

## **Task Force on Sabbaticals**

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### **The Task Force's Charge**

On 24 October, 2007 the president of the Faculty Assembly charged this task force:

“...to develop criteria to be used for evaluating sabbatical applications submitted at Ramapo College beginning in Fall 2008.”

We met weekly through December 2007 and drafted the following recommendations.

### **I. The Composition and Purpose of the All-College Committee**

1. We recommend that evaluation of all sabbatical applications be done by an all-college committee (hereafter “the committee”) comprised of six tenured faculty members: one from each of the Schools and one from the Library. To this shall be added one representative of the union and one representative of the college administration, whose responsibility is to monitor the procedures of the committee, and who shall not be any person to whom the committee normally reports. The union and administration representatives shall be *ex-officio*, non-voting members. The total membership of the committee shall be eight persons.
2. We recommend that the Units ensure that at least one member of the committee is “under-10” (i.e., has been employed by the college for fewer than eleven years.)
3. The committee shall review all sabbatical and SBR applications.
4. Prior to considering any applications, the committee shall decide whether or not to employ confidential balloting procedures. The method of voting decided shall apply to all applicants.
5. All awards for which money or time are allocated from the fund designated for sabbaticals must be evaluated according to these criteria.

## II. Criteria for the Evaluation of Applications

We recommend that sabbatical applications be evaluated according to three criteria: **Merit**, **Track Record**, and as a **Reward for Service**.

### 1. Merit

The applicant should demonstrate the merit of his/her proposal and the committee should evaluate its merit by examining the following questions:

#### a) Substantiality

How substantive is this proposal? Does the applicant propose to do a work of demonstrable importance?

The substantiality of the proposal should be endorsed by at least one letter from a Ramapo colleague in a related or comparable field. That letter should then be endorsed by the applicant's Unit, by whatever procedure the Unit deems appropriate. Additional letters from scholars outside Ramapo college are optional.

The applicant should also justify the time requested, vis-a-vis the substantiality of the project.

#### b) Feasibility

How feasible is this proposal? Has the applicant demonstrated that the proposed work can and will be completed in the time requested?

The committee may also consider that some projects are time-sensitive, and may be prioritized if they could only be completed in the period requested by the applicant.

#### c) Demonstrated Benefit to Ramapo College

Has the applicant illustrated the ways in which the completion of his/her project will ultimately benefit the college? These benefits might be demonstrated through research significant to one's field, through enhancing one's teaching, or through service to the college.

### 2. Track Record

#### a) Past Scholarship

The applicant should include his/her CV, providing a comprehensive summary of past scholarship, as defined by the Faculty Handbook.

#### b) Prior Support

In the event that the applicant has received prior institutional support, the committee shall evaluate the demonstrated success of those projects. Reports on same should be appended by the applicant.

### 3. Reward for Service

The committee should consider the applicant's exceptional service to the college, including but not limited to: search committees, accreditation, assessment, task forces, Middle States, and demonstrated contributions to major college initiatives or college governance.

**III. The Application Package**

The applicant's package should include:

1. A letter describing the project, explaining the need for a sabbatical, and emphasizing why this application meets the criteria, as explained above.
2. The candidate's CV.
3. A report summarizing prior institutional support and the demonstrated success of the projects thus supported.
4. A letter from one Ramapo colleague in a related or comparable field, regarding the substantiality of the proposal. This letter should be endorsed in some form by the applicant's Unit. Letters from outside Ramapo are optional.

#### **IV. Further Considerations**

##### **1. Ranking**

We recommend that the committee rank its applicants, from 1 through the number of sabbaticals available, with a supplementary ranking of a further five candidates who would qualify in the event that additional sabbatical opportunities were subsequently or unexpectedly made available by the college.

##### **2. Full-Year Sabbaticals**

In extraordinary cases, a full-year sabbatical may be required by the nature of project. In such cases, the applicant should demonstrate that only a full year would suffice to complete his/her project.

##### **3. Deferment**

A sabbatical should be taken in the time for which the applicant applied. The applicant should not be permitted to defer or “save” the sabbatical for use at a later time.

#### **Conclusions**

Given the limited support by the state, the size of our faculty and competition for sabbaticals, we recognize that sabbaticals will be rare, treasured, and hotly contested. It is crucial, therefore, for the college administration to commit to funding all sabbatical opportunities provided to Ramapo by the state.

One of the issues the task force notes is a lack of mentoring at the college, and the resulting inevitable unevenness in the quality of applications. Now that sabbaticals will be the object of heavy competition, we strongly suggest that the college dedicate resources to appropriate career development in the interest of a fair competitive environment.