



UNIVERSITY
OF WYOMING

Office of
Academic Affairs

To: Academic Deans and Directors, Department Heads
From: Tami Benham-Deal, Vice Provost
Date: September 30, 2020
Subject: Sabbatical and professional development leave requests for 2021-22
Copies: Anne Alexander, Edmund Synakowski, Ed Seidel

This memorandum contains information and instructions for requesting sabbatical and professional development leaves for the 2021-22 academic year. Please forward to individuals who are interested in sabbaticals, including committees that review sabbatical proposals.

The regulations governing these leaves include UW 2-3 and 2-16. These regulations can be found on the UW website at: www.uwyo.edu/generalcounsel/current-uw-regulations-and-presidential-directives/.

In accordance with the regulations, sabbatical and professional development leaves may be granted to faculty members and academic professionals. However, the university does not recognize *de facto* leaves. The submission of an application does not automatically ensure that the leave will be granted.

COVID-19 Impacts. Given budgetary constraints and impacts of the pandemic, sabbatical and professional development leave proposals for 2021-22 should be limited to *year-long projects* that require the faculty member to conduct work off-campus. Unit heads and deans are encouraged to explore alternative opportunities to support faculty who have semester-long projects that can be conducted on campus and establish internal processes for managing these opportunities. For example, adjustments could be made to teaching loads and/or course schedules (e.g., heavier loads in one semester and/or assign summer offerings taught onload).

Sabbatical and professional development proposals should reflect careful and thorough preparation that is appropriate for the benefit that this type of paid leave represents. In particular, it is important that each request carefully address the relationship between the proposed activities and the University's mission and strategic plan, provides a clear plan that identifies a focused purpose, intended scholarly and curricular outcomes, and a plan to achieve these outcomes.

Proposal requests will be submitted and reviewed through the WyoFolio system. Additional resources, including the proposal request form, instructions for submitting proposal documents, criteria for evaluating proposals, and a sample evaluation rating form are available at (<http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/academics/awards/index.html>).

Faculty members who will be submitting a proposal should contact their Dean's office and indicate an interest so that the college's WyoFolio system administrator can create the proper materials in the online system. For Directors in units reporting directly to the Provost – if someone in your unit plans to submit a proposal and you do not have a system administrator for the WyoFolio, contact Aneesa McDonald, aneesamc@uwyo.edu.

We anticipate the number of approved proposals will be smaller this year than in the past few years. Therefore, it is especially important that deans or other appropriate administrators only recommend those proposals judged to be of high value to the University and to have an important contribution to the applicant's professional growth and/or to the applicant's field of study. Deans or the appropriate administrator will provide a ranked list of proposals that he or she recommends from the college or unit to Academic Affairs by **Monday, November 9, 2020**. A justification for each proposal should be provided.

Faculty with approved sabbatical and professional development leaves planned for this academic year, including semester-long leaves, were given the opportunity to request a deferral, if the pandemic had introduced factors that problematize the proposed work. At least a dozen referrals were approved. If a sabbatical or professional development leave was taken and subsequently impacted by the pandemic, faculty should describe the impacts in their final report, which is due four weeks after the end of the first semester back from the sabbatical.

During the review and recommendation process, Deans and Directors should take into account previously approved sabbatical or professional development leaves that have been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic when determining impact new leaves will have on a unit's capacity to meet instructional needs.

The college and department's plan for meeting instructional needs in the unit should be provided in the recommendation letter from both the Academic Unit Head and the Dean, including any needed adjustment of workload that may result from the sabbatical leave. Be specific about how the instructional needs will be met. Please notify other units that might be affected by the sabbatical or professional development leave (e.g., when faculty have interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary responsibilities).

As in the past, the Provost will establish an ad-hoc sabbatical review committee composed of academic personnel to provide her will feedback on proposals submitted to Academic Affairs.

Finally, I encourage faculty and administrators to review the sabbatical pay guidelines (http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs/files/docs/sabbatical_pay_guidelines.pdf). Be advised that according to the regulation cited above, a faculty member who does not return to the University for at least one academic year immediately following the leave shall be obligated to repay an amount equal to the net salary received during the leave. The repayment may not come from UW funds.