Guidelines for Sabbatical Leaves

The purpose of this document is to clarify NIU’s sabbatical application processes for applicants, departments, and colleges. NIU’s sabbatical policies are directly inserted in the guidelines, wherever applicable. For current information on NIU’s sabbatical leave policies, please check:

- Board of Trustees Regulations Subsection E. Sabbatical Leave (http://www.niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml#anchor807317)
- NIU Constitution and Bylaws Article 8: Sabbatical Leaves (http://www.niu.edu/u_council/constitution/bylaws/article08.shtml)
- Working Rules of the University Council Personnel Committee, Section II, Item 18, 8.0 Sabbatical Leaves (http://www.niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/II18.shtml)

Guidelines for Applicants

1. Sabbatical leaves are ordinarily limited to tenured faculty members and non-temporary supportive professional staff (SPS) members. The term “faculty” is used in the rest of this section to include both faculty (ranked) and SPS (no rank).

2. Sabbatical leaves are granted only in connection with proposed or ongoing programs that promise to enhance the professional competence and improve the professional standing of the faculty member.

3. Sabbatical leaves are not ordinarily granted to a faculty member in order to:
   (a) Revise books designed primarily for use as texts,
   (b) Retrain or develop competencies primarily for a different professional position,
   (c) Primarily to visit various locations of general, professional, or academic interest,
   (d) Perform full-time duties at another institution similar to the duties presently performed at NIU,
   (e) Complete a doctoral or other terminal degree, or
   (f) Carry out formal study at NIU.

   Sabbatical leaves for a semester at full pay cannot be granted to a faculty member if, during the leave, the faculty member is to undertake full-time or part-time employment that is not an integral part of the scholarly purpose of the leave. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their planned sabbatical activity with their unit heads (school/department/division chair/director, etc.) before preparing the application.

4. A first sabbatical leave is granted only to a faculty member who will have completed five years of full-time service by the time the leave begins. Full-time service on a temporary appointment shall count toward a sabbatical leave. Periods of time on leaves of absence without pay shall count toward a sabbatical leave provided the University Council Personnel
Committee judges the activity associated with that leave without pay to be comparable in professional significance to service as a member of the faculty.

5. A subsequent sabbatical leave may not begin before a faculty member has completed full-time service for six years (i.e., 72 months) since the end of his or her most recent sabbatical leave.

6. Each applicant for sabbatical leave must propose a program of scholarship which is capable of being substantially advanced by means of the leave. The applicant shall indicate the nature of the program, its present state of development, and, in some detail, plans for advancing the program during the leave.

7. Each applicant must complete all the items in the “Request for Sabbatical Leave-Cover Sheets” and the “Request for Sabbatical Leave-Proposal,” attach current resume/vita and reports submitted for previous sabbatical leaves (if any), and submit them to his or her unit level head (e.g., school/department/division chair/director) by the deadline set by the unit. Individuals with academic rank in the university libraries or in a college without academic departments shall submit their applications to the personnel committee of their unit.

8. Each applicant must answer all items in the sabbatical application cover sheets and the proposal and follow the space limits, wherever indicated. The sabbatical title and the non-technical statement of the proposed sabbatical activity and its value must be meaningful for reviewers outside the applicant’s field of expertise and appropriate to use in documents and reports prepared for the UCPC and Board of Trustees.

Sample of brief, hypothetical titles of sabbatical leaves:
“Conduct research on socio-economic themes in 19th century American literature”
“Study the impact of zebra mussels’ invasion on waterways of Illinois”
“Explore new heuristics for optimal scheduling of semiconductor wafer manufacturing”
“Investigate new choreography models of regional dance movements”
“Examine the impact of coal mining effluents on adolescents’ cognitive development”

Sample of non-technical statements of hypothetical sabbatical activities and their value:
“To analyze recurring themes in the writings of 19th century American writer John Ragland in order to enhance my English fiction course as well as prepare manuscripts for publication.”
“To study air quality in office buildings during winter to find the best techniques to prevent the spread of airborne illnesses, promote the health and safety of building occupants, and minimize building maintenance costs.”
“To examine the movement of barbarians in ancient times and apply the findings to understand modern day fringe political movements and their potential impact on society.”
“To complete the unfinished compositions of Joan Q. Public and make them available to educational institutions for further exploration and integration in their curricula.”

