ARTICLE 19
Professional Improvement

Section A. Professional Improvement Funds.

Subd. 1. Professional improvement funds shall mean support funds for improving professional competence.

Subd. 2. All faculty except adjunct faculty shall be eligible for professional improvement funds provided in Subdivision 3, below.

Subd. 3. The funds distributed shall be no less than four hundred thousand dollars ($400,000) in FY 2018 and five hundred twenty thousand dollars ($520,000) in FY 2019. All funds shall be distributed each fiscal year to the universities on the basis of the number of FTE faculty at each institution. Within thirty (30) days thereafter, a report shall be provided to the IFO indicating the amount allocated to each university.

Subd. 4. In FY 2019, professional improvement funds of not less than fifty-nine thousand, five hundred dollars ($59,500) per academic year shall be available to adjunct faculty for improving professional competence related to their teaching assignments. All funds shall be distributed to the universities on the basis of the number of adjunct faculty at each institution. Within thirty (30) days thereafter, a report shall be provided to the IFO indicating the amount allocated to each university.

Subd. 5. The President, after meeting and conferring with the Association, shall establish procedures and criteria for the application and awarding of these funds to individual faculty members. Awards shall be made by the President.

Section B. Professional Study and Travel.

Subd. 1. The IFO and MnSCU recognize the need for faculty development relating to their university’s mission. Therefore, each department/unit will be allocated professional study and travel funds at the rate of not less than one thousand three hundred eighty dollars ($1,380) in FY 2018 and one thousand four hundred fifty dollars ($1,450) in FY 2019 per each full-time equivalent faculty member in the department as of the beginning of each academic year as determined in Subd. 2 below. Funding for faculty, excluding adjuncts, hired during the year will be allocated on a pro rata basis at the time of hire.

Subd. 2. In determining the number of full-time equivalent faculty members, those on paid leaves of absence, sabbatical, reassigned time and those on phased retirement or the annuitant employment program shall be counted as full-time, but their replacements, if any, shall not. Those faculty members on paid leaves of absence, sabbatical, reassigned time or on phased retirement shall be eligible to receive such professional study and travel monies. This provision shall include faculty members whose positions are financed from external sources, even though funding for this purpose is not provided by the external source. Professional study and travel funds shall be available to all faculty members at the time of hire.
Subd. 3. Funds provided by this section (PST funds) shall be limited to paying for costs associated with the process of faculty development as described in Article 22. Purchase of activities, services or tangible assets should be consistent with the faculty member’s professional development plan or sabbatical plan. Examples of permissible uses include, but are not limited to, the cost of travel, housing, meals and registration associated with participation in professional conferences, workshops, and similar meetings and courses, professional memberships, professional books and journals, supplies and services including Internet access, online services including electronic subscriptions, software, multimedia, and fees associated with the publishing or presentation of scholarly and creative work including preparation services. PST purchases must be reasonably likely to enhance the faculty member’s effectiveness with respect to one or more of the five criteria set forth in Article 22; purchases of technology that satisfy the standards of this subdivision are permissible.

Funds may not be used to purchase routine equipment. All tangible assets purchased with PST funds are the property of the University.

The department shall, through a democratic process, determine an equitable procedure for distribution of funds. The department may carry over any portion of its allocation from the first to the second year of the biennium, and from one biennium to the next.

Section C. Sabbatical Leave. The purpose of a sabbatical leave is to enhance professional development, support department/unit goals, and/or meet the instructional, service, or research priorities of the university.

Subd. 1. The President/designee may grant a sabbatical leave to an eligible faculty member who proposes to undertake a scholarly research project, additional study, or other endeavor related to the purpose described above. At the beginning of each academic year, the President, after meeting and conferring with the Association, will establish a schedule for application, consideration and announcement of the sabbatical leaves.

Subd. 2. Eligibility.

a. Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, in order to be eligible for sabbatical leave, a faculty member must have completed at least seven (7) years of service at the university, or have at least six (6) years of service since the conclusion of such faculty member’s previous sabbatical leave.

b. The granting of sabbatical leave shall be contingent upon the President’s determination that funds are available for this purpose and that staffing requirements of the university can be met. Where sabbatical leave is denied, reasons therefore shall be communicated to the faculty member in writing. However, the faculty member shall be granted an initial sabbatical, upon request:

1. after a year of service following an initial award of tenure; or

2. after completion of ten (10) years of service.
Subsequent sabbaticals shall be granted, upon request, after ten (10) years of service following the conclusion of the faculty member’s last sabbatical leave.

c. Eligibility for sabbatical leave is subject to presentation of a satisfactory plan in accