

REASSIGNMENT AND FELLOWSHIP (SABBATICAL) LEAVES

Sharon Swacker
Associate Professor & Coordinator of Collection Development
New York City College of Technology

Introduction

I was asked to speak at this program because I have been on the LACUNY Professional Development Committee for many years, and because of my role chairing the Library Faculty Delegate Assembly Committee of PSC/CUNY. This standing committee of the Delegate Assembly is “responsible for the consideration of concerns and the recommendation of policies related to library faculty employed at all units of the City University.” Currently, the committee is composed of Herman Cline (City), Bill Gargan (BC), Diane DiMartino (Baruch), Jose Diaz (Hostos), Bonnie Nelson (John Jay), John Drobnicki (York). Alternates are Lisa Ellis (Baruch), Beth Evans and Mariana Regalado (BC), Tess Tobin (City Tech), and Rob Laurich (City). One of our ongoing concerns has been the lack of use of professional reassignment and fellowship leaves available to library faculty in the contract. Last year the committee prepared a leave survey that was mailed to all library faculty. Some of the survey answers (78 respondents; 57 senior college, 19 community college, and 2 unknown) were used in preparing my presentation.

History of faculty rank and status

CUNY Bylaws were amended in October 1965 giving librarians faculty rank and status. See: Minutes and Proceedings of the Board of Higher Education (the predecessor of the Board of Trustees) for Oct. 25, 1965.

I am not familiar with the promotion criteria before 1965 but one can assume that after this date library faculty became subject to the same criteria as other faculty for tenure and promotion. However, workload (work week), annual leave, inter-sessions, and spring recess were not the same as for classroom faculty. According to Belle Zeller, the Founding President Emerita of the PSC, the union “negotiated in 1978 a new professional leave of two weeks for a limited number of librarians. The objective was to take a step toward the goal of full annual leave for librarians as for the rest of the faculty. The two-week leave was extended to three weeks in 1982 and to four weeks in 1987.”(37)¹

Unfortunately, library faculty lost annual leave in the September 1, 1987 – August 31, 1990 contract. New library faculty’s starting annual leave was reduced from 6 weeks to 4.

¹ Zeller, Belle. “The Status of CUNY Librarians.” *Urban Academic Librarian* 7, No. 2 (Winter 1989) 34-39. (Special Issue LACUNY 1939-1989: 50 years of service to the City University.)

PSC/CUNY Contract

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Members of the Instructional Staff who are employed full-time as Librarians on or after January 1, 1988 shall accrue annual leave at the following rates:

During the 1st year of service 20 days

During the 2nd through 11th year 20 days plus one

of service and thereafter additional day for each year of service to a maximum of 30 days

To make us even more unequal in terms of time for scholarly activities, in the last contract (August 1, 2000 through October 31, 2002) library faculty were excluded from the reassigned time for scholarly activities granted to untenured faculty.

Memorandum of Economic Agreement for a Successor Agreement between The City University of New York and The Professional Staff Congress/CUNY

- 4e. Reassigned Time for Scholarly Activities: Untenured Faculty: Effective October 31, 2002, untenured Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors, except Librarians and Counselors, who are initially appointed on or after September 1, 2002, will be eligible for reassigned time not to exceed a total of 12 contact hours during their first three (3) annual appointments in order to engage themselves in scholarly and/or creative activities related to their academic disciplines. Assignments of such released time will be made by the college pursuant to guidelines designed to encourage scholarship.

Criteria for tenure and promotion vary from campus to campus. Annual, reassignment and fellowship leaves are important to help us achieve whatever is required on our campuses for tenure and promotion. I can't encourage you enough to make use of these leaves.

Professional Reassignments

PSC/CUNY Contract

25.4 The parties agree to establish a paid leave not to exceed four weeks during any year commencing September 1 and ending August 31 for the purpose of permitting members of the instructional staff who serve in the libraries to be reassigned for research, scholarly writing, and other recognized professional activities that enhance their contribution to City University. The reassignments shall be subject to approval by the personnel and budget committees of the respective library departments and appropriate college-wide committees. The parties accept as a goal the reassignment of 50 members of the instructional staff in the University libraries during a one-year period.

