

Memo

To: Department Chairs  
From: College Sabbatical Committee 2008  
Date: 11/14/08  
Re: Helping faculty create more effective sabbatical proposals

After reading this year's sabbatical proposal and sorting them into categories, we found that while all of the proposals were interesting projects with promising elements, a number of the proposals needed development that would make them more clearly appropriate and practical. Each proposal should follow the *Administrative Manual* in addressing the project's appropriateness, benefits, and practicability, as discussed in section 672.2.6.b (1-3). Following are some specific issues that we hope will help future applicants shape their proposals more effectively:

The scope of the proposal should be clearly appropriate for a sabbatical. Writing a single essay or an introduction or a book proposal (instead of completing a substantial amount of the book itself) is too small for a sabbatical. At the other end of the spectrum, completing a whole book starting from scratch is too large for a single semester sabbatical. In this case, perhaps a full year at half pay sabbatical would be more appropriate.

The scope of a project should be consistent throughout the proposal. The project proposed in the first paragraph should be the same project discussed in the timeline of work to be performed.

If the project comprises two elements, the relationship between the two elements should be clearly explained and the two elements should not both be so large as to make the project too big for a sabbatical.

If the proposal includes work to be performed with other faculty, it should be made quite clear who is performing what work and what work specifically falls under the terms of the sabbatical itself

The proposal should be clear and precise as to what will be accomplished. Elements of a project that lie outside the scope of a proposal can be discussed for context but should be clearly labeled as such.

The project should be clearly and thoroughly situated within a theoretical framework. If, for example, the project includes fieldwork and data collection, methods and parameters should be clearly delineated and discussed.

The proposal should be specific as to how the results of the project will be disseminated. Will a book be sent to a publisher? Which one? Will art be entered in competitions or exhibited in a show or a gallery? Will course handbooks, if not actually published, be offered to other professors or made available at the library for potential use in more than one course?

Finally, department committees should engage actively with applicants to help them produce effective proposals. If differences in the quality of the proposals are clear, the committee should take steps to help the applicants improve their proposals. If differences remain, the committee should produce realistic rankings instead of offering a blanket ranking of "truly outstanding" for proposals that plainly are not in similar states of clarity and completeness.