

URTPS Sabbatical Guidelines

A. Helpful information about the sabbatical process

The number of sabbaticals awarded each year is based on the number of faculty eligible for sabbaticals in that year. According to the SSU Sabbatical Policy, “SSU shall grant no fewer than twelve percent (12%) of the total number of campus faculty unit employees eligible to apply for a one semester leave.” Since the number of eligible faculty varies somewhat from year to year, the number of sabbaticals awarded also varies, but is generally close to 13 or 14 a year.

In any given cycle, it is unpredictable how many people will actually apply. On rare occasions, there have been few enough applicants that all requests could be granted. More typically, we receive anywhere from one and a half times to two times as many requests as can be filled. The result is that sabbaticals can be relatively easy to obtain one year, and very difficult the next.

On years when there are more applications than can be granted, the limit of 12% of eligibles holds, regardless of the quality of the applications. In other words, in a year with many exceptionally strong applications, it would be possible for an application to receive a very high score and still be turned down, because there were other applications with even higher scores.

B. How scores are calculated

The SSU sabbatical policy states that scores are based on three weighted criteria:

- 1) merit of the project (40%)
- 2) nature of and quality of the applicant's past service to the university (30%)
- 3) years of eligibility since the last sabbatical leave at Sonoma State University (30%)

The **merit of the project** concerns the proposed activity to be carried out during the sabbatical. While this criterion is the most highly weighted of the three, it is not the only factor.

Past service to the university specifically refers to department, school, and university service, not to professional and community service. This should be service since the last sabbatical, if there has been a previous sabbatical.

Years since the last sabbatical: the highest rankings in this category will be reserved for candidates who have never received a sabbatical at SSU.

C. Guidelines for a Successful Sabbatical Proposal

1. Write a clear narrative explaining the project you are proposing, including details, specific plans, timelines, outlines of writing projects, etc. If there is a particular time urgency to the project (a collaboration opportunity, timing on a grant proposal, a book contract), please include this information.
2. The project narrative should be written in such a way that the project itself, and the significance of the project, are clear to readers with a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds.
3. Include a section of the narrative that covers service since the last sabbatical.
4. Submit a current CV, highlighting scholarship and service since the last sabbatical.
5. If you are not granted a sabbatical, you are always welcome to request feedback from the committee. This will help you to strengthen your proposal in the next cycle. If you simply resubmit the same proposal in subsequent years, your “years since last sabbatical” score will improve, but your “merit” and “service” will not.
6. Sabbaticals are intended for work that is beyond the scope of activities a faculty member normally engages in during the school year, as expressed in CBA 27.1: “A sabbatical leave is for the purpose of enhancing the University educational environment and facilitating the professional development of eligible faculty unit employees by affording opportunities for sustained focus on research, scholarly, and creative activity, instructional improvement or professional currency.”

D. For Department Chairs applying for a sabbatical

When the applicant is a Department Chair, they will also, as Chair, provide a written statement of the impact on the Department of the sabbatical. The SSU Sabbatical Policy states: “The Department Chair shall forward the proposal along with a written statement to the Dean of the School or Library regarding possible effects on the curriculum and operation of the department should the sabbatical be granted. (CBA 27.6)” This is a straightforward factual statement, not an evaluative document.