at the time of death. These payments are made in addition to any benefits payable by the University's Life Insurance carrier.

### 5.3. 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan

The Lutheran University Association, Inc. d/b/a Valparaiso University has established a 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan with TIAA-Cref. A 403(b) plan allows participants to invest pre-tax dollars in managed funds to provide income after retirement.

All Regular and Limited full-time employees are eligible to participate in the plan and receive an employer's contribution to their accounts from Valparaiso University. Most Regular part-time employees are eligible to participate in the plan, but are not eligible for the employer's contribution. A detailed description of the administrative rules governing the plan can be found in the plan document available in the Office of Human Resource Services.

### 5.4. Time Away from Work

#### 5.4.1. Vacation

All Regular and Limited full-time employees and all Regular part-time employees receive an allotment of paid vacation days based on their employment status (as defined in Section 2.2) and years of service. Limited part-time and temporary employees are not eligible for vacation days.

Vacation time must be scheduled in advance and is subject to supervisor approval. Exempt employees are expected to utilize the Vacation Request System through DataVU. The DataVU system is the approved method for tracking and reconciling salaried employee vacation use. Failing to use the DataVU system may result in losing carry over vacation days or not receiving a payout of remaining vacation days should the employee leave employment.

While the vast majority of vacation requests are approved and every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate vacation requests, the timing of an employee's vacation cannot significantly disrupt departmental or university operations. For this reason some departments may limit vacation approvals during certain periods in the academic year or in anticipation of special projects being undertaken by the department.

Available but unused vacation time will be applied to absences which would otherwise be unpaid. However, having available vacation time in those instances does not automatically excuse the absence nor does it relieve the employee of notice requirements under the attendance policy. See Absences, Section 2.6.7.2. Additionally, hourly paid employees may schedule vacation time in one hour increments.

Generally, vacation time must be used during the fiscal year in which it is awarded. The University does offer a limited exception to this rule. An employee who, due to scheduling conflicts or other circumstances, has been unable to use all available vacation time before the end of the fiscal year, or academic year in the case of a Limited Full- or Part-Time employee, may carry over of up to 5 vacation days into the new fiscal year. The carry-over is automatic in both the Datatel and Kronos systems. Any unused vacation days at the end of the fiscal year beyond 5 are forfeited. Carry over days **must** be used within the first three months of the new fiscal year or they will be forfeited on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

The vacation allotments described below are based on an 80 hour pay period and will be prorated based on the employee's FTE. Vacation day allotments are provided upon initial hire

and then annually at the beginning of each new fiscal year.

Effective July 1, 2018 Employees who leave employment with the University, either voluntarily or involuntarily, after completing a minimum of one year of service will receive a payout of one day of awarded vacation for each year of University service, less any awarded vacation already used, to a maximum of 20 days. This excludes use of vacation days carried over from the previous fiscal year, which are not eligible for payout. An employee who leaves employment before completing at least one year of service will not receive a vacation payout.

First Year of Employment		Years of Service Schedule	
Hire Date	Vacation Days Available to July 1	Years of Service as of July 1	Vacation allotment
Jul 1 – 31	12	1 or less	12
Aug 1 – 31	11	2	13
Sep 1 – 30	10	3	14
Oct 1 – 31	9	4	15
Nov 1 – 30	8	5	17
Dec 1 – 31	7	6	18
Jan 1 – 31	6	7	19
Feb 1 – 28	5	8	20
Mar 1 – 31	4	9	20
Apr 1 – 30	3	10 to 19	22
May 1 – 31	2	20 to 24	23
Jun 1 – 30	1	25+	25

#### 5.4.2. Sick Leave

In addition to vacation time Valparaiso University allocates six days of paid sick time at the beginning of each fiscal year to Regular and Limited full-time employees and a prorated number of days to Regular part-time employees. Limited part-time and Temporary employees are not eligible for Sick Leave.

Sick Leave may only be used for absences related to illness, injuries, or medical treatment of the employee, the employee’s spouse, the employee’s child, or the employee’s parents. It may be used to attend healthcare related appointments or to accompany a spouse, child, or parent to such appointments.

Sick Leave may not be used as vacation time or to compensate for lost work time due to any circumstance other than a medically related absence.

An employee who leaves employment with the University, either voluntarily or involuntarily, will not receive a payout of unused sick leave.



