

# University of Wisconsin System Backgrounder on Faculty Sabbaticals Spring 2003

## Purpose

- The purpose of the UW System Faculty Sabbatical Program is to provide in-depth study opportunities for selected faculty members to enhance their teaching and scholarship. Sabbaticals offer the opportunity for faculty in all disciplines to develop new directions in their fields of study and incorporate them into the classroom.
- Sabbaticals are essentially faculty reassignments for one or two semesters. During the time of their absence from their regular duties, faculty members engage in work on a well-specified project and must meet the expectations and requirements of the sabbatical program.
- Sabbaticals enable UW institutions to maintain quality by renewing the vibrancy of the teaching and scholarship of faculty members.
- Sabbaticals are also a highly effective tool in keeping UW System institutions competitive when recruiting and retaining quality faculty members. Without sabbaticals, UW campuses would be at an enormous competitive disadvantage. Virtually all institutions of higher education in the United States, both public and private, offer sabbaticals.

## Eligibility and Process

- To be eligible for a sabbatical, a professor must have completed six or more years of full-time service in the UW System; have not taken a sabbatical during the previous six years; and agree to return to the institution for at least one year following the leave.
- Upon return to their regular duties, faculty must demonstrate they have completed the work they set out to do, and fulfilled the expectations and requirements of the program.
- UW Chancellors select professors for sabbaticals following approval by appropriate faculty and administrative committees. The committees scrutinize the proposed sabbatical projects and how they will benefit students when the faculty member returns to the classroom. The Board of Regents reviews the list of faculty chosen for sabbaticals.
- The UW System Faculty Sabbatical Program is competitive. Each UW institution undertakes an annual competition in which faculty must apply and be accepted into the program. Sabbatical proposals undergo a rigorous review process by faculty peers at each institution.

## Cost

- Generally, there are no additional costs incurred by campuses for sabbaticals. Instructional responsibilities of professors on leave are assumed by their colleagues, by visiting faculty funded through salary savings generated by year-long sabbaticals, or by rescheduling courses.
- Faculty on leave for the academic year receive up to 65 percent of their salaries, in accordance with institutional policies. Professors can also take sabbatical leave for one semester and receive financial support up to full compensation.

## Current Sabbaticals

- 227 faculty members have been selected to receive sabbatical leaves during the 2003-04 academic year, equivalent to 3.6 percent of the total UW faculty. Of those selected, 122 will be on leave for one semester. The remaining 105 will be on leave for the full academic year.
- Professors on sabbatical next academic year will undertake projects such as writing new textbooks in math and psychology; creating new courses in astrophysics, botany, and new media; and expanding knowledge in such areas as community-based nursing in underserved areas and new methods to provide early diagnosis of kidney disease.

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