What we have put together here is existing policy in the black and suggested changes in the red (bold).

* The existing policy stated that the University recognizes the importance of the activities that provide an opportunity for professional renewal and growth. Efforts are made to fund as many professional improvement leaves as possible each year. We have suggested the change to read: ***Except in cases of financial hardship, funds are made available for professional improvement leave for at least 4% of the tenured faculty members per year.***
* We’d also like to add this new clause that says: ***This paid professional improvement leave is awarded based on merit through an application process to ensure maximum flexibility in improving and enriching the capabilities of faculty members from diverse backgrounds. No restrictions are placed on where the development activity occurs or the type of improvement activity which is to be pursued, provided that the activity is approved through the application process.***
* The existing policy stated that a tenure track faculty member was eligible for professional improvement leave after four calendar years of full time employment. We have suggested the change of: ***A tenured faculty member is eligible for professional improvement leave after six calendar years of full time employment.***
* The existing policy states: He or she may be granted one semester at full salary or two semesters at half salary. In order to facilitate such leaves department heads should arrange teaching loads and course offerings in such a way to minimize the need for additional funding to the department. The University recognizes that departments that do not have research appointments will need extra help in providing such leave. This provision remains as is.
* The application policy existing says that the application must be accompanied by a proposed program which gives reasonable promise of contributing to the improvement of the applicant’s professional services to Auburn University. A fall deadline of applications for leave for the following academic year will be announced by the Provost’s office. Applications should be submitted through the department head and the dean to the office of Provost. Professional improvement leaves are competitively awarded. We’re going to keep that, but we ask that it also add: ***Preference will be given to proposals of faculty who have a proven record of success in research, teaching, and/or outreach.***
* A faculty member granted professional improvement leave must serve as a member of the Auburn faculty for one year after taking leave. If he or she does not do this, he or she must reimburse the University for paid leave time. A faculty member granted professional improvement leave with pay must submit a written report of his or her activities and accomplishments to his or her dean and the Provost by the end of the semester after returning to campus. This provision remains as is.
* A faculty member on leave with compensation may receive fellowship support or part time teaching or research appointments which do not interfere with their programs. The compensation for the period of the leave should not be greater than the total University salary would have been plus a reasonable allowance for relocating and meeting the cost of living in a new location.  We thought this was cumbersome and have suggested that it be condensed to: ***A faculty member on leave with compensation may receive fellowship support or part time teaching or research appointments which do not interfere with their programs.***
* And new to the policy would be: ***Professional improvement leaves granted to the outgoing Chair and Secretary of the AuburnUniversity Senate are not covered by the revisions of this program.***

With these changes the recommendation of the Faculty Welfare Committee is that Auburn University will adopt the Professional Improvement Leave Policy change, the Provost office will provide funding for at least 4% of the tenured faculty members per year, and implementation will begin Fall of 2008.