TO: Karen Gipson, Chair, ECS/UAS
FROM: Gayle R. Davis, Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
SUBJECT: Sabbatical Policy
DATE: June 9, 2014
C: Robert Smart, Vice Provost for Research Administration
   Tonya Parker, Vice Chair, ECS/UAS
   Merritt Taylor, Chair, Research and Development Committee
   ECS Members
   Lisa Surman Haight, Office of the Provost

I received your memo in which you forward the University Academic Senate support for the recommendation of the Research and Development Committee to revise the sabbatical leave policy. After careful review of the submitted material, I concur with the recommendation but offer clarifying language in various locations throughout the policy. The revised language is included on the attached pages with track changes noted. With these changes, I am pleased to recommend the proposed *Administrative Manual* changes to the Board of Trustees at the July 11, 2014 meeting. The policy has a proposed implementation date of Fall 2014.

I would like to offer my appreciation to faculty governance and especially the Research and Development Committee for the outstanding work they did to revise our sabbatical policy. It now reflects the quality proposals we seek in sabbatical leaves and more accurately defines past practices to make them policy. I believe this is a good example of how shared governance can work – and work well.
Recommended Changes for Board of Trustees Approval
Administrative Manual

Chapter 4 – Section 2.30

4. Sabbatical Leave. A sabbatical is defined as a period of release to provide an opportunity for the faculty member to learn, develop or enhance understanding or skills that will improve the applicant’s teaching, scholarly/creative and/or professional competence beyond their normal workload (as described in Section D). Sabbaticals are a part of the university’s responsibility in relation to faculty growth and development. Such leaves contribute to the accomplishment of these ends by enabling the faculty to undertake specific, planned activities involving study, research, or creative work of mutual benefit to the applicant and to Grand Valley State University. The providing of resources necessary for sabbatical leaves is a high priority for the University.

A. Eligibility.
By March 15 each year the Human Resources Office will provide the academic deans with the names of the faculty members eligible to apply at the beginning of the Fall semester. The deans then send a notice to each eligible person as a reminder, indicating sources of assistance and relevant information.

Subject to the provisions listed below (Section J), sabbatical leave may be granted after six years of service. Such leave may not be awarded to the same person more than once in seven years and leave time shall not be cumulative. Up to two years of service prior to serving in a tenure track faculty position at the rank of instructor or above, or its equivalent, at GVSU or other accredited institutions of higher education may count toward fulfillment of the eligibility period. Only tenured Grand Valley faculty members are eligible to receive a sabbatical.

If a current full-time faculty member previously served part time, then their sabbatical will be delayed until the equivalent of six years of full-time service has been accrued. A part-time faculty member is eligible for a sabbatical after six years of service at or above their current appointment rate; a part-time faculty member will receive their current appointment rate while on sabbatical. In the case of the faculty member on leave from a faculty position to hold an administrative position at Grand Valley, the provisions of Section 2.11 apply.

In computing years of service for the purpose of establishing eligibility, periods of vacation leave and periods of sick leave with salary shall be included; periods of leaves of absence other than vacation leave and sick leave will not ordinarily be included.

B. Application and Approval Process.
1. Applicants shall electronically submit the completed proposal via the sabbatical website. The completed proposal will then move through the review process.
2. At each level of review, the proposals shall be evaluated with reference to the objectives and criteria in Sections D and E. The applicant shall be notified, in writing, of any negative recommendation, along with an explanation, within three (3) working days of the date of transmission of the notice.

3. Applicants whose proposals have been rejected may appeal to the next level of review within three (3) working days of their receipt of the reasons for rejection. This appeal must be in the form of a written statement and include the reasons that the proposal meets the objectives, criteria, and format in Sections D and E. If the next level of review wishes to overturn a rejection on appeal, their written statement must provide an explanation addressing the reasons for reversing the previous decision of rejection by the previous level of review, including how the proposal meets the requirements outlined in Sections D and E.

- If the proposal is approved on appeal, a written explanation of the reasons for the approval will be sent to the previous level(s) of review and to the applicant; a written record of both the positive and negative recommendations will accompany the proposal when it is forwarded to the next level of review.

- If the proposal is rejected at two stages of review (Unit, College, Dean, or University Sabbatical Review Committee) on appeal, it ends for that academic year and may not be considered by higher levels of review.

- All appeals of a negative recommendation by the unit or college sabbatical review committee must be decided by November 1.

- All appeals of a negative recommendation by the dean must be decided by November 20.

- All appeals of a negative recommendation by the University Sabbatical Review Committee must be decided by December 10.

