

**Research, Teaching, Practitioner & Clinical-Track
Faculty Affairs Committee
Final Report on The Future of Faculty Work (April 2023)**

Committee Roster

Co-chairs

Amber Foster, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences (RTPC-T)

Reyes Enciso, Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry (RTPC-T)

Committee Members

Linda Hoffman - PT FAC liaison

Scott Applebaum, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences (RTPC-T)

Paul Beringer, USC School of Pharmacy (RTPC-C)

Alison D'Amato, Kaufman School of Dance (RTPC-P)

Adrian Donato, Rossier School of Education (RTPC-T)

C. Kerry Fields, Marshall School of Business (RTPC-C)

Elizabeth Fife, Viterbi School of Engineering (RTPC-T)

Sherin Guirgis, Roski School of Art and Design (RTPC-P)

Assal Habibi, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences (RTPC-R)

Angela Hasan, Rossier School of Education (RTPC-C)

Steve Hydon, Dworak-Peck Social Work (RTPC-C)

Jef Pearlman, Gould School of Law (RTPC-C)

Leah Stein Duker, Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry (RTPC-R)

Jonathan Tam, Keck School of Medicine (RTPC-C)

Tin-Yu Tseng, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences (RTPC-T)

Dan Wei, Price School of Public Policy (RTPC-R)

Committee Description

The Committee on Research, Teaching, Practitioner, and Clinical-Track (RTPC) Faculty Affairs monitors and evaluates the working environment, terms and conditions of employment, job security, compensation, benefits eligibility, opportunities for participation in governance, opportunities for professional advancement, and participation in the academic life of the university provided for non-tenure-track faculty. It monitors compliance with the Faculty Handbook and with stated school policies of the schools or units as they relate to RTPC faculty. It makes recommendations to relevant Senate and

University committees, and to the Academic Senate, concerning any policy issues that have an impact on non-tenure-track faculty.

Charge for Spring 2023

As a follow up to the Fall 2022 RTPC Faculty Affairs whitepaper on the “Future of Faculty Work,” this committee was asked to provide various recommendations for improvements to, and expansions of, current sabbatical programs for RTPC faculty.

RTPC Sabbaticals/Paid Leave Recommendations

Following a review of sabbatical and paid leave programs across USC, we have compiled a series of recommendations aimed at assisting with ongoing administrative efforts to support the professionalization of RTPC faculty by expanding access to paid leave and sabbatical programs. While we acknowledge that the professional objectives of the RTPC faculty are diverse, we aim to underscore the impact that such programs will undoubtedly have with respect to faculty retention, research outcomes, improvement of teaching/research/clinical skills, continuing education, and professional advancement, all of which ultimately will benefit the students, the faculty, and the university.

Note: since “sabbatical” and “paid leave” are used interchangeably at some schools and programs, we’re referencing both in this document. For our purposes, “paid leave” refers to release granted for professional activities, which should not be conflated with paid leave for other purposes (paid parental leave, for example).

Recommendation 1: Expand eligibility criteria to track-specific professional activities

While many RTPC faculty sabbaticals are aimed at supporting traditional academic publishing (producing book-length works in creative or research fields), an expansion of sabbatical/paid leave considerations to track-specific activities would allow RTPC faculty more room to innovate, as they would be provided time and support for engaging in scholarly and professional activities that might not fall within the umbrella of traditional publishing and research. Examples of track-specific professional activities are provided below, although additional opportunities could be developed by each school (see: Recommendation 2).

Although research and clinical faculty dependent on external funding may face unique challenges in applying for sabbaticals/paid leave, expanding eligibility to these faculty opens the door to individual proposals that could be assessed for merit and viability at the level of the program/department.

Examples of track-specific professional activities

Teaching

- Development of new, collaborative, and/or interdisciplinary courses and curriculums
- Development of, or training in, new technologies that enhance teaching
- Engaging in track-specific research activities (such as statistical analysis or pedagogical research culminating in a book or article presentation or publication).
- Engagement in pedagogical training, courses, or community outreach that would enrich track-specific activities

Clinical

- Participation in community programs/outreach
- Development of, or training in, new technologies that enhance teaching
- Completion of supplemental professional development courses, certifications, or other clinical training.
- Engagement in clinical research, statistical analysis, or other activities that might fall outside the scope of typical clinical obligations

Research

- Participation in collaborative work, such as outreach programs or working in tandem with external labs
- Engagement in research that is track specific but may fall outside the scope of traditional duties, such as writing grants, articles, or books
- Participation in training or professional development programs

Practitioner

- Engagement in field/track-specific professional activities, such as creative endeavors, touring, or field work
- Participation in supplemental professional development, such as certification or training programs

Recommendation 2: Have each school develop (or expand) RTPC-specific sabbatical/paid leave eligibility criteria to align with Recommendation 1.