### **5.4.3. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a statutory leave entitlement available to eligible Valpo employees. The brief summary below describes major features of the Act, as well as some of the rights and responsibilities for both employees and the University. Please see the full [FMLA Policy](#) for additional information.

To be eligible for FMLA leave an employee must have worked for the University for at least 1 year and for at least 1250 hours in the preceding twelve months.

The FMLA provides for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for the following circumstances:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or childbirth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent, who has a serious health condition;
- For a serious health condition that causes the employee to be unable to perform his/her job; or,
- For a qualifying exigency arising when a spouse, son, daughter, or parent in the armed forces of the United States is on covered active duty or is called to covered active duty.
- In addition the Act also provides up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave in a single 12 month period to care for a covered military service member who is suffering a serious injury or illness when the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the military service member.

Employees are responsible for requesting FMLA leave 30 days in advance of the leave when the need for the leave is foreseeable or as soon as practicable if the need for the leave is unforeseeable.

Valparaiso University requires employees who request FMLA leave for a serious personal health condition or to care for a covered family member with a serious health condition to provide medical certification from a health care provider to support the leave request. It is the employees' responsibility to secure the necessary information and to provide the information to the University in a timely manner. Employees are also responsible for maintaining regular communication with the University throughout the FMLA leave to report progress toward completing the leave or to notify the University of any change in circumstance affecting the leave.

An employee who timely returns from FMLA leave is entitled to reinstatement in the job he or she occupied at the time the leave was undertaken or to an equivalent job with the same pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. During the FMLA leave the University is required to maintain the employee's group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee was regularly working.

### **5.4.4. Funeral/Bereavement Leave**

Valpo grants to Regular and Limited full-time employees and Regular part-time employees up to three days paid leave following the death of an immediate family member and up to one day following the death of an extended family member. Employees will be compensated for the actual lost work time from their regular schedules up to a maximum of 8 hours per day.

For purposes of this benefit immediate family members include the employee's spouse/partner, parents, grandparents, siblings, child, or in-law relationships of the same. Extended family members include the employee's aunts, uncles, cousins or close friend. Employees must notify their supervisor in advance of the need to take funeral leave.

#### **5.4.5. Jury Service**

Jury service is a civic obligation which the University supports. Employees who are called to jury service must notify the supervisor and provide a copy of the jury summons or subpoena.

Employees will be paid their regular wage or pay rate for any regularly scheduled work hours lost as a result of jury service, up to a maximum of 40 hours in any single work week. University paid time for jury service will not be counted as work time or used to calculate overtime hours.

Employees are expected to report for work on any day or any partial day they are excused from jury service.

#### **5.4.6. Military Training/Reserve Leave**

Pursuant to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), employees who are or who become uniformed service members will be provided job protected, unpaid leave to perform their military service. Uniformed Services include Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service commissioned corps, the reserve components of any of those branches, and federal training or service in the Army National Guard and Air National Guard.

Service in a Uniformed Service includes active duty; initial active duty training; training during active duty; inactive duty training; funeral honors duties, including those performed by the National Guard; and, physical exams to determine fitness for active duty.

Employees are obligated to provide advance notice to the supervisor of the absence unless such notice is precluded by military necessity or is otherwise impossible or unreasonable. Employees are also required to make a timely return to work following uniformed service as described in the Act

#### **5.4.7. Discretionary Unpaid Leaves of Absence**

Occasionally an employee's circumstances may cause the employee to need time away from work either for reasons not covered by law and/or for which the employee does not have available paid vacation time. Some examples might include the need for days away from work to manage estate administration following a death; for an employee's medical treatment when FMLA is not available due to eligibility; or, other exigent circumstances in the employee's personal life.

Except for medically related circumstances, granting a discretionary unpaid leave is within the authority of the department head. Such determinations will consider the length of the requested leave; the basis for the requested leave; the impact, including associated costs, on the department; and any other business related factors the University deems relevant. In the case of a medically related unpaid leave request, the department head should consult with the Director of Human Resource Services or the University General Counsel before approving or denying the leave.

Unpaid leaves will not be granted for purposes of seeking other employment; to undertake profit-making activities, including other employment; or, for periods exceeding 60 days.