4. Timetable for Review Process

**September 1:** applicants submit proposals to the sabbatical website.

**September 15:** Units forward recommended proposals (including revisions or amendments, if any) to College Sabbatical Review Committee; no further revisions to proposals are permitted. The sabbatical proposals will be classified in tiers (Excellent, Good, Satisfactory and Not recommended) using the standard evaluation instrument by the appropriate College Sabbatical Review Committee based upon objectives and criteria outlined in Sections D and E.

**October 15:** College Sabbatical Review Committee forwards recommended proposals by tiers to the Dean.
November 1: Dean forwards recommended proposals to the University Sabbatical Review Committee. The Dean may choose to deny not recommend any proposal.

November 20: University Sabbatical Review Committee forwards recommendations to Provost. The University Sabbatical Review Committee will consider but are not bound by the tier rankings of the College Sabbatical Review Committee. The University Sabbatical Review Committee will classify the proposals in tiers (Excellent, Good, Satisfactory, and Not Recommend) using the standard evaluation instrument based upon objectives and criteria outlined in Sections D and E.

December 1: Provost forwards decisions to the President and informs Deans and University Sabbatical Review Committee. The Provost will inform the Board of Trustees of the titles and authors of approved proposals.

C. Remuneration.
Faculty shall receive full salary when on leave one academic semester and fifty percent of base salary when on leave two academic semesters (or up to three academic semesters for faculty on a 12 month appointment). Applicants for sabbatical leave must specify other salaries, grants, fellowships, or financial support they expect to receive (or do receive) during the period of the leave. The combined incomes from such sources and the sabbatical grant shall not exceed the faculty member's normal salary plus expenses incurred because of the sabbatical leave. The recipient is expected to return to a regular appointment with Grand Valley for at least one academic year (or twelve months in the case of faculty on twelve-month appointments) after the sabbatical period.

D. Objectives.
A sabbatical proposal shall concern a significant problem, area, or issue in the field of study and show promise that it will enhance the teaching, scholarly/creative and/or professional capabilities of the applicant. The scope of the sabbatical project should require the faculty member to have one or two (or three in the case of faculty with 12-month contracts) semesters of continuous release from normal teaching and service responsibilities. The sabbatical project should not be accomplishable in shorter intervals with other forms of assistance available. A request for sabbatical leave must be accompanied by a well-developed proposal for use of the leave time. The proposal shall conform to one or more of the objectives listed below:

1. Promise of a significant contribution to a new or existing subject under study or problem undertaken.

2. Expansion of skills or application of research that deepens or extends the applicant’s professional capabilities.

3. Development of new capabilities for teaching through research or creative endeavors.
4. A planned effort to retrain professionally, in a manner appropriate to the applicant’s discipline and the unit’s and university’s needs.

E. **Criteria and Format.**
   The sabbatical requests must address the following:

1. A descriptive title for the project.

2. Conceptual Focus – the proposal needs a clear conceptual focus and must be explicit about the desired results or outcomes of the project. In addition, the applicant must state which of the objectives listed in Section D are being addressed in the proposal.

3. Background and significance of project – the proposal must clearly express how the project represents significant scholarship, research or creative exploration within the context of the applicant’s discipline, and explain how the sabbatical fits into the applicant’s overall teaching, scholarly/creative and/or professional endeavors.

4. Relevant preparation – the proposal must demonstrate that detailed planning and specific preparation has already been done toward the successful completion of the sabbatical project.

5. Project Plan – the proposal must outline specifically how the sabbatical project will be conducted.

6. Timeline – the proposal must detail a clear timeline for proposed activities during the sabbatical.

7. Benefit to one’s own or other units – the proposal must connect the sabbatical project to other aspects of the applicant’s work at the University.

8. The proposal shall not exceed ten (10) pages, excluding references and other supporting documents.

9. The prior sabbatical report must be submitted with the proposal as well as any results completed if promised after the prior sabbatical.

10. A condensed *Curriculum Vitae* (not to exceed 5 pages in length) focused on the applicant’s scholarly or creative accomplishments most relevant to the sabbatical application must be submitted with the proposal.

11. The Unit Head must provide a summary of the unit’s discussion with vote results, in addition to verification that requested amendments have been made (this can should be submitted electronically via the sabbatical website).
F. Selection Process When Not All Recommended Sabbaticals Can Be Awarded.

There are two circumstances when not all recommended sabbaticals can be awarded: (1) inadequate funding, and (2) staffing problems.

1. Inadequate Funding.

In the event that the University anticipates that the number of recommended sabbaticals requires funds greater than the amount available for support, the Provost will explain the financial situation to the Chair of the Faculty Salary and Budget Committee and the Chair of the University Sabbatical Review Committee. The Chair of the Faculty Salary and Budget Committee and the Chair of the University Sabbatical Review Committee may respond to the Provost within seven (7) calendar days. The Provost will select proposals for funding based on the final classifications provided by the University Sabbatical Review Committee and his/her own review.

