

MSP/FSU 2007-2010 Contract Proposal

Why A Full-Year Sabbatical at 75% Pay Provision is Good for the University

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The MSP/FSU has proposed that members of the bargaining unit would have the option of applying for a full-year sabbatical at 75% of their pay. We are convinced that this sabbatical policy is good for the university for a number of several reasons.

First and foremost, it would provide faculty the added time necessary to complete major research projects. Research demands and expectations are growing, and yet faculty are burdened with increasing duties, due to the decline in the number of colleagues and support staff. This new policy would, by making clear the administration's support for research, dramatically improve faculty morale and aid in faculty recruiting and retention. This policy would be a statement that the university truly believes in the goal it repeats time and again: to make UMass into a top-ranked research university system.

The beauty of this proposal is that it would achieve these goals at a cost **savings** to the university. As the attached spreadsheet demonstrates, in virtually all cases -- whether few or many people take the full-year option, and whether the university hires adjunct faculty to teach some or all of the faculty member's courses -- the university would realize a substantial savings from having some faculty take a reduction in salary in order to pursue their research for a full year.

What we propose here is, contrary to a commonly-heard misunderstanding, is widespread at major research universities, including many of our peer public research universities.

How A Full Year, 75% Pay Sabbatical Policy Will Yield Cost Savings for the University

Assumptions in Estimating the Cost of this new Sabbatical Option

- On average, 100 faculty per year take sabbatical.¹
- The vast majority -- more than 8 in 10 -- at present take one semester at full pay, even though the contract allows a full year at half pay.²
- The average salary of people taking sabbaticals is around \$90,000.³

¹ At the Amherst campus, from 2004-05 through 2006-07, 265 members took sabbatical; at the Boston campus, from 2004-05 to 2006-07, 51 took sabbatical leave.

² At the Amherst campus, of the 265 who had sabbatical leaves in the past three years, 218 (or 82%) took the one semester, full pay option. The breakdown was as follows:

- 2 assistant professors on full-year, half-pay leaves
- 23 associate professors on full-year, half-pay leaves
- 79 associate professors on one-semester, full-pay leaves
- 22 professors on full-year, half-pay leaves
- 139 professors on one-semester, full-pay leaves

- If a full year sabbatical, at 75% pay were offered, a substantial number would take that option.
- Part-time instructors to cover courses not taught by faculty would be paid \$6000, the rate common for the Five Colleges, and what is proposed by the MSP in our proposals.

Scenarios under the new benefit:

At the present average -- about 80 one-semester, full-pay, and 20 full-year, half pay sabbaticals per year -- the university is effectively only paying for 90 full-year salaries (80 are paid for both semesters, and 20 are paid for one).

If the numbers switch, and now 80% of those 100 faculty take the full year sabbatical, and only 20% take the one semester full-pay option, the university would pay only 80 full salaries for the year (20 at full-pay and 80 faculty at 75% salary, which equals 60 full salaries (80 x .75). Thus the net reduction in full faculty salaries paid by the university is 10. Using the average pay of \$90,000, the savings to the university for just that year is \$900,000.

In virtually every scenario the university would save money from offering this benefit.

Paying to Cover Courses

Naturally, the university would want to have part-time instructors teach some of the courses usually offered by the faculty on sabbatical.

If 60 additional faculty took a full year leave (that is, 80 out of 100 faculty took one year leaves, in place of the 20 out of 100 who now do so), that would leave up to 120 additional courses uncovered (although in reality a number of those faculty probably have course relief from various administrative duties or from research grants). For the sake of argument, we can estimate that the university would want to cover half of the courses normally taught by those faculty.⁵ If the university chose to hire instructors to teach half of those courses, the cost would be (using the \$6000 per course rate) \$360,000, about a third of the \$900,000 reduction in university salary expense. The net gain to the university is \$540,000. Even if the university replaced all of the courses not taught because of the new policy (which is highly unlikely, as the administration emphatically does not provide funds to replace all of the courses not taught due to current sabbaticals), the cost to the university would be \$720,000 -- leaving a net savings to the university of \$180,000.

There is a savings for almost every ratio of faculty taking full and one-semester leaves. Indeed, the more faculty who take the full-year sabbatical, the greater the savings for the university.

³ 61% of people taking sabbatical at the Amherst campus over the past three years were full professors, with an average salary of \$105,434. See http://www.umass.edu/oapa/publications/factbooks/06-07/facultystaff/FB_fs_04_2006.pdf. The rest (save for 2 assistant professors) were associate professors, with an average salary over those three years of \$83,196.

⁵ This 50% ratio is high. There is no requirement at present that the Dean or Provost will fund replacement faculty to teach courses of faculty on sabbatical.