

**Article 11:**  
**Sabbatical Leave Policy**

**11.1** The university shall award sabbatical leaves for the purpose of supporting and encouraging scholarship (research or artistry) on the part of individual faculty members in order to strengthen the academic programs of the university.

**11.2** The criteria upon which the merit of sabbatical leaves shall be judged shall be the quality of the proposed scholarship, the capacity of the applicant to conduct the work, reports on previous sabbatical leaves by the applicant, and the likelihood of the completion of the proposed project.

**11.3** The procedure followed is presented below:

**11.3.1** Each applicant for sabbatical leave shall 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. Documentation may be submitted in support of the application.

**11.3.2** Each application shall be submitted through the chair of the department in which the applicant holds rank for review by the department personnel committee. In consultation with the chair, the committee shall (1) evaluate the merit of each sabbatical leave application in the department; (2) if there is more than one such application, rank them in order of merit; and (3) recommend the approval or disapproval of each application, forwarding it through the dean to the appropriate college personnel committee. The chair shall prepare a cover letter to accompany the committee's rankings which explains how the rankings were developed and how the criteria were applied. In the case of multiple applications from the same department/school, the chair/director, in concert with the department personnel committee (and with the dean if necessary), shall 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 shall be forwarded to the college personnel committee. Differences of opinion between a majority of the personnel committee and the department chair shall be resolved at the department level whenever possible. Otherwise, they shall be reported in detail to the college personnel committee. The department chair shall notify each applicant, in writing, concerning the committee's recommendation including ranking. A request for reconsideration of the committee's recommendation shall be filed within 14 days of the date of the notification from the chair. They shall be heard within the department in accordance with department policies, prior to the start of the deliberations of the college personnel committee.

**11.3.3** 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. Those leaves which are approved shall be forwarded with accompanying justification to the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee. The chief administrative officer of the unit shall prepare a letter to accompany the committee's rankings which explains how the rankings were developed and how the criteria were applied.

**11.3.4** The college personnel committee, in consultation with the dean, shall evaluate the applications from all departments in the college, taking into account department

recommendations. The committee shall review any differences of opinion referred to it by the departments and act in accordance with its own best judgment on the dispute. On a college-wide basis, the committee shall rank applications recommended for approval by the department personnel committees. The ranking shall respect, insofar as possible, the rankings provided by the departments and shall be based upon the committee's judgment of the relative scholarly (research or artistry) merit of each project. Any changes in departmental ranking of sabbatical leave applications shall be explained in writing to the affected department and applicants in a timely manner, with specific reason(s) given for the ranking changes. The college dean shall notify each applicant, in writing, concerning the committee's recommendation. Appeals of the committee's recommendation shall be filed within 14 days of the dean's notification; they shall be heard in accordance with the policies of the college, prior to the deliberations of the university-level personnel committee. The college committee, through the dean, shall forward its recommendations to the executive vice president and provost. The dean shall 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 shall be reported in detail to the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee.

**11.3.5** Individuals with rank in an academic department, but assigned to more than half-time administrative duties outside the college or department, as well as faculty no-rank persons, may submit a sabbatical proposal for scholarship on a topic appropriate to the applicant's responsibilities and in accordance with the expertise involved in the person's position. Such requests shall be submitted to the personnel committee of the administrative unit involved, or, where no personnel committee exists, to the applicant's immediate supervisor. Those leaves which are approved shall then be forwarded with accompanying justification to the next level until they reach the level of dean or vice president. The sabbatical leave requests should be rank ordered at that level and then submitted through the executive vice president and provost to the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee.

**11.3.6** Taking into account the recommendations of the appropriate committees, the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee, in consultation with the executive vice president and provost, shall evaluate all applications for sabbatical leaves. The committee shall resolve any differences of opinion referred to it. The committee shall combine the rankings of the several colleges, taking care in the process to retain the relative rankings of the applicants from each college. The university rankings shall be based upon the committee's judgment of the relative scholarly merit of each proposal. Taking into account the number of leaves available and its merit-ranking of proposals, the committee shall assign each application to one of three classes: (1) leaves granted, (2) standby leaves, (3) leaves disapproved. Any changes in departmental ranking of sabbatical leave applications shall be explained in writing to the affected department and applicants in a timely manner, with specific reason(s) given for the ranking changes. The executive vice president and provost shall notify each applicant in writing concerning Faculty Senate Personnel Committee's action. Appeals of the committee's action shall be filed within 14 days of the executive vice president and provost's notification and they shall be heard, and action taken on them, before the committee's action is forwarded to the president by the executive vice president and provost. If an approved leave is declined by a faculty member, the executive vice president and provost shall assign that leave to the highest-ranking applicant on the standby list.

## **11.4 Sabbatical Policies**

**11.4.1** Sabbatical leaves shall ordinarily be limited to tenured faculty members and non-temporary supportive professional staff members. Throughout Bylaw 11.4, the term "faculty" shall include both ranked and no-rank (supportive professional staff) faculty, unless specifically specified to the contrary.

**11.4.2** Sabbatical leaves shall be 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.

**11.4.3** Sabbatical leaves ordinarily shall not be granted to a faculty member in order: (a) to revise books designed primarily for use as texts, (b) to retrain or develop competencies primarily for a different professional position; (c) primarily to visit various locations of general, professional, or academic interest; (d) to perform full-time duties at another institution similar to the duties presently performed at NIU; (e) to complete a doctoral or other terminal degree; (f) to carry out formal study at NIU. Sabbatical leaves for a semester at full pay shall not be granted to a faculty member if, during the leave, the faculty member is to undertake full- or part-time employment that is not an integral part of the scholarly purpose of the leave.

**11.4.4** Within 30 days following resumption of regular duties at the university, the faculty member shall submit a written report to the department or division chair, to the dean or director, and to the executive vice president and provost, describing the personal scholarly activities during the sabbatical leave. Each report must include a brief statement of the scholarly purpose for which the leave was granted. The report shall become a part of each ranked faculty member's service record for the purpose of merit evaluation as described in Article 9.2.5.1 of the Bylaws, and as a basis for evaluation of subsequent leave requests for all faculty. The departmental personnel committee and the department chair will review the report and indicate whether there is adequate documentation of the completion of work outlined in the sabbatical proposal or its equivalent. This departmental review will be completed during the same semester that the sabbatical report has been submitted. A copy of the review will be sent to the dean and executive vice president and provost's office for incorporation with the report in the faculty member's sabbatical record for consideration in recommendations by the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee regarding future sabbatical leave proposals. An individual granted a sabbatical leave assumes a professional obligation to return to NIU for a period of at least one year subsequent to the leave. At the request of the executive vice president and provost approximately two years after the sabbatical leave, each faculty member will submit a report on the sabbatical outcomes related to research and artistry, teaching, and/or engagement and outreach. This information will be compiled for a report to the NIU Board of Trustees.

**11.4.5** Sabbatical leaves shall be for one semester at full pay, or one academic year at half-pay or for equivalent time as agreed among the faculty member, the employing unit(s), and the relevant vice president. Persons on 12-month appointments are also eligible for two consecutive summer sessions at full pay.

**11.4.6** Each sabbatical leave application and project shall be considered anew each year.

**11.4.7** A first sabbatical leave shall be 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 Faculty Senate 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.

**11.4.8** 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.

*Then NIU Bylaws, Article 8.4.4 amendment approved by the University Council on 2/22/2012.  
Proposed amendments to the Faculty Senate Bylaws approved by Faculty Senate on 04/22/2020.*