At schools where sabbaticals/paid leave for RTPC faculty are currently available, eligibility criteria for a full semester of leave, with benefits, include a minimum of 3 years or more of uninterrupted full-time service, as well as a competitive application process at the school level. Faculty must typically be of Associate rank or higher, although employment titles/minimum rank requirements may vary. Our research affirms the ongoing need for administrative oversight, with applications requiring approval by both the Department Chair and Dean based on the merits of the application and its relevance to the department/school's

mission. Below are various examples of “best practices,” while acknowledging that the eligibility criteria might be expanded further, per our above recommendations. We also strongly recommend that sabbatical/paid leave opportunities for clinical and research faculty should be explored further at the school level, as current sabbatical offerings are primarily restricted to teaching and practitioner tracks.

Non Tenure-Track Full-time Teaching Faculty Leave Policy at the Price School of Public Policy

(Full guidelines may be accessed here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nd3K-2k4jJK2byypXyo6h_dGXL6wruT/view)

This initiative supports the quality of teaching in Price academic programs and the professional development of the faculty by enabling concentrated time in which one can enrich one’s field of knowledge and develop innovative pedagogy in the curriculum areas in which one teaches. Resources to support these leaves are provided by the Price School, with leaves granted at the discretion of the Dean and with the advice of the Faculty Council. Proposals must specify how the project will contribute to the school’s teaching mission and the applicant’s professional development. Examples include: study in one’s area of substantive expertise or pedagogy culminating in a book or articles, as well as development of or training in new technologies that enhance teaching.

School of Cinematic Arts (SCA) Paid Leave for RTPC Faculty

(Full guidelines may be accessed here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1szptiXBSP9Bjlve5mP2nEgnTPhgYNkre/edit?usp=share_link&oid=101268811594196509610&rtpof=true&sd=true)

The SCA awards paid leave to approximately two faculty per year. If an applicant is awarded both a SCA leave and an ASHSS leave, however, they must take the ASHSS leave. Applicants must articulate why the sabbatical is critical at this moment in the scholarly or creative process. The strongest applications make a compelling case for how the ASHSS early sabbatical will either propel a new project or spur a project’s completion. The most successful proposals articulate the work for a broad interdisciplinary audience and provide the context for understanding the importance and impact of the proposed project.

Advancing Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences

(Full guidelines located here: <https://faculty.usc.edu/scholarship/ashss/>)

Sabbaticals of one semester at full pay/benefits are granted on a competitive basis for RTPC faculty at full professor or associate professor rank in the arts, humanities, and humanistic social sciences. Applicants must have a minimum of 3 uninterrupted years of full-time service. Successful applications present a viable and realistic plan to produce leading work, a compelling case for why the paid leave for RTPC faculty is critical at this moment in the research process, and how the ASHSS sabbatical will accelerate scholarly output.

Preference is given to full professors who already have a proven track record of high-quality productivity.

The RTPC Faculty Fellowship at Marshall (Teaching)

(Full guidelines located here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/10BVIIISL2LNfjWD5cJH5DPwtcj22gv0k/edit?usp=share_link&ouid=101268811594196509610&rtpof=true&sd=true)

Although not as impactful as a full semester of sabbatical/paid leave, this initiative provides an example of a course release program that similarly supports professional activities for RTPC faculty. This particular initiative (discontinued since 2020 due to budgetary constraints) offered course relief of one or two teaching credits (during one semester) to pursue professional development activities such as conducting and publishing research that advances teaching, writing textbooks, developing new, cutting-edge courses, programs, or instructional methods, and participating in a professional internship at a company. Although limited in impact, with just two applicants in 2019 (one successful), course releases for track-specific activities may be a viable option in departments or programs where a full semester of paid leave/sabbatical is infeasible.

Recommendation 3: Generate and make accessible assessment criteria for RTPC sabbatical/paid leave proposals

At present, faculty who apply for current sabbatical/paid leave programs have no clear assessment criteria made available to them. For example, none of the programs we examined provide a rubric or other assessment mechanism that makes transparent how the merit of individual proposals is determined, or how proposals are competitively “ranked.” This lack of clarity in assessment criteria can lead to dissatisfaction, as faculty with unsuccessful applications have no means of knowing why their application had less merit than others in the applicant pool. We therefore recommend all sabbatical/paid leave programs be required to provide clear assessment criteria. Formative feedback is also recommended, as it would create a mentorship mindset that would then allow unsuccessful applicants to re-evaluate the merits of their proposal and adjust accordingly with subsequent application cycles.

Recommendation 4: Create sustainable funding to support school-wide sabbatical expansion

While allocation of funds falls outside the purview of this committee, it is noteworthy that current arts and humanities sabbaticals (ASHSS) at Dornsife college are funded at the university level, with the Provost’s office providing the Dean with funds to defray teaching replacement costs. We therefore suggest an expansion of this initiative to other schools and programs, in concert with the expanded eligibility criteria, discussed above. Given known

budgetary constraints, we also recommend the use of matching funds at the Provost level, which would reduce budgetary impacts at the level of each school.