9. By submitting the sabbatical leave application, each applicant agrees to the following obligations if the application is approved:

- Submit a written report describing the personal scholarly activities during the sabbatical leave to the department or division chair, to the dean or director, and to the executive vice president and provost within 30 days following resumption of regular duties at the university.
- Assume a professional obligation to return to NIU for a period of at least one year subsequent to the leave.
- Approximately two years after the sabbatical leave submit a report on the sabbatical outcomes related to research and artistry, teaching, and/or engagement and outreach to the department or division chair, to the dean or director, and to the executive vice president and provost. This is different and separate from the report submitted upon return.
- Meet the required commitment of effort to any federal grant during the sabbatical period, and obtain prior approval for any outside consulting or research activities during sabbatical leave.
- Obtain necessary approval from IRB, IACUC, IBC or other appropriate research compliance bodies for the proposed sabbatical activity, and make arrangements for continued oversight and management of ongoing research during the sabbatical leave.
- Supportive Professional Staff must fill out and report their time expended on the SOEEA Work Time Reporting System during the sabbatical leave.

10. Applicants must submit the Request for a Change in Sabbatical Leave Date or Notice of Declination of Sabbatical Leave Award form, at the earliest convenience, to the department or division chair, to the dean or director, and to the executive vice president and provost if the approved sabbatical leave has to be changed or declined so that applicants on the alternate list could be considered.

Guidelines for Chair/Director/Head of Applicant’s Unit

Faculty Sabbatical Applications from Academic Departments/Schools

1. Each sabbatical application should be submitted through the chair of the department in which the applicant holds rank for review by the department personnel committee.

2. In consultation with the chair, the personnel committee should
   a. Evaluate the merit of each sabbatical leave application received from the unit,
   b. If there is more than one such application, rank them in order of merit, and
   c. Recommend the approval or denial of each application, forwarding it through the dean to the appropriate college personnel committee.
3. The department chair should prepare a cover letter to accompany the committee's rankings which explains how the rankings were developed and how the criteria were applied.

4. In the case of multiple applications from the same department, the chair, in concert with the department personnel committee (and with the dean, if necessary), should determine if sufficient resources are available to reasonably accommodate the absence of all faculty members requesting sabbaticals. Only sabbatical requests that can be reasonably accommodated should be forwarded by a department to the college personnel committee.

5. Differences of opinion between a majority of the personnel committee and the department chair should be resolved at the department level whenever possible. Otherwise, they should be reported in detail to the college personnel committee.

6. The department chair should notify each applicant, in writing, concerning the committee's recommendation (approval or denial) including ranking. A request for reconsideration of the committee's recommendation should be filed by the applicant within 14 days of the date of the notification from the chair. Requests for reconsideration should be heard within the department in accordance with department personnel policies, prior to the start of the deliberations of the college personnel committee.

Faculty Sabbatical Applications from University Libraries or Colleges without Departments

1. Each sabbatical application should be submitted to the personnel committee of the unit.

2. In consultation with the chief administrative officer of the unit, the personnel committee should
   a. Evaluate the merit of each sabbatical leave application received from the unit;
   b. If there is more than one such application, rank them in order of merit; and
   c. Recommend the approval or denial of each application, forwarding it through the chief administrative officer to the appropriate university council personnel committee.

3. The chief administrative officer should prepare a cover letter to accompany the committee's rankings which explains how the rankings were developed and how the criteria were applied.

4. In the case of multiple applications from a unit, the chief administrative officer, in concert with the unit’s personnel committee, should determine if sufficient resources are available to reasonably accommodate the absence of all faculty members requesting sabbaticals. Only sabbatical requests that can be reasonably accommodated should be forwarded by the unit to the university council personnel committee.

5. Differences of opinion between a majority of the personnel committee and the chief administrative officer should be resolved at the unit level whenever possible. Otherwise, they should be reported in detail to the university council personnel committee.

6. The chief administrative officer should notify each applicant, in writing, concerning the committee's recommendation (approval or denial) including ranking. A request for reconsideration of the committee's recommendation should be filed by the applicant within
14 days of the date of the notification from the chief administrative officer. Requests for reconsideration should be heard within the unit in accordance with unit’s personnel policies, prior to the start of the deliberations of the university council personnel committee.

Supportive Professional Staff Sabbatical Applications

1. Supportive professional staff members in academic colleges should submit their sabbatical leave requests to their chairs or immediate supervisors. The requests will be evaluated by the supervisors, approved or disapproved, and forwarded to their supervisors for review until they reach the dean. The dean will evaluate all the requests and submit the supportive professional staff sabbatical leave requests in rank order to the provost. The ranking of faculty sabbatical leave requests will be a separate list submitted to the provost by the dean.

2. Supportive professional staff not in an academic college should submit their sabbatical leave requests in accordance with the personnel procedures of that unit, if any, or to their immediate supervisors if the unit does not have such procedures. The requests will be evaluated by the supervisor/appropriate committee, approved or disapproved, and forwarded to the next level for review until they reach the dean, library director, or vice president. The sabbatical leave requests should be rank ordered and then submitted to the provost by the dean, library director, or vice president.