Implementation of the contract

Originally each college was allocated a fixed number of leaves. However, colleges can use additional leaves from the pool if others go used. (In PSC-

CUNY bargaining sessions, it is pointed out by administration that library faculty do not use the present number of reassignment leaves, so why should they grant us more leaves? We should try to use 50 plus leaves)

Application

The application form is available on the CUNY Office of Library Services website: <http://libraries.cuny.edu/rl-form.pdf> and the LACUNY Professional Development program website: <http://lacuny.cuny.edu/committees/pdcom.html>.

University deadlines, according to Larry McCue in the Office of Library Services, are June 1st for the leaves to be taken between September 1 and January 31, and December 1st for leaves to be taken between February 1 and August 31.

The application should be sent to the University Librarian – Office of Library Services after obtaining all required departmental and college signatures, not to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

According to the PSC Library Faculty Committee survey, some departments call for applications in both the Fall and Spring; others once a year.

Upon completion of reassignment leaves, reports are sent to the college president and then forwarded to the University Librarian – Office of Library Services.

Criteria

The application form asks for (A.) purpose of reassignment, (B.) nature of work and how it will contribute to the City University, (C.) proposed date of reassignment, (D.) where the project will be carried out; and authorities to be consulted, if appropriate and (E.) list previous reassignments. The criteria vary for each library department. Some have formal guidelines and others use the wording in the contract. Interestingly, some departments require that the project be in the library field and others indicate the project can be in any area.

Very few applicants seemed to have been rejected; however a few faculty said they are not encouraged to apply.

Approved Leaves

Dates are required on the application and the leave is taken at the convenience of the library department. Consult with your department chair and be flexible (i.e. continuous weeks, several days a week over the semester, ½ days, etc.)

The workload question has been dealt with in the application so when it is time to take a leave, use it. Plan ahead and adjust your workload so you do not have conflicts.

Data on Leaves

The number of reassignment leaves over the past few years has varied. According to the University, not all approved leaves are published in the university reports. Our survey examined leaves taken in 2003/2004:

2003-04 Reassignment Leaves Reported by LACUNY Delegates

Senior Colleges	Year Total	Community Colleges	Year Total
Baruch **	0	BMCC	0
Brooklyn	1	Bronx	0
City	4	Hostos	2
Graduate Center	1	Kingsborough	0
Hunter	7	LaGuardia	0
John Jay	2	Queensborough	0
Lehman **	0		
Medgar Evers	0		
NYC College of Technology	4		
Queens	8		
Staten Island	3		
York	1		
Total: 33	31		2

**informal arrangements for research leaves.

Reassignment leave examples

Reassignment leave topics taken have included:

- comparing “English as a second language (ESL) and English as a first language (EFL) students’ use of CD-ROM and print indexes to see if they take advantage of all possibilities in these indexes for research information. Student vocabulary was to be the focus of the study to see if it translated adequately into the indexes’ unique vocabularies.”
- researching Chinese American artist Yun Gee which resulted in a book publication (combined 3 reassignment leaves with 2 PSC/CUNY grants.)
- researching the “Beat Generation” in Mexico.
- preparing an annotated bibliography of ancient Greek costume studies that has been accepted by a publisher (combined PSC/CUNY grants with 3 reassignments).

Fellowship Awards

Fellowship or sabbaticals are another leave option available to library faculty.

PSC/CUNY Contract

25.3 Fellowship Awards

(a) **Eligibility:** It is the intention of the parties that the funds for fellowship awards be limited to instructional staff members of the permanent instructional staff. Tenured members of the permanent instructional staff, including those holding the title Lecturer with certificates of continuous employment, who have completed six years of continuous paid full-time service with the University exclusive of non-sabbatical or fellowship leave, shall be eligible for a fellowship award. Individuals in professorial titles who are on leave from the title Lecturer with a certificate of continuous employment shall be eligible for a fellowship award. Service shall include service in a school or college maintained in whole or part with City funds immediately preceding service in a college or institution under the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees, provided that credit for such prior service shall not exceed three (3) years.

(b) **Applications:**

1. Applications for a fellowship award may be made for the following purposes:

- (a) Research (including study and related travel)
- (b) Improvement of teaching
- (c) Creative work in literature or the arts

2. Such application shall also state that the applicant will continue to serve for at least one year after expiration of the term of his or her leave unless this provision is expressly waived by the Board of Trustees.

