

SABBATICAL LEAVE GUIDELINES

Sabbatical leaves are essential to the intellectual health of Salisbury University in general and its faculty in particular. While on sabbatical, faculty can focus on scholarly projects in a way not possible in a regular semester. Outcomes of sabbaticals are numerous and varied, but they often include publications and presentations that enhance the reputation of Salisbury University on a national and international scale. Additionally, students benefit from the enhancements faculty bring to the classroom and faculty benefit from the invigoration of focusing in one's field of study without the responsibilities of teaching and service.

Unfortunately, sabbaticals are often an easy target when funding is scarce. We believe this is a short-sighted and ultimately damaging solution. As the number of faculty eligible for sabbatical increases, the money allocated for funding sabbaticals must also increase. Additionally, faculty within a department should work together towards creative solutions for decreasing sabbatical costs. Faculty members not on sabbatical might teach larger courses when a fellow faculty member is on sabbatical. Departments are urged to develop sabbatical schedules to plan ahead for when each faculty member will be on sabbatical. If departments plan ahead, students can be advised of an upcoming semester when a core course will not be offered due to a sabbatical leave.

Types of projects

While it is impossible to create an exhaustive list of the types of projects that are considered sabbatical-worthy, the following are examples that have been supported in the past:

1. Research in one's discipline (e.g. quantitative and/or qualitative designs)
2. Research related to teaching practices, learning strategies
3. Extensive curriculum development and evaluation
4. Creative endeavors-art, music, dance, poetry, play-writing, and others
5. Collaborative projects-inter-departmental, inter-institutional (local, regional, state, national, international)
6. International learning and/or activities

In all of the above examples, applicant must make the case for how a project in this category is linked with own professional development, benefit to school, university, and community.

Expectations for proposals

It is the faculty member's responsibility to craft a well written sabbatical proposal clearly outlining the nature of the project, the proposed work during the sabbatical period, and the expected benefits to the faculty member, students, the school, and the University. If this is a repeat request, a post-sabbatical report (Part B) from the previous sabbatical should be included.

It is the role and the responsibility of the department chair and dean to write unambiguous but powerful letters of support or non support. A reference to the previous sabbatical and successful outcome is useful. When a proposal is weak, the department chair and dean must not endorse the application. The department chair and dean need to elaborate on the reasons for endorsement or non-endorsement in an unambiguous manner as well. The department chair is in the best position to judge the merit and benefits of the proposal since s/he is familiar with the subject material. Weak letters of support do not enhance the proposal and make it difficult for others to assess the merits of the proposal.

We advocate approval of all sabbatical proposals that have received the endorsement of the chair and dean as noted above and meet the expectations outlined below.

A well developed proposal should demonstrate the following:

- ✓ **The project develops and/or rejuvenates the academic capital of the faculty member.** Show how the project builds on past scholarly efforts or is a direct outgrowth from them. Provide background information on the topic to be studied explaining how the topic fits in its larger academic field
- ✓ **The project is faculty scholarship or a creative activity which will lead to a peer reviewed "product" through which the work is shared with a larger audience.** Show how project will make a contribution to the field.
- ✓ **The project cannot be accomplished in the absence of the large block of unscheduled time available during a sabbatical.** Show how this project requires a block of time away from teaching over and above the time always needed for scholarly activity. Examples include work requiring travel and/or use of resources not on SU campus, or work requiring use of equipment, studio, etc. that cannot occur during ordinary time. A time line or estimate of time dedicated to various aspects of the project is helpful.
- ✓ **Clarity about research design, outcomes of the project, and a precise plan to achieve them.** Provide evidence of scholarly preparation and awareness of the current state of the field of interest and a plan of work. For example, a good proposal might have evidence of a thorough literature review and an exact proposed research schedule. The faculty member must show that how s/he will be fully prepared to begin the project at the start of the sabbatical as opposed to still trying to search the literature or formulate a plan. A well developed proposal also provides a detailed description of the project to be undertaken.
- ✓ **Sufficient information to show that there will be funds, transportation, permission to use other facilities, etc. (if the research requires these).** If faculty plan to teach at another institution to gain access to that institution's resources during the sabbatical, they should first consult with the Provost regarding the appropriateness of that plan and then explain how/why teaching at

another institution is related to the sabbatical project. There should be a clear explanation as to why teaching or earning an income elsewhere should justify a sabbatical leave. Include evidence of effort to secure external funding and/or explanations of how any funding will occur, if applicable. A contingency plan if external funding is not approved (personal funds, etc.) should be provided.

- ✓ **The project will contribute to the department, the school, and/or the University's mission.** The value/importance of the project to the department's needs and planning should be described. The chair's letter should be clear here. The benefits of the sabbatical for the faculty member, students, school, and the university (include potential journals, publishers, conferences, courses impacted, etc.) should be described in some detail.
- ✓ **For collaborative projects, the role of each investigator should be clearly delineated.** In particular, avoid the appearance that collaborators are doing the project without the benefit of a sabbatical while the faculty member is trying to justify that the project needs a sabbatical for completion.
- ✓ **A clear and concise format.** Write concisely, but in a way that can be understood by your faculty colleagues outside of the discipline. Most good proposals are at least 2 pages, but not more than 5. Put the name of the faculty member and the date at top of proposal page. Use one inch margins, double-space and font size of 10 or 12.

Expectations at the end of a sabbatical

Timely completion of a post-sabbatical report (Part B) with submission to the department chair within 6 months of sabbatical completion is of extreme importance. Relevant updates of this report should be submitted up to one year after sabbatical completion. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary as to how the faculty, students, department, school, and the university as well as the community (if applicable) have benefited from the outcomes of the sabbatical. These post-sabbatical reports will play a vital role when faculty apply for subsequent sabbaticals as they must be attached to future sabbatical proposal requests and chairs are urged to refer to them when considering endorsement of subsequent sabbaticals.

Worksheet for Sabbatical Project Review

(Minimum requirements for chairs and deans to consider in writing letters of support/non-support. Please do not attach to sabbatical proposals.)

Key Element	Rating		
	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Needs Work
1. Well developed idea with evidence that preliminary work has already been undertaken (a clear plan with identified outcomes and timeline)			
2. Clearly written and explained in language that someone outside the field can understand.			
3. Justification for why a large block of unscheduled time is needed to accomplish the project.			
4. Timeline for completion. If the project is unlikely to be completed during a sabbatical term, a clear description of how/when it will be completed is needed.			
5. How the project (or its outcomes) will be disseminated. If presentations or publications, target organizations or journals should be identified with timeline for submission			
6. Convincing statement of benefit to the individual, department, university, and field.			
7. Explanation of need for travel, use of resources not available at SU, extensive collaboration with colleagues at another location. Progress towards planning travel should be included with application (letters of agreement or written permission to use other facilities).			
8. Plans for funding if the project is dependent on other funding. Contingency plans should be provided if funding is not secured.			