Guidelines for Academic Leaves of Absence for
Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty in the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts

A tenured or tenure-track faculty member with a specific plan for creative activity/scholarly research may apply for a year’s leave at half pay or a semester’s leave at full pay after completing at least twelve semesters of teaching since the previous leave or since arriving at Washington University. Taking a paid leave obligates the faculty member to return to Washington University for at least one year.

The Sam Fox School values creative activity/research and teaching. We recognize that creative activity and scholarly research sometimes requires an extended period free of teaching and other obligations. The faculty member who takes a leave returns to the university refreshed and revitalized, having accomplished significant research or having realized a major creative project. The university benefits from the fresh outlook that is brought back to the classroom and the campus, as well as from the recognition in the wider community that creative and scholarly accomplishment by our faculty brings to us.

At the same time, we owe it to our students and to our colleagues to have our faculty available on campus and in the classroom. The possibility of taking sabbatical leave is “earned” by time spent on campus and in the classroom. The following govern leaves in Sam Fox School.

1. Options for Leaves with Pay: Paid leaves of absence (leaves with salary paid by the university) are normally granted as either:

   A. a full-year leave with half salary from the university, or

   B. a one-semester leave with full salary from the university

2. Outside Funding: Faculty are encouraged to seek grants or other sources of external funding that will provide the other half salary to complement the half salary from the university during a full-year leave. Such grants may be paid directly to the faculty member by the granting agency, or they may be received by the university and paid to the faculty member by the university, depending on the policy of the granting agency. However, if university funding is used, the total of the university funding and the outside funding may not exceed the faculty member’s regular full-time academic-year salary.

3. Leave Eligibility Requirements: A sabbatical leave may be granted on request of a faculty member, subject to approval by their College dean and the dean of the Sam Fox School provided the following requirements are met:

   A. The faculty member has been in residence teaching at Washington University for at least six full academic years (twelve semesters) since a previous sabbatical leave, or if this is the first such leave, since joining this Faculty.

   B. The faculty member has a specific plan for creative work, research or other scholarly activity related to his/her field and position at Washington University.

   C. The proposed timing of the leave will not cause significant problems with the program or function of the faculty member’s home department or area.

   D. The faculty member will return to regular faculty status at Washington University following the leave. The faculty member must return to the Sam Fox School for at least the number of semesters he or she was on paid leave. Failure to do so will require the faculty member to reimburse Washington University the amount of gross compensation (including benefits and other payments and contributions) paid by the University during the leave of absence.
4. Exception for Tenure-Track Faculty: The Sam Fox School recognizes that a leave during the probationary period, prior to the seventh year, may be particularly valuable for a tenure-track faculty member. Requirement A in Paragraph 3, above, may be waived for a tenure-track faculty member who has completed at least three years at Washington University if the dean of their respective College and the dean of Sam Fox School agree that the person is making good progress toward earning tenure and that the early leave of absence is likely to advance the person's creative and scholarly research. Thus a tenure-track faculty member may have his/her first sabbatical leave as early as the fourth year in the Sam Fox School.

5. Timing of Leave: Leaves are not automatic entitlements every seven years. The timing of leaves depends both upon the creative activity/research program of the faculty member and the needs of the College and Sam Fox School. Deans must balance legitimate requests for leaves against the requirements of the College’s curriculum and the needs of its graduate students. The Sam Fox School cannot permit too many leaves in a College during a single academic year. Similarly, leaves cannot be automatically taken whenever a faculty member receives an external grant that would support a leave. Faculty members should inform their dean in advance of applying for grants that would require leaves, and deans must consider how such a leave could be accommodated within the College.

6. Non-accumulation of Leave Eligibility: While leaves of absence, under appropriate circumstances, may be taken as often as every seven years, for many faculty members they are less frequent. Eligibility to apply for a leave does not accumulate; e.g., a faculty member who has had no leave for twelve years is still only eligible for a one-semester leave at full pay or a one-year leave with half pay.

7. Timing of Application for Leave: It is essential that the dean of each College be able to plan in advance for leaves by their faculty. Accordingly, faculty expecting any leave [with or without pay from the university] must request permission from the dean of their College no later than November 1st prior to the academic year of the leave. The Sam Fox School recognizes that external grants or research arrangements may not be firmly set a year in advance, and thus the request for leave may be tentative. The formal application for any leave of absence in the Sam Fox School must be submitted to the office of the Dean of the Sam Fox School no later than January 1st to be considered for the subsequent academic year.

8. Formal Application for a Leave: Applications for any leave must include the following:

A. a completed Sam Fox School Leave of Absence Application Form, which includes the date the applicant joined the Washington University faculty and a list of all leaves since then, including the extent of university contribution to salary during each leave;

B. the dean of the College’s endorsement of the creative activity/research plan and statement of the effect of the leave on the College (N.B.— usually this is included on the form specified in 8 A, above, but may require more detailed information depending upon the circumstances of the department):

1. Who else in the College may be on leave?
2. Will the department need temporary faculty for essential courses, or will its regular faculty cover the courses, or will it be acceptable to omit courses?
3. What will be the impact on graduate students?

C. a one-page synopsis of the faculty member’s preliminary plan for research or creative activity while on leave, and the understanding that the faculty member will submit to the dean of their College and to the dean of the Sam Fox School a final 2-3 page report documenting their activities and results upon completion of the leave.

9. Leaves without Pay: Faculty members may take semester or full-year leaves without pay, subject to approval by their College dean and the dean of the Sam Fox School. Such a leave does not replace a paid leave of absence, but neither does the period of such a leave count toward the twelve semesters of teaching and residence required prior to a paid leave of absence, e.g. if one had a sabbatical leave during the academic year 2000-01, then the next such leave could be during 2007-08 provided the intervening six academic years are spent in residence with normal teaching; but if a one-year leave without pay were taken during that period, then the sabbatical year would be postponed until 2008-09.

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