#### **5.4.8. Holidays**

Valparaiso University generally recognizes nine holidays: Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter, Memorial Day, and Juneteenth. If Juneteenth, Independence Day, Christmas, or New Year's Day occurs on a Saturday or Sunday the University will not treat these holidays as scheduled paid holidays. In relation to some of these holidays the University may augment the holiday with additional "holiday" days.

Regular and Limited full-time employees and Regular part-time employees are eligible for paid holidays including additional holiday days in most cases. Eligible employees will be paid up to 8 hours for all recognized holidays. Holidays are paid at the employee's regular wage or pay rate and do not count as work hours in calculating overtime. Paid holiday time is prorated for employees regularly scheduled to work fewer than 80 hours in a pay period.

A scheduled paid holiday which occurs during an eligible employee's previously scheduled vacation will not be counted as a vacation day. A complete holiday schedule is published annually and posted on the HR portal page.

##### **5.4.8.1. Pay for Hours Worked on a Holiday**

Some job positions at Valpo are required to work during a scheduled holiday. Additionally, extraordinary circumstances may require some employees who would otherwise not work during a scheduled holiday to report for unanticipated work activities. To compensate these employees appropriately the University has adopted the following pay plan for employees who are required to work during a scheduled holiday:

Generally hourly employees required to work on a scheduled University holiday will receive the holiday pay to which they would otherwise be entitled, plus compensation for all hours worked during the holiday at their regular pay rate. Although the paid holiday time does not count toward an overtime calculation, the hours actually worked are counted toward that calculation.

Hourly employees who are called back to the University during a scheduled paid University holiday in response to an emergency or exigent circumstance will receive the holiday pay to which they would otherwise be entitled, plus compensation for all hours worked consistent with the Special Pay Circumstances for Hourly Employees policy in Section 4.5. Although the paid holiday time does not count toward an overtime calculation, the hours actually worked are counted toward that calculation.

Employees who are required to work on Easter will be paid at double their regular hourly rate for all hour worked on that day. For purposes of this calculation Easter begins at 12:00 a.m. and concludes at 11:59 p.m. These actual work hours are counted toward overtime calculation.

An exempt employee who is required by his or her supervisor to work on a scheduled paid University holiday will receive an alternative day off for each holiday worked. The day(s) must be scheduled after the holiday worked through the employee's supervisor.

#### **5.4.8.2. Employee Recognized Religious Holidays or Observances**

Although Valparaiso University is a faith based institution in the Lutheran tradition, we recognize our community is comprised of employees some of whom hold faith in other Christian denominations and different religions. Employees who wish to participate in an off campus religious observance or unscheduled religious holiday must request the time through their supervisor. Absences to participate in a religious observance or unscheduled religious holidays are unpaid unless the employee chooses to apply vacation time. Although the University does not guarantee all such requests can be accommodated, requests for leave to participate in religious observances or religious holidays will be given priority consideration by supervisors.

### **5.5. Affiliated Benefits**

#### **5.5.1. Tuition Remission and Tuition Exchange**

As an institution of higher education and one which is committed to the life and community benefits that higher education provides, Valparaiso University offers to eligible employees, their spouses, and their children both Tuition Remission and Tuition Exchange programs. The programs are available to all Regular and Limited full-time employees and those Regular part-time employees who meet participation requirements.

Tuition Remission is a program which covers all or a portion of the tuition costs for eligible and qualified students enrolled in classes at Valparaiso University.

The Tuition Exchange Program is an association of colleges and universities which subscribe to a program of reciprocal remission of tuition charges for eligible and qualified students.

Participation in either of these programs is strictly controlled by the rules described in the policy. For a detailed explanation please see the policy on the General Counsel's webpage under Policies Related to Faculty and Staff at <https://www.valpo.edu/generalcounsel/>. You may also contact the Office of Human Resource Services for more information.

#### **5.5.2. ID/Courtesy Cards**

Employee ID Cards, also known as a OneCard, serve multiple purposes. The card can be used to attend cultural, musical, and athletic events, many at no charge to the employee. The card can also be used to receive discounts on purchases at participating retail establishments. Employees can also deposit money on the card, called Crusader Cash, which can be used on campus or at off-campus participating merchants just like a debit card.

Each employee is also able to obtain a Courtesy OneCard for his or her spouse or guest. Unmarried minor children (under age 18) of the employee can also receive a courtesy card to

attend on campus events.

