Expert Advice on Sick Leave (AP Staff/Faculty)

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Adedayo: Welcome to Leading Edge online. My name is Adedayo Adeniyi. I am the Director for Leadership and Organization Development in the office of the vice president for human resources. Joining me today is Sharon Williams. Sharon is a Senior Employee Relations Specialist. Welcome Sharon.

Sharon: Thanks, Adedayo.

Adedayo: Today's focus is AP and faculty sick leave. Sharon, can you please share with us the purpose of this policy and why it was established.

Sharon: University understood that faculty and administrative and professional staff might need time away from campus, for reasons of illness for themselves or for family members. And so they provided this policy, so AP Staff and faculty could be away from campus on a paid status.

Adedayo: Sharon, how does AP and faculty accrue sick leave?

Sharon: Once someone is hired at the university, they're given an allotment of 10 working days per year based on their hire date. Once they reach their anniversary date next year, they would be eligible for two month -- one month at full pay and one month at three-quarter's pay. When they reached their next anniversary date, they would be eligible for two months at full pay and two months at three-quarter pay. And then the third year they'd be eligible for three months at full pay and three months at three-quarter pay.
Adedayo: Sharon, can this leave be used for the illness of a family member? Or is it specific to the employee?

Sharon: This leave is for the employee, but it can also be for members of the immediate families; so parents, spouse, child, grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws, step relatives, are all considered part of the immediate family. And the AP or faculty member can use up to 10 days of sick leave per fiscal year for family members.

Adedayo: Sharon, what tips would you like to provide supervisors to make sure that they're compliant with this policy?

Sharon: It's important that supervisors let employees know that employees are responsible for keeping track of their own time. And so when employees request leave, that they are requesting leave for time that they have, actually have available to them. A supervisor is only assigning approval that they actually took the time as with sick leave. Should an employee request leave that they don't have time for, the potential for them to have to pay that back is great. And so supervisors need to remind employees of that. Another suggestion I would have for supervisors is to not ask or receive detailed medical information. You just need to know that the employees needs to be off for illness, and leave it at that.

Adedayo: So Sharon, in terms of knowing whether or not it's a serious health condition or something like the flu, can you give us some type of understanding of what a typical conversation might sound like?
Sharon: An employee calls up and says hey, I need to be off. My wife's having surgery. And you don't need any additional information from them, except for them to complete the appropriate paperwork. You don't need to know what kind of surgery the wife's having or anything like that. You just need to know that they need to be off.

Adedayo: And the same time, to your point, if somebody's calls in and says I'm not going to be in. I have the flu. Once again, they need to fill out the correct medical paperwork and that's.

Sharon: Yeah. They don't even have to tell you that they have the flu. They just need to say that they're ill. If they say they have the flue, that's fine. You can stop them at that. And they just need to request it either online or through the paperwork process.

Adedayo: What are the common errors that supervisors and employees make when implementing this policy?

Sharon: I think one of the most frequent errors is not having employees complete either request or paperwork in a timely manner. If we go too long without the employee filling out paperwork or the proper request, then sometimes people forget to do that and it's hard to track the leave. So it's important things are done in a timely manner. Another error could be that supervisors gather too much medical information about employees, either through casual conversation or those types of things, that supervisors really need to be careful about what kind of information they have about employees, so that there can't be allegations that was used against someone.
**Adedayo:** Sharon, if you wrap things up here today, are there any parting thoughts you'd like to leave with the supervisors?

**Sharon:** The university provides paid sick leave to faculty and administrative and professional staff so that they can remain in a paid status. And when they have health issues arise, it's important that supervisors have these employees fill out paperwork in a timely manner, so that it can be a win-win situation for everyone.

**Adedayo:** Sharon, we thank you for your -- once again, for your advice. And we look forward to working with you soon.

**Sharon:** Thanks, Adedayo.