

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE  
The University of Oklahoma (Norman campus)  
December 14, 2020, 3:30 p.m., via Zoom**

**(<https://oklahoma.zoom.us/j/96734515931?pwd=dHI1Q1lxOEZaXZlY0pQSIRQMWR4dz09>)**

*Please mute your microphone until you have been recognized by the Chair to speak.  
If you would like to speak, please ask using the Chat window, which will help coordinate discussion.  
Please be advised that the meeting will be recorded, as will comments in Chat.*

**AGENDA**

1. Approval of the Senate Journal for the regular session of November 9, 2020.
2. Announcement:  
The following faculty will serve on the 2020-21 Academic Program Review Committee: Karlos Hill (African & African American Studies), Somik Ghosh (Construction Science), Mike Bemben (Health & Exercise Science), Marilyn Byrd (Human Relations), Elizabeth Pober (Interior Design), Leehu Loon (Landscape Architecture), Charles Warnken (Regional & City Planning), and Julie Miller-Cribbs (Social Work). The units to be reviewed are Political Science, Religious Studies, Sociology, and the Honors College.
3. Senate Chair's Report (will be made available prior to the meeting).
4. Remarks by Center for Faculty Excellence Director Megan Elwood Madden.
5. Remarks by Associate Vice President for Budget and Finance Stewart Berkinshaw.
6. For Action:
  - a. Faculty Compensation Committee Proposal re: COVID-19 Disrupted Sabbaticals (attached)
  - b. Faculty Compensation Committee Proposal re: Faculty Remuneration Policy (attached)
  - c. Faculty Compensation Committee Proposal re: Additional Protections for Faculty from COVID-19 Related Health Costs and Disability (attached)
7. New business (any matter not known about or that could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time the agenda was prepared).

Join Zoom Meeting <https://oklahoma.zoom.us/j/96734515931?pwd=dHI1Q1lxOEZaXZlY0pQSIRQMWR4dz09>

*There is a 300-person limit on this Zoom session. We will also utilize the 'waiting room' function.  
Senators and invited guests will be admitted initially, followed by OU faculty/staff/students, then the public. Members of the media may email the Senate at [facsen@ou.edu](mailto:facsen@ou.edu) prior to the meeting to expedite their admission.*

# COVID-19 Disrupted Sabbaticals

**Proposed by the Faculty Senate Compensation (and Benefits) Committee  
Passed FSCB by a vote of 3 yea, 2 nay on September 8, 2020**

## **Summary**

The OU Faculty handbook states: “Sabbatical leaves of absence are among the most important means by which an institution's academic program is strengthened, a faculty member's teaching effectiveness enhanced, and scholarly usefulness enlarged. The major purpose is to provide an opportunity for continued professional growth and new or renewed intellectual achievement through study, research, writing, and training.”

Faculty on sabbatical that extended through spring of 2020 experienced several unique disruptions that could not have been foreseen when they completed their application. These disruptions involved data collection with community research partners such as schools; differential accessibility to state and federal funding agencies experiencing mandatory shutdowns; access to research laboratory facilities and supports; and unexpected increases in caretaking (child, partner, elder). As a result, faculty on a sabbatical that extended through Spring 2020 have been unable to realize the benefits of uninterrupted time and focus on furthering their scholarship.

## **Issue: Timeline for Sabbatical Eligibility**

The current policy indicates that after six years of service that eligible faculty may apply for sabbatical leave.

## **Proposal: Amended time for Sabbatical Eligibility**

The Faculty Senate is requesting that the University allows for waivers from the current policy for those who were on a yearlong 2019-2020 or spring 2020 sabbatical during the 2019-2020 academic year. Waivers could include:

- Being eligible for submitting a sabbatical application after three years.
- Course and service releases over a period of time that is negotiated between the faculty and their unit Chair or Committee A rather than a dedicated sabbatical period.

# Faculty Remuneration Policy

Proposed by the Faculty Senate Compensation (and Benefits) Committees  
Passed FSCBC by a vote of 5 yea and 0 nay on September 8, 2020

## Summary

Currently, OU Norman campus faculty may earn up to 25% of their full-time base pay. OUHSC and OU Law does not have the same restrictions as the same professional privilege is not allowed for the academic professionals on the Norman campus. While the policy's intention appears to encourage the faculty member to focus on their primary job, this one-size fits all policy, unnecessarily prohibits productive faculty from additional compensation beyond the 25% threshold for either teaching, research or consulting.