### **5.5.3. Dining Facilities**

A variety of dining options are available on campus which are open to faculty, staff, and students. Facilities are located in the Harre Union and Christopher Center and offer an a la carte style food service. Employees may pay cash or use their OneCard after depositing money into his or her personal account. Deposits may be made at the Finance Office located in Kretzmann Hall or in the Dining Services Office located on the first floor of the Harre Union.

In addition, a number of buildings are equipped with vending machines, seating, microwave ovens, and refrigerators for employees who bring lunch from home.

### **5.5.4. Bookstore**

The Valparaiso University Bookstore is located on the first floor of the Harre Union. It features a variety of books, school and office supplies, Valpo clothing and assorted imprint items. Employees can receive a discount on many of these items by presenting their Employee ID OneCard. Although operated by Valparaiso University, the bookstore is owned by a private corporation which determines discount rules.

### **5.5.5. Library Services**

The Library and Information Services, located in the Christopher Center, is available for use by employees and their immediate family. Employees may check out general circulation materials using their Employee ID OneCard.

### **5.5.6. Athletics and Recreation Center (ARC)**

The ARC facilities include a pool, racquetball courts, weight room, track, and free play area for basketball. Schedules of available days and times for employee use are available from the ARC.

### **5.5.7. Fitness Center**

The Fitness Center, across from the ARC, offers membership based access to exercise equipment and special programs relating to health and fitness. Hours of operation and membership information, including fees, are available from the Recreational Sports office.

### **5.5.8. Chapel Services and Activities**

Valparaiso University is proud of its Christian heritage and Lutheran tradition. The Chapel of the Resurrection represents the focal point of these ideas and the University's support for and encouragement of its ministries are vital to the distinctiveness of its educational programs.

All employees are invited to attend any public services or programs offered by the Chapel's ministries, as schedules permit, including Morning Prayer each weekday from 10:00 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. A weekly schedule of services, programs, and events is available in the Chapel office or online at the Chapel's webpage.

### **5.5.9. Ministry to Faculty and Staff**

The Chapel of the Resurrection sponsors a ministry of care and concern which is available to all employees of Valparaiso University. A clergy member on the Chapel staff offers attentive support to employees in times of crisis and conflict, such as hospitalization, death of a loved one, or domestic issues.

## **6. CHAPTER 6 – Leaving Employment with Valparaiso University**

### **6.1. Notice**

The University requests that all voluntary terminations, including resignations or retirements be preceded by a written notice to the employee's supervisor or department head at least two weeks in advance of the departure.

### **6.2. Return of University Property**

All University property issued to an employee, including University ID, keys, credit cards, cell or smart phones, computers/tablets, electronic storage devices, uniforms, tools, and intellectual property, must be returned to the University. Keys must be returned directly to the Facilities Management department, but most other property can be returned through the supervisor or the Human Resource Services Office.

### **6.3. Final Paycheck**

Employees will be paid for all hours due and owing, including eligible vacation days, if any, on the next regularly scheduled pay date following the employee's employment termination date. The termination date is typically the last day actually worked by the employee. Payment will be made by direct deposit.

### **6.4. COBRA**

Employees will receive information on health insurance elections under COBRA from Infinisource within two weeks of separation from employment. Employees should notify the Office of Human Resource Services if they have not received the notice by that time.

### **6.5. Departing Staff Checklist**

The following checklist reflects a number of incidental issues to be considered when leaving employment:

- No later than the last day of employment, employees must return all University property, including OneCard, Parking Permit, Keys, Credit Card and assigned equipment such as laptop computers, tablets, and cell phones.
- Departing employees are encouraged to complete an [exit interview](#) using the form on the HR website or by contacting HR directly to schedule one.
- Retirement Plan Participants: Employees generally have three options regarding their 403(b) retirement plans.
  - (1) Roll the money into another qualifying plan, such as with a new employer or into an IRA;
  - (2) Leave the money in the Valparaiso University plan, subject to the rules governing the plan, or;
  - (3) Receive a distribution of the funds, which can incur penalties and taxes at the employee's current tax rate.

Employees should consult with their financial advisor or a TIAA representative before making a decision.

- **Returning to Campus:** Many Valparaiso University employees and former employees are alumni, friends, and family. Except in extraordinary circumstances in which the University imposes a No Trespass order against a former employee, former employees are encouraged and welcome to return to campus, participate in public events, and visit former colleagues. The University asks only that a returning former employee respect the rules applicable to any public visitor on campus.