

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

**FA-010-189**

**Sabbatical Applications**

Faculty Affairs Committee

Date: 4/17/2019

Executive Committee  
Received and Forwarded

Date: 4/07/2021

Academic Senate

Date: 4/14/2021  
First Reading

**Referral**

Sabbatical Applications

**Background:**

Given that the awarding committee members change frequently and the guidelines for selection are general and up to the determination of the members of the leave committee, the process can appear unfair and obscure to the applicants. Most importantly because the annual budget for sabbaticals is not sufficient to fund all qualified applications, it is demoralizing for faculty who are active in their professional work to be denied sabbatical leave.

We propose, therefore, three things: that the budget for sabbaticals be increased, and that the criteria be made available in order to increase transparency in the process so that faculty in all departments and colleges may understand what the current committee deems sufficient for funding a project. In particular, we recommend a revision of Policy 1375 4.0 a. to require the "standards" and "evaluation criteria" for evaluation be made available to the applicants before the deadline for applications.

And finally, there are some inconsistencies in 4.0a about who is responsible for the criteria, so we ask that this be reviewed and clarified, which should also contribute to the process being more transparent.

This change will contribute to all faculty feeling like they have a fair chance of receiving funding, which will in turn increase Faculty Satisfaction and Retention, one of the goals articulated in the current Strategic Planning efforts.

**Resources:**

Faculty  
Professional Leave Committee  
AVP Faculty Affairs

**Discussion**

The Faculty Affairs committee (FAC) considered the "Northridge model" for sabbaticals. There were three reasons for considering the Northridge Model for sabbatical awards. First, leave committee members are tasked with ranking proposals from a wide array of disciplines, most of which are outside their fields—that is, projects range from those aimed at producing works of art to those aimed at research in the sciences. The central concern is that this kind of ranking simply doesn't make sense. Second, there are concerns about bias within the process, given that most disciplines and departments are not directly represented on the committee. Third, there are concerns about the demoralizing effect of submitting a meritorious proposal but not receiving funds based on small ranking differences.

Using the Northridge model, the University Leave Committee would use a rubric to rank and sort proposals into three categories, "Outstanding," "Meritorious" (i.e., meets stated criteria), and "Does not meet criteria." Using these categories, "Outstanding" projects are funded first, based on perceived merit, but the majority of sabbatical awards go to the "Meritorious" group. If institutional support for sabbatical leave is insufficient for funding all "Meritorious" proposals, the committee's suggestions to the Provost are determined by time since applicant's last fully-funded sabbatical, then total years of service to CPP. If ties still exist, they are broken by lot.

After the FAC interviewed the professional leave committee, there were some concerns that were discussed with the "Outstanding" category of the Northridge Model. Specifically, proposals would still have to be ranked against each other to distinguish the "Outstanding" proposals from the merely "Meritorious." Hence, after the FAC met with the Professional Leave Committee, there was some concern that the Northridge model may not sufficiently address the concerns about ranking detailed above.

Thus, the Faculty Affairs Committee also considered the "No-Ranking model," which does not involve any process of ranking. The merit of proposals will be determined solely by whether they meet the stated criteria. Under the No-Ranking model, the Professional Leave Committee shall recommend to the Provost that all meritorious proposals be approved for sabbatical and no proposals would be ranked as outstanding. If institutional support for sabbatical leave is insufficient for funding all "Meritorious" proposals, the committee's suggestions to the Provost are determined by time since applicant's last fully-funded sabbatical, then total years of service to CPP. If ties still exist, they are broken by lot.

To help decide if the No-ranking model or the Northridge model should be considered at CPP, the FAC surveyed all tenured and probationary faculty for their opinions on the current model, the Northridge model, and the No-ranking Model. The results from 265 tenure-line faculty revealed that only 29.5% of the respondents liked the current system and 55.6% disliked it. Alternatively, 57% of respondents reported they liked the Northridge model and 29.8% disliked it. Finally, 69.5% of respondents said they liked No-Ranking model and 23.6% disliking it. Furthermore, when asked to rank the three models from first to third place, of the 258 faculty that answered this question, the current model was rated as first place by 22.1% of the respondents and third place by 55.4% of respondents. The Northridge model was ranked first by 29.8% respondents and ranked third by 12.8% of respondents. Finally, the No-ranking model was rated first place by 48.1% of respondents and third place by 31.4% of respondents.

### **Recommendations**

Given that faculty appear to dislike the current model and have the strongest positive feelings toward the No-ranking model, the FAC recommends the University adopt the changes to Policy 1374 to reflect the No-Ranking Model.