3. A supportive professional staff person who is denied a request for a sabbatical leave may appeal that decision to the next higher level.

4. The provost will submit the faculty and supportive professional staff lists to the University Council Personnel Committee.

5. The UCPC will then allocate the university's allotment for supportive professional staff leaves in rank order consistent with 8.36 of the Bylaws. The sabbatical leaves generated by the supportive professional staff will be first allocated to the supportive professional staff within their college/division. The supportive professional staff leave allocations for the individual colleges will be combined for the purpose of determining the number of sabbatical leaves available to the supportive professional staff in the colleges.

6. The sabbatical leaves not used by the supportive professional staff in that college/division will be first reserved for other supportive professional staff sabbatical leave requests. The unused supportive professional staff leave allocations will return to a common pool.

Guidelines for Colleges

1. The college personnel committee, in consultation with the dean, should evaluate the applications from all departments in the college, taking into account department recommendations. The committee should review any differences of opinion referred to it by the departments and act in accordance with its own best judgment on the dispute.

2. On a college-wide basis, the committee should rank applications recommended for approval by the department personnel committees. The ranking should respect, insofar as possible, the
rankings provided by the departments and should be based upon the committee's judgment of the relative scholarly (research or artistry) merit of each project.

3. Any changes in departmental ranking of sabbatical leave applications should be explained in writing to the affected department and applicants in a timely manner, with specific reason(s) given for the ranking changes.

4. The college dean should notify each applicant, in writing, concerning the college personnel committee's recommendation (approval or denial).

5. Appeals of the college personnel committee's recommendation should be filed within 14 days of the dean's notification; they should be heard in accordance with the policies of the college, prior to the deliberations of the university-level personnel committee.

6. The college committee, through the dean, should forward its recommendations to the executive vice president and provost. The dean should prepare a cover letter to accompany the college recommendations which explains how the rankings were developed and how the criteria were applied. Where differences between a majority of the college personnel committee and the dean are not resolved at the college level, they should be reported in detail to the University Council Personnel Committee.

Guidelines for Support Staff for Forwarding Sabbatical Applications to the Office of the Provost

**SABBATICAL LEAVE APPLICATIONS FOR 2016-2017 ARE DUE TO PROVOST’S OFFICE BY OCTOBER 9, 2015**

Department support staff should submit all necessary documents to their College/Area/Vice President reporting unit (referred to as the Reporting Unit hereafter) office. The reporting unit office should submit all the necessary documents to the Office of the Provost.

1. **Originals** in the following order (unstapled/single-sided)

   a. Memo from the dean/vice president AND memo(s) from the chair/director. (Place on top of the entire packet. Do not attach to each sabbatical leave proposal.) This is a requirement of the NIU Constitution and Bylaws. The dean/vice president memo should list all sabbatical recommendations in ranked order along with an explanation about how the rankings were determined and how the criteria was applied. **NOTE:** Where differences exist between the department and reporting unit rankings, the dean/vice president memo needs to include an explanation of any changes made in the rankings.

   b. Sabbatical applications, including cover sheet, proposal sheet and all necessary documents, in ranked order making sure all necessary areas of the cover sheet and proposal are completed. If an applicant had previous sabbatical leaves, please attach a copy of **only** the recent previous sabbatical report along with his or her vitae/resume.
c. Electronic PDF copy of the memo from the dean/vice president.

d. Electronic PDF copy of the memo(s) from the chair(s)/director(s).

e. Electronic PDF copy of each completed and signed application and documents from the reporting unit office emailed to provost@niu.edu in the following filename format:

   Rank#ofRequests# College LastName.pdf
   (example - 1of4 VPA Smith.pdf)

2. Denial of sabbatical applications at the department level, but approved at the next higher level, must be accompanied by a letter outlining the reasons for the departmental denial. A copy of the notification of the process to appeal from both the department and reporting unit office (next higher level), must be included.

**Schedule for Personnel Decisions in 2015-2016 for Academic Year 2016-2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sabbatical Leaves</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Due to Provost’s Office</td>
<td>October 9, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals Heard</td>
<td>January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCPC Decision</td>
<td>February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations to President</td>
<td>February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOT Decision</td>
<td>February/March 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Promotion and Tenure</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Due to Provost’s Office</td>
<td>December 4, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals Heard</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCPC Decision</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations to President</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOT Decision</td>
<td>May/June 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All deadlines are estimates unless dates are specifically stated. Appeals of recommendations are required to be filed with the Office of the Provost within 14 days after the faculty/staff member is notified of the recommendation.