

SABBATICAL LEAVES

This statement is intended to clarify and expand upon the University's policies governing the granting of sabbatical leaves. It should be read as a supplement to the Policies of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York.

The Policies of the Board of Trustees provide for the granting of sabbatical leaves to faculty with continuing appointments (See Article XIII, Title E). The stated purpose of such leaves is "to increase an employee's value to the University and thereby improve and enrich its program." A sabbatical leave "shall not be regarded as a reward for service nor as a vacation or rest period occurring automatically at stated intervals." Rather, such leaves "shall be granted for planned travel, study, formal education, research, writing or other experience of professional value."

While not stated explicitly in the Policies, the sabbatical leave program clearly presumes a complementarity of benefits between the individual and the institution; that is, benefits which accrue to the individual from a sabbatical leave are expected to benefit the University as well, and vice versa. It is incumbent upon the applicant, then, to provide a clear and convincing description of the benefits – both personal and institutional – that his or her sabbatical leave will produce. This description will be a critical component of the sabbatical plan which the applicant must develop. Approval of the sabbatical leave request will be contingent primarily upon a favorable assessment of the overall quality of the sabbatical plan.

A key element in the evaluation of a sabbatical plan will be the likelihood that it can be carried out given the time and resources available. Indicators shall include (but not be limited to) the applicant's overall record of activity and the uses made of previous leaves.

Approval of a sabbatical request must also take into account the ability of the applicant's unit (Department, Faculty, School) to cover critical teaching and research responsibilities during his or her absence. It may be necessary, on occasion, to delay or modify sabbatical leave requests because of unavoidable resource constraints.

Illness, or other unplanned circumstances, may cause interruption of an approved sabbatical. In all such cases known to the campus, the faculty member or employee shall be placed on another leave, with or without salary as appropriate, when in the discretion of the Provost such action is in the best interest of the University and the employee. The Provost may reestablish the balance of the sabbatical leave at the mutual convenience of the campus and the employee. Such reestablished approval shall not affect future eligibility or any other section of Article XIII, Title E.

The Department Chairperson plays a key role in the sabbatical approval process. The Chairperson shall be available to assist the applicant in developing a sound sabbatical plan, and must certify that the sabbatical can be accomplished within the Department's resource base. Once the Chairperson is satisfied that the proposed sabbatical will be advantageous to both the applicant and the University, the plan shall be submitted for approval by the appropriate Dean. A sabbatical request shall be approved by the Dean when the Dean is satisfied that it presents an academically meritorious and workable plan, with benefits to the applicant and to the institution clearly identified.

With regard to external earnings while on sabbatical leave, it is the University's policy that the individual's income during the sabbatical period shall not exceed that which would have prevailed had the individual not taken sabbatical leave. All income must be reported. External non-salary support which serves to assist the individual in fulfilling the purposes of the sabbatical – grants or awards for travel, research facilities, etc. – may be accepted without impact on sabbatical leave salary. Financial awards - fellowships, grants, etc. – which provide general support for the individual, rather than being targeted for

specific project-related expenses, shall be construed as external salary support. Consulting may also be carried out while on sabbatical, provided it occurs in a manner that is consistent both with the University's normal consulting practices and with the individual's customary level of such activity when not on sabbatical leave. The overall criterion for addressing the external earnings issue shall be that of reasonableness. Certainly the individual should not be expected to suffer financially while on sabbatical leave; neither, however, should the sabbatical be construed as an opportunity for unusual financial gain, and in some cases there may be an adjustment in state compensation.

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