

Sabbatical Leave Applications

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Sabbaticals

- A tremendous opportunity
- A great part of our profession
- Sabbatical - Hebrew: “sabbath” -rest
- They’ve become a bit more about productivity and less about reflection
- Disclaimer— the opinions here are from someone who’s read sabbatical applications for ten years—following my advice doesn’t guarantee success



Sabbaticals: An Overview

- Some general thoughts:
 - Familiarize yourself with the Academic Labor Relations website
 - <https://wmich.edu/academic-labor-relations/sabbatical>
 - Application and policy—attach cover page
 - Guidelines—specific format information
 - Provost memo—important dates
 - Article 26 of the WMU AAUP Agreement
 - Get copies of applications from colleagues/department





Academic Labor Relations

- HOME
- AAUP
- ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS
- COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS
- DEPARTMENT POLICY STATEMENTS
- PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES REPORT
- RESOURCES
- SABBATICAL**
- TENURE AND PROMOTION
- DIRECTORY
- CONTACT US

Sabbatical

- [Application for Sabbatical Leave](#)
- [Application for Sabbatical Leave](#)
- [Guidelines for Sabbatical Leave Applications](#)
- [Memo from Interim Provost Stapleton: Application for Sabbatical Leave](#)

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Sabbaticals: Format Matters

- Sections (check Provost's Memo)
 - Application form on top
 - Table of Contents
 - Project Description (and short bibliography) (5 pp. max.)
 - Applicant's Experience
 - Output/outcome
 - Schedule
 - Outcomes: In its own right, For the individual, For the institution
 - Funding, Previous Leaves, Location
 - Attach Vita (10 pp. max.)
 - ****Follow directions closely!



Sabbaticals: Writing

- Analyze your audience!
- Recognize that your proposal is going to be read and judged by faculty and administrators first inside and then outside your unit
 - Be careful about overusing disciplinary jargon
 - Don't get lost in nuance--your readers will!
 - The higher it is up in the process, the faster it will be read
 - Your first few pages should be especially tight
 - Math, science and engineering applicants should write for a generalized university math, science and engineering audience; humanities applicants should write for a generalized humanities audience; health professions for the health professions, etc.
- *Recognize that more people will read and evaluate your proposal outside of your department than inside it*



Sabbaticals: Outcomes

- The most overlooked sections:
 - Output: what will you produce if you are granted a sabbatical?
 - Be specific—don't be ambiguous; how many chapters? articles?
 - List journal titles or publishers to whom you'll submit the results of the project
 - Schedule: what is your timeline?
 - Monthly is good; biweekly is even better
 - Consider adding a Pre-sabbatical/Post sabbatical schedule
 - Break up the steps of research, analysis, drafting, editing and submitting
 - *Remember, you are asking the University to invest in you by awarding you a sabbatical—what makes your proposal of value to the institution?*



Sabbaticals: What Happens When it Leaves the Department?

- Departmental Faculty Evaluation
 - matters, but don't fret too much about your departmental ranking
- Chair Evaluation
 - a bit more programmatic in terms of evaluation
- Dean's Evaluation
 - rank across the whole college; matters a great deal
- Sabbatical Leave Committee
 - kind of an extra-evaluation; results can be uneven
- Provost's Evaluation
 - Where final decision gets made; 4% minimum
- *At each stage, you're competing with a different set of faculty*



Sabbaticals: Thoughts and Tips

- Does the project you're proposing fit the length of time you're requesting?
 - A one semester sabbatical is short—4 months, whereas a two semester sabbatical is close to a year
- When you justify your reason for needing the sabbatical—don't put that “you're too busy to write during the fall/spring semesters”
- It is best if the project reads as one that cannot be completed in the normal blocks of time (i.e., summer and holiday breaks)
- The best proposals are an outgrowth of an active research agenda - i.e., they fit the programmatic research in which you are currently engaged



Sabbaticals: Thoughts and Tips

- Sabbatical applications are like grant applications: You are most likely to succeed in getting the grant/sabbatical when you have already finished at least a third of your project
- Outside funding—getting in advance greatly improves chances of acceptance
- Books: get a contract, letter of interest from a publisher
- If you are relying upon third party participation, obtain commitments from other institutions prior to turning in application. Documentation of such commitments gives further evidence that you've done your homework and the project will be completed.



Sabbaticals: Afterwards

- Don't forget to write your sabbatical report
 - Send it to your chair, dean, and provost
 - Failure to submit a report will disqualify you from future sabbaticals
- You must return for two full years after your sabbatical is complete

