

TO: Academic Deans
FROM: Sacha Kopp, Provost
RE: Sabbatical Applications
DATE: July 10, 2024
CC: Vice Provost Mia Bertagnolli



As part of our commitment to University excellence and individual career development, Gonzaga University allows tenured faculty the opportunity to apply for sabbatical leaves. The process and guidelines for sabbaticals are described in the *Faculty Handbook* Section 311. The present memo provides questions to be of assistance to you in reviewing applications and to be helpful to colleagues preparing applications for sabbatical.

Purpose

The purpose of sabbatical to provide “a focused and sustained period of time to renew and enhance their teaching and scholarly/creative work” is laid out in Section 311.01. As noted in Section 311.04(a), “...sabbatical leave will contribute to the teaching, scholarly/creative work, which may include collaboration with other colleagues or community groups, and/or other academic roles of the faculty member and to the University community. Individual course development on its own is considered insufficient grounds unless the work benefits the department or University as a whole.” That is, there is a duality of purpose, to benefit the individual faculty member and to benefit the University (also see 311.04(b)).

Eligibility

Eligibility is spelled out in Section 311.02. Please note the criteria both to (a) be tenured at the time of the sabbatical leave, and (b) to have contributed six full years (or more) of full-time service to the University (see Section 311.02(a)). Thus, an individual who applies early for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor (which is allowed in Section 304.06), will still have to wait to apply for sabbatical until six years (or more) of service are completed. Additionally, an individual who is hired at Gonzaga and given some number of years’ credit toward time in rank (which is allowed under Section 303.06) will nonetheless have to contribute six years or more of service at Gonzaga in order to be eligible. As noted in Section 311.02(b), years in which a leave of absence occur do not count toward the years of service. Deans are expected to fully review criteria for eligibility before forwarding any sabbatical application to the Office of the Provost.

Please note these eligibility criteria spell out the soonest date for an individual to apply. There is no guarantee of a sabbatical being granted at the first year of eligibility. As noted in Section 311.02(c) “Sabbaticals are encouraged but not guaranteed, and are contingent upon the needs of the department, school, College, or University being met during individual absences, as well as the sabbatical work being undertaken serving the mission of the University.”

Sabbatical Applications

Recognizing the purpose of the sabbatical to “enrich the faculty member and the University” (Section 311.04(b)), it is important to guide individual faculty to prepare applications which speak to “...the activities planned and the outcomes or work the faculty member expects to produce during the sabbatical leave” (Section 311.04(a)).

In reviewing and deciding whether to recommend each application, you may consider:

- Has the individual presented compelling and specific professional and research goals for the sabbatical? What will be the specific outcomes of the time? Are you persuaded by the importance of the work/goals? How do these align with your goals for this individual? For the unit? For Gonzaga?
- Has the individual made a case for the timing of the sabbatical? Is the individual responding to a specific fellowship opportunity, travel to remote site, telescope time, or other time-sensitive issue? This may assist you in determining whether it is important for this individual to be awarded the sabbatical immediately.
- Has the individual applied for any outside funding that would help support the work? Fellowships? Grants? In addition to financial support, such outside support provides recognition and distinction for the individual and Gonzaga University.
- If the application is for a full year, does the scope of work warrant this extended time?

These questions are not exhaustive but rather meant to be illustrative. You may additionally have your own ideas for how to guide colleagues and prioritize the requests.

Resource Implications

The department chair and the dean must assess the resource implications of the sabbatical. Students must have access to the curriculum in order to be assured timely completion of their degrees. A plan to cover the curriculum must be prepared by the chair and dean and the resources requested must be made clear. The following should be considered:

- Will the applicant require financial support from GU to complete the sabbatical work?
- Has the chair presented a plan for covering the curriculum of their unit and ensured that instruction can continue to enable student access and completion of curricula?
- Are there a number of individuals applying for sabbatical within the same department? Will that present challenges?
- What course and advising coverage will be needed in light of this individual's absence? What about service responsibilities that will require coverage?
- Is the individual requesting a full year or one semester? For a full year, the university's need to cover ongoing responsibilities must be weighed alongside the specific individual goals of the faculty member.
- Does the reduction in faculty available in one department of your area create resource implications for another department? Such might not be evident to the individual's department chair and must be assessed at the dean's level (or perhaps the Provost).

Deans must provide a cost estimate to any proposed sabbatical, including course coverage.