

To: Montana State Library Commission
From: Karen Strege
Re: Leave of absence without pay request
Date: December 6, 2001

During my evaluation, we discussed my request to take up to three weeks of leave of absence without pay (LWOP) in 2002. The Commission took no action on this request and directed me to research appropriate state rules. The following is the result of this inquiry.

The agency has the discretion to grant LWOP. Montana rules define two types of LWOP. Long term, which lasts over 15 consecutive working days, and short-term, which consists of absence of up to 15 consecutive working days. I requested short term LWOP, not to exceed 15 consecutive working days. This type of leave does not result in a break of service for the purpose of health or retirement benefits.

MSL's policy requires my approval. The Commission is my supervisor and therefore has the authority to make this decision. Our policy also requires that an employee use accrued leave or compensatory time before granting LWOP. I have required employees, who have requested LWOP, to do so and urge you to require me to do the same.

Perhaps the Commission could direct me to follow the following procedure to request leave w/o pay.

The State Librarian shall contact the Chair of the Commission to request LWOP. The request will state the days requested and designate a program manager who will be in charge at the state library during the absence. The request will also inform the Chair if the request will result in overtime or compensatory time for other employees or will result in a negative impact on the agency's budget or productivity. The Chair will make a decision and notify the State Librarian within one week.

In December 2002, the Commission shall evaluate the State Librarian's use of LWOP and its impact on the agency.