To: College of Engineering Faculty  
From: Robert E. Peck, Dean  
Subject: College Guidelines on Sabbatical Leaves  
Date: August 1, 2013

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify the policies of the College and University concerning sabbatical leaves and to provide some guidance in preparing a successful application. The sabbatical leave program is intended to invigorate faculty scholarship, with the expectation that the activities will benefit both teaching and research and thereby strengthen the University. As the single largest development program available for tenured faculty, it represents a substantial continuing investment on the part of the university. As a consequence, it must be managed wisely, and all sabbatical-leave requests must be evaluated carefully to ensure that their expected outcomes are consistent with the purposes described in Attachment 1.

The criteria described in Attachment 1 for evaluating sabbatical leave requests can be summarized as follows:

1. Quality and potential impact of proposed scholarship;  
2. Likelihood of success (capacity of applicant to carry out the proposed project);  
3. Probable enhancement of the applicant’s effectiveness; and,  
4. Potential value to the academic program(s) of the department/institution;

Along with a project narrative and plan, each sabbatical request should state the goals or outcomes expected from the work conducted during the leave, showing clearly how the evaluation criteria have been addressed.

Although there are exceptions to the norm, the College recognizes that there is particular value in faculty spending a substantial part of the sabbatical leave away from campus. It ensures a break from the campus routine, provides fresh perspectives that cannot normally be obtained in the course of normal academic duties on campus, and enhances the reputation of the institution through increased contact with external institutions. A letter of invitation from the host institution must accompany the application. At the same time, it is important for the applicant to address how their on-going research programs and graduate student advisees will be sustained during the leave.

Applicants for sabbatical leaves should recognize that it is not always possible to approve all sound sabbatical requests without compromising the effectiveness of a program. In addition to the quality of the proposal and the probability of its success according to the criteria listed earlier, budgetary considerations may necessitate a department to recommend approval of the sabbatical leave only if the department’s program of teaching and advisement will be maintained during the applicant’s absence.

Finally, the outcomes of a sabbatical leave provide important feedback on the success of the sabbatical leave program generally, and specifically must be used to make the administration of the program as effective as possible. Where information concerning an applicant’s use of prior sabbatical leaves is available, it should be used as an indicator of the probability of success for a pending proposal. Reports from the immediately preceding sabbatical leave should be attached to each new request. This will ensure the quality of the faculty development process and assist in its improvement over time.