

State University of New York at Fredonia
Sabbatical Policy
Approved by Senate and President, May 2014

Preface

In accord with “The State University of New York Policies of the Board of Trustees” (“Policies”), Article XIII, Title E, sections 1-7, SUNY Fredonia should place high priority on maintaining a sabbatical leave system. A sabbatical leave is neither “a vacation” nor a “rest period.” Instead, it is “granted for planned travel, study, formal education, research, writing or other experience of professional value.” BOT policies recognize that funding sabbaticals for the purpose of professional development benefits the institution as well as the members of the faculty. This system also supports professional activities which are directly linked to promotions and discretionary salary increases. A robust sabbatical program is an important part of a comprehensive professional development plan. Thus, the institution should do everything feasible to grant requests for sabbaticals promptly at the time of eligibility. Otherwise, an accumulation of sabbatical requests will lead to selections being made from a growing backlog of applications.

Accordingly, the SUNY Fredonia Joint Sabbatical Task Force recommends the following regarding (I) providing notice about application; (II) funding; (III) process of selection; and (IV) reporting the results of sabbatical leaves.

I. Eligibility, Notice, Application, and Review Process

Policy: Article XIII, Title E of the “Policies” of the Board of Trustees stipulates that the objective of a sabbatical leave “is to increase an employee's value to the University and thereby improve and enrich its programs.” Sabbaticals are granted for “planned travel, study, formal education, research, writing, or other experience of professional value.” All requests for sabbatical leave should clearly and specifically describe how the proposed project(s) will meet the criteria in the “Policies.” All requests should be accompanied by a current curriculum vitae and by 1) the ballots and commentary from the Department Personnel Committee; 2) the recommendations of the appropriate department chair or director, dean, and Provost/VPAA; and 3) the applicant’s response(s), if any. The chair’s letter should clearly state how the faculty member’s teaching, advising, and other responsibilities will be covered during the sabbatical.

Eligibility: According to the “Policies” Article XIII, Title E, section 3, “Academic employees having continuing appointments and college administrative officers not in a negotiating unit established pursuant to Article XIV of the Civil Service Law who have completed at least six consecutive years of service within the University or who, if they previously had a sabbatical leave, have completed at least six consecutive years within the University from the date of return from their last sabbatical leave shall be eligible for sabbatical leave. In computing consecutive years of service for the purpose of this section, periods of vacation leave and periods of sick leave with salary shall be included; periods of leaves of absences, other than vacation and sick leave with salary, and periods of part-time service shall not be included but shall not be deemed an interruption of otherwise consecutive service.”

Notice: Although the Academic Calendar delineates the application deadline, this date - with guidance about the application process and timeline - will be a routine outreach item each year. The following venues are recommended:

- Academic Affairs LISTSERV distribution (recommend 1st week in September).
- Information item at Academic Leadership meetings in September/October, with guidance to Chairs/directors to disseminate and advise in their units.
- The PDC (Professional Development Center) will host a panel annually, in advance of the annual sabbatical application submission deadline. The panel will be comprised of cross-discipline faculty who have completed one or more sabbaticals. The panel members will relate their personal experiences with sabbaticals as relevant to their professional development. PDC staff will disseminate information about the application/approval process. The event will be advertised on the usual PDC calendar.
- All unit/department chairs/heads/directors will be asked by their respective supervisors to communicate to eligible faculty: (a) the timeline; (b) application procedures; and (c) information that may be helpful in the application process.

Terms and Conditions: There are two types of sabbatical leave as provided in the “Policies” Article XIII, Title E, section 4:

1. Sabbatical leave for one year at up to half pay.
2. Sabbatical leave for one-half year at up to full pay.

Employees on sabbatical leave may, with the prior approval of the President, accept fellowships, grants-in-aid, or earned income to assist in accomplishing the purposes of their leaves. In such cases, the President may adjust sabbatical leave salaries to reflect such income.

Applications: Requests for sabbatical leave are to be submitted to the Departmental Personnel Committee by the second Friday in November. The review process will follow the dates published annually in the Academic Affairs Master Calendar. When signing the application, applicants must agree to the following requirements:

1. Applicants are required to file a statement outlining the program to be followed identifying any proposed income other than salary from the campus while on leave.
2. Applicants are required to return to the campus for a minimum of one year at the conclusion of their leave. Where justified, the President may request a waiver of this condition, which must be reviewed and approved by the Chancellor.
3. If the faculty member fails to return for the minimum period, then he/she is obligated to reimburse all salary paid during the leave.
4. Any substantive change in the proposed activities (following its approval) must be submitted in writing to the Chair and then approved by the Chair, Dean, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and President.
5. The faculty member is required to submit an activity report as soon as possible following the leave, and no later than the end of the first full semester after return from the leave.

6. In the event of illness or other unplanned circumstances that interrupt an approved sabbatical, the faculty member will be placed on another leave as appropriate, when in the discretion of the President such action is in the best interest of the college and the employee.

Leave Credits: Employees on sabbatical leave are not eligible to earn or use leave credits during sabbatical leave.

Review:

1. Requests for sabbatical leave are subject to review by the applicant's Departmental Personnel Committee, department chair, dean, and the Provost/VPAA. The final decision is rendered in writing by the President, who shall inform the applicant of the decision. The President shall report approved sabbaticals to the SUNY Chancellor (*Policies* Article XIII, Title E, sec. 6).
2. For the purposes of sabbatical review, the Departmental Personnel Committee shall comprise of all of the tenured faculty regardless of rank, but shall not include any faculty who are applying for a sabbatical in the same year.
3. In the event that the composition of the DPC is fewer than three faculty members, the department will follow the process of recruiting alternate(s) as outlined in HARP II.E.2.b.
4. Should the chair of a department apply for a sabbatical, the chair of the DPC shall make the formal recommendation of the department for all sabbatical requests, including information on class coverage.

