

## FACULTY SENATE

## Faculty Senate Statement on Sabbatical Leaves December 2019

The value of short-term leaves and sabbatical leaves to colleges and universities and to individual faculty members can hardly be overestimated. Such leaves can bring new ideas and best practices to the institution. They rejuvenate faculty members and sharpen their skills. They are standard practice at most institutions of higher education.

The history of short-term leaves and sabbaticals at Snow College has had ups and downs. There has occasionally been a budget to fund sabbaticals, but recently that has not been the case. There have been precious few leaves or sabbaticals granted in the past two decades—they could be counted on two hands. There was even an understanding among some faculty that a moratorium on sabbaticals had been imposed by the Faculty Senate in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008, although few of the current senators were aware of this.

The old 2004 Advancement and Tenure Policy outlined a process for faculty members to apply for leaves, but that section was not included in the new A&T policy passed earlier this year. The intent is to shift the evaluation of the merits of applications for leave or sabbatical to the Faculty Development Committee. A new policy outlining this structure and process is being drafted.

All of these issues were recently brought to the attention of the Senate (again) by an application for leave that was submitted a couple of months ago. Without a governing policy, without an oversight committee, without funding, and with mixed understanding about a moratorium, the Senate did not take action on that application. However, we officially lifted whatever moratorium may have been in effect. We hope to have a new policy in place in a couple of months and we anticipate soliciting applications by the end of spring semester 2020.

However, the peer review by the Faculty Development Committee will only evaluate an application on its merits—its value to the college and the faculty member; administration at multiple levels will have to be actively involved in the logistics of making meritorious applications actually happen. That is, a vote of support by the Faculty Development Committee does not automatically generate or access resources to make the leave possible. We acknowledge and are grateful for the administration's understanding of the importance of these leaves. We strongly encourage the administration to make funding for these leaves a priority.

1) June ///num

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