3. The application in the form of a plan shall be submitted to the appropriate departmental committee and, if approved, to the college committee on faculty personnel and budget. If the latter committee approves, it shall forward the application to the President with its endorsement. Such endorsement must state that the work of the department in which the applicant serves can be so arranged as to be carried forward effectively during the period of the leave, and that the work the applicant intends to do is consonant with the principles of the fellowship leave. The President shall transmit such application to the Board of Trustees, with his or her own recommendation.

4. The Board of Trustees will consider the advantage of the applicant as a scholar and teacher to be expected from such a fellowship award, and the consequent advantage through his or her service to the college. Special consideration shall be given to those applicants who have not had a sabbatical leave or fellowship in fourteen (14) or more years.

5. Application may be for one of three types of fellowship leaves:

- a full year leave at one-half the annual salary
- a one-half year leave at one-quarter the annual salary
- a one-half year leave at full pay

(a) Fellowship leaves received by members of the instructional staff who serve in the libraries will be of the same duration as those of other instructional staff. Members of the instructional staff who serve in libraries will not accrue annual leave during the period of the fellowship leave.

Members of the unit who receive a full-year fellowship leave at one-half pay may, at their option, upon written notice to the President no later than October 30 or March 30, whichever is applicable, terminate the fellowship leave after one-half year.

Where fellowships are terminated upon request under Section 25.3 (b) 5, such termination relieves the University of any obligation to further claims for the second half of the leave, but does not reduce the time period or other qualifications required for consideration for a subsequent fellowship leave.

(c) The University agrees to request the appropriate retirement system to credit the period of the fellowship as service for retirement purposes. The period of the fellowship leave shall be credited for increment purposes.

(d) Nothing contained in this Article shall be construed to diminish or impair the rights of an employee appointed prior to July 1, 1965, of the benefits of the Bylaws of the Board as they existed on July 1, 1965 with respect to sabbatical leaves of absence.

Fellowship leave examples

Library faculty have taken fellowship leaves for:

- information literacy and distance education projects. These projects have involved developing instructional materials, textbook writing, and publication of articles.
- researching “visual representations of the Ten Commandments...An art historical project...grounded in an ongoing investigation that is now moving toward publication.”

Scholar Incentive Awards

The Scholar Incentive Awards are a final contractual leave option available to library faculty. Focusing solely on scholarly research, these awards do not have the “six years of paid full time service” requirement of the Fellowship Award leave.

PSC/CUNY Contract

25.5 Scholar Incentive Awards

Scholar Incentive Awards of not less than one semester nor more than one year shall be established for full-time personnel in the following titles: Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Instructor, Lecturer, University Professor, Distinguished Professor and Medical Series. The only purpose of these Awards shall be to facilitate bona fide and documented scholarly research. Other projects or proposals (e.g. meeting of degree requirements, study, service outside the University) or reasons (e.g. professional, career, personal) shall not be considered for these Awards.

The application in the form of a plan shall be submitted to the appropriate departmental committee and, if approved, to the college committee on faculty personnel and budget. If the latter committee approves, it shall forward the application to the President with its endorsement. Such endorsement must state that the work of the department in which the applicant serves can be so arranged as to be carried forward effectively during the period of the leave, and that the work the applicant intends to do is consonant with the principles of the Scholar Incentive Award. Upon positive recommendation of the President, the application shall be forwarded to the Chancellor for review and recommendation.

The following principles for such Scholar Incentive Awards shall apply:

1. A candidate shall be a full-time member of the instructional staff in one of the above titles.

2. A candidate shall have completed not less than one full year of continuous paid full-time service with the University before becoming eligible for a Scholar Incentive Award. A candidate shall be eligible for a subsequent Scholar Incentive Award after six years of creditable service with the University since the completion of the last Scholar Incentive Award. A Scholar Incentive Award may not be held concurrently with a Fellowship Leave.

3. If a Scholar Incentive Award is immediately preceded by full-time continuous service creditable for tenure or a Certificate of Continuous Employment or Fellowship Award and immediately followed by such full-time continuous service, the period of creditable service immediately preceding the Scholar Incentive Award shall be counted in computing the years of service required for the granting of tenure, Certificate of Continuous Employment or Fellowship Award.

4. A candidate may be compensated by the University for up to 25% of annual salary rate. The total amount of money earnable with outside support and the University salary may not exceed 100% of the annual salary rate that the person would have received without the leave. The amount may be less than 25% if the amount of any outside fellowship and grant support received would result in earnings above 100% of salary.

5. The University shall develop guidelines to be utilized in approving applications for Scholar Incentive Awards.