## Issues: Inequity and inflexibility in additional compensation policy

Currently, 5.7.2 of the OU faculty handbook reads: After prior written arrangement, faculty members may engage in professional activities for extra remuneration (from within the University or from outside sources or in any combination of the two) to a maximum of 25% of their professional effort.

## Proposal

The Faculty Senate is requesting that the University amend the policy to the following:

- After prior written arrangement, faculty members may engage in professional activities for extra remuneration (from within the University or from outside sources or in any combination of the two) beyond the 25% given they are *meeting expectations* for their academic units annual performance review.

# **Additional Protections for Faculty from COVID-19 Related Health Costs and Disability**

**Proposed by the Faculty Senate Compensation (and Benefits) Committee  
Passed FSCB by a vote of 4 yea, 1 nay on September 8, 2020**

## **Summary**

A number of recent publications have shown that patients who contract COVID-19 may suffer prolonged illness lasting several months, even if they were previously healthy and had no pre-existing conditions prior to infection (see sources below). Doctors are also realizing that some patients go on to develop kidney damage, neurological problems, cognitive decline, permanent lung scarring and/or other complications that require extensive rehabilitation. The newness of the disease means that these different clinical profiles are still not well understood.

## **Issue: Faculty and Staff Risks**

These uncertainties mean that OU faculty and staff who return to in person teaching or other campus job duties in the fall will be at risk for an infection that could require extensive hospitalization and prolonged rehabilitation services. Some employees could end up permanently disabled. While faculty with pre-existing conditions have been given the opportunity to petition for adjusted job duties in the fall, there is no guarantee that young, healthy faculty will be spared these long-term complications if they contract the virus.

OU is among one of a slight majority of schools that self-insures employee healthcare. This model of providing health insurance is generally advantageous for cost control but remains untested as a model to address a 21<sup>st</sup> century pandemic that will make the already unpredictable costs of healthcare difficult to project.

## **Proposal: Additional Protections: Funds for Out of Pocket Health Costs**

The Faculty Senate is requesting that the University create a special fund for faculty and staff who may need assistance with out of pocket health costs (including co-pays and deductibles) in the 2020-2021 academic year due to COVID-19 infection. While several federal policy initiatives (such as the CARES Act) have sought to limit out of pocket costs for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, this benefit is likely to expire before the beginning of the fall semester.

## **Additional Protections: Enhanced Coverage for Short- and Long-Term Disability**

In addition to catastrophic out of pocket costs, COVID-19 infection may result in long term disability. The current disability insurance offered by OU includes short term disability (60% of salary, with coverage up to 26 weeks), and long-term disability (3 plans with variable coverage, up to 2/3 of salary, uncertain duration). The Faculty Senate is also requesting that the University either negotiate with an insurance provider to offer additional disability insurance with an open enrollment period or set aside additional funds that could be used to bolster the payout of existing short- and long-term disability policies.

## **Stop-Loss Coverage Review:**

Self-insured plans usually feature stop-gap coverage for employees whose costs exceed \$50,000-\$100,000. Faculty side is requesting that University review projections for current COVID-19 projected health care costs and consider those against the current stop-loss coverage provisions. Faculty should not face financial ruin to comply with the universities reopening plans.

## **Improving Faculty Confidence in Re-Opening**

The Faculty Senate appreciates that the University has already invested significant resources in redesigning classroom spaces to encourage social distancing in ways that will protect faculty. We are confident

that appropriate precautions will reduce the risk of outbreaks in the campus community. But at the same time, we encourage the university to demonstrate additional support for faculty by pledging to fund these initiatives. Faculty who return to in person teaching should not have to face devastating out of pocket medical costs or lasting disability for complying with the University's re-opening plans.

## SOURCES

1. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-12/covid-19-s-health-effects-can-last-long-after-virus-is-gone>
2. <https://www.vox.com/2020/5/8/21251899/coronavirus-long-term-effects-symptoms>
3. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-symptoms-long-haulers/>
4. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/06/covid-19-coronavirus-longterm-symptoms-months/612679/>
5. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-kidney-damage-caused-by-covid19>
6. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(20\)30222-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(20)30222-8/fulltext)
7. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/04/one-third-of-hospitalized-covid-19-patients-show-signs-of-delirium/>
8. <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/a-tsunami-of-dementia-could-be-on-the-way/>
9. <https://www.sciencealert.com/covid-19-can-target-the-entire-nervous-system-causing-dizziness-and-delirium>
10. <https://www.higheredjobs.com/Articles/articleDisplay.cfm?ID=498>