Applicants who are not awarded sabbaticals because of inadequate funding should reapply to be reviewed the following year.

2. Staffing Problems

The recommendation not to award a sabbatical because of staffing problems will be made by the Dean after consultation with the appropriate unit head. Applicants who are not awarded sabbaticals because of staffing problems will receive a written explanation from the Dean. If an applicant’s recommended sabbatical is delayed because of staffing problems, the applicant will be given priority for the following year, assuming the applicant’s proposal has been recommended and approved by the Provost. If the applicant makes there are alterations in the sabbatical proposal or delays beyond one year, then the applicant must seek approval of alterations as outlined in Section H. A faculty member whose sabbatical is delayed because of staffing problems will not be required to wait an additional 6 years from the later date before becoming eligible to apply for another sabbatical, but will be eligible to apply 6 years from the previous eligibility year provided an approved final report is on file for the delayed sabbatical.

G. Delayed Sabbaticals.

An applicant whose sabbatical was awarded but must be delayed for reasons other than staffing problems will not have to resubmit their proposal for review and will automatically be recommended for a sabbatical the following year without reapplication or review of their sabbatical, provided the project has not altered (see Section H). A faculty member whose sabbatical is delayed will not be required to wait an additional 6 years from the later date before becoming eligible to apply for another sabbatical, but will be eligible to apply 6 years from the delayed eligibility year of the delayed sabbatical provided an approved final report is on file for the delayed sabbatical.

H. Alteration of Project.

If a faculty member finds it necessary to alter the original project approved for the sabbatical leave by the Provost, then three months before the sabbatical would have commenced the faculty member must submit a revised proposal to his/her College Dean.
This deadline may be waived in unusual circumstances by the Dean. If the Dean supports the revised proposal, the Dean will submit the revised proposal to the University Sabbatical Review Committee for special review and approval. If the proposed alteration is judged to significantly change or weaken the spirit of the original proposal, then the appropriate Dean or the University Sabbatical Review Committee may recommend to the Provost that the proposed alteration not be accepted. In this event, the sabbatical proposal would enter the standard review process (as outlined in Section B). In the event that an alteration is proposed after the sabbatical has already commenced, the University Sabbatical Review Committee will recommend a course of action to the Provost. Depending on the nature and the extent of the alteration, the university may take action as it deems appropriate, including repayment to the university for time spent on sabbatical.

I. Cancellation of Project.
If a faculty member decides not to take a sabbatical leave which has been approved by the Provost, then the faculty member must inform the Dean of the appointing unit at least three months before the sabbatical would have commenced. If the faculty member cancels a sabbatical leave later than three months before the start of the leave, the Dean shall be free to deny the request. This deadline may be waived in unusual circumstances.

J. Final Report and Dissemination.
Each faculty member returning from sabbatical leave shall prepare a final report of the sabbatical activities and accomplishments in accordance with the guidelines on the sabbatical website of the sabbatical activities and accomplishments. The faculty member must submit the report electronically via the sabbatical website. This final report shall be filed no later than the end of the first semester after return to campus and shall include an account of the financial remuneration received during the sabbatical leave. The Provost will review the final report. If the Provost does not approve the final report as submitted, the faculty member may revise and resubmit it. The Provost will notify the faculty member, the Dean, and the Human Resources Office whether or not the final report has been approved. Eligibility for the next sabbatical leave shall be calculated from the academic year in which the Provost approves the final report. A copy of the approved sabbatical report will automatically be sent electronically to the faculty member’s Unit Head, Dean, the Provost, the President, the University Sabbatical Review Committee, and the library University Archives.

Faculty members are also required to participate in a University Wide Sabbatical Showcase in the year following their sabbaticals or in the year after the final report is approved.

K. The College and University Sabbatical Review Committees.
Each College Personnel Committee or other designated committee will serve as the College Sabbatical Review Committee.

The University Sabbatical Review Committee is a subcommittee of the Research and Development Committee. The University Sabbatical Review Committee membership comprises seven standing members from the Research and Development Committee (of the
seven no more than three members from a single college, including the chair), one representative from each of the College Sabbatical Review Committees, one representative from university libraries, and the Executive Director, Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence (Ex officio, non-voting). The chair of the Research and Development Committee will serve as the chair of the University Sabbatical Review Committee. No member of the University Sabbatical Review Committee can vote or participate in discussion about his/her own sabbatical proposal. The University Sabbatical Review Committee reports to the Research and Development Committee, and the Research and Development Committee reports to the Provost.

The University Sabbatical Review Committee shall be responsible for reviewing sabbatical leave policies and procedures and shall recommend changes, when needed, to the UAS for feedback and endorsement. It shall also facilitate ways in which returning faculty can make new knowledge and insights available to Grand Valley State University.