II. Funding

Funding for sabbaticals should be intentional and planned according to the number of sabbaticals anticipated in a given year based on faculty eligibility. Funding should follow these recommendations:

1. Funding for sabbaticals should be a line item in the budget annually.
2. Funding for sabbaticals is intended to be used to hire adjunct instructors or other temporary, part-time specialists to cover the work of the faculty member on sabbatical. In exceptional cases, a full-time Visiting replacement may be requested and is subject to the approval of the Provost.
3. Funding should be calculated at a maximum of the equivalent of 9 credit or contact hours per semester at the appropriate departmental adjunct rate.
4. Salary savings from full-year, half-pay sabbaticals should be used to offset or supplement the budgeted sabbatical line item, as needed in a given year.
5. All funding is subject to the approval of the Cabinet.
6. The Provost's office shall maintain an annual record of the number of sabbatical applications, approvals, and funding, available to the Faculty Senate upon request, for the purposes of budget planning.

III. Process

- A. **TIMELINE:** The deadline for submission to the Departmental Personnel Committee is the second Friday in November. Review dates will be published annually in Academic Affairs Master Calendar.
- B. **REVIEW PROCESS:** Sabbatical proposals will be submitted on the Fredonia Sabbatical Leave Request form. Proposals will be reviewed by the faculty member's Departmental Personnel Committee, following the review procedures defined in HARP II.E.2. The chair, the dean, and the Provost/VPAA add their recommendations, and all documents (including applicant responses, if any) are forwarded to the President, who makes the final decision.
- C. **REVIEW CRITERIA:**
 - 1) Sabbaticals will be reviewed in the context of the merits of the proposal.
 - 2) The "merits of the proposal" are judged according to SUNY policy objective "to increase an employee's value to the University and thereby improve and enrich its program." Also according to policy, "sabbatical leaves shall be granted for planned travel, study, formal education, research, writing or other experience of professional value" ("Policies" Article XIII, Title E, sections 1-2).
 - 3) Applications must describe the program of study or research, the expected results of the project, and relationship of the project to departmental, college/school, or university strategic goals.
- D. **APPLICANT RESPONSE:** At each level of review, the faculty member will receive a copy of the votes and comments (DPC) or the recommendation letter (chair, dean, provost). The faculty member will have five days from receipt to submit a response to be included at the next level of review. The decision of the President is final.
- E. **PRIORITIZATION:** in the event that not all sabbaticals can be funded in a given year, priority will be granted in the following order:
 - 1) The project's potential "to increase an employee's value to the University and thereby improve and enrich its program" and its relation to departmental, college/school, or university strategic goals.
 - 2) Time-sensitive proposals (e.g. a pending grant, conference, or publishing deadline, collaborative projects, etc.). Applicants will have the opportunity to make their case if this situation arises.
 - 3) Those with the greatest number of years since their last sabbatical leave.

IV. Reporting

In accordance with the "Policies" Article XIII, Title E, sec. 5, "upon return the applicant will submit to the chief academic officer a detailed report of professional activities and accomplishments while on sabbatical leave." This report is to be submitted to the department chair not later than the last day of classes of the semester in which the faculty member returns from sabbatical. The chair will forward it to the appropriate dean, who will in turn forward it to the Provost. The chairperson and Dean shall append their comments and evaluations indicating whether the conditions under which the leave was granted have been met. The dean shall provide the faculty member with a copy of the

comments at the same time they are submitted to the Provost. Faculty members who dispute the comments and evaluations by the chairperson and Dean may appeal directly to the Provost within 10 days after receiving their copy of the comments and evaluations.

Faculty members returning from leave who do not file this report in the prescribed time period will be ineligible for any financial support for professional development (including campus grants or travel funds) until the report is filed. If, in the judgment of the Provost, the report indicates that the conditions under which the leave was granted were not met, or that the sabbatical activities did not include “planned travel, study, formal education, research, writing, or other experience of professional value,” the Provost may determine, after consultation with the dean and chair, that the faculty member should be ineligible for future sabbaticals or professional development funds.

On an annual basis, the Provost will compile a complete list of the professional activities and attainments of faculty members on leave during the relevant time period. This list will be widely distributed and available to the public.

V. Library Faculty

Librarians with faculty status are equally eligible for sabbatical leave. According to the “Policies” Article II Definitions (i) and (j):

(i) “Academic Staff.’ The staff comprised of those persons having academic rank or qualified academic rank.”

(j) “Academic Rank.’ Rank held by those members of the professional staff having the titles of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, and assistant instructor. . . and rank held by members of the professional staff having the titles of librarian, associate librarian, senior assistant librarian, and assistant librarian.”

Because their job duties require full-time, on-site work for twelve months, their leave and replacement costs will differ from teaching faculty. Library faculty will also follow a modified approval procedure.

1. Duration: A half-year sabbatical leave at full pay for library faculty will encompass 50% of the working days in a given contract year, taken consecutively.
2. Review and Approval: the Library Personnel Committee acts in the role of the Departmental Personnel Committee. Ballots and comments are then forwarded to the Chair of the Library Faculty for review and approval and then to the Director of the Library, who serves in a role equivalent to the dean for the purposes of sabbatical review.
3. Coverage: coverage should be devised by the Director of the Library as economically as possible, with part-time hiring and reassignment of duties if feasible. However, it is to be expected that full-time, temporary hires will be necessary in most cases to replace the work of library faculty on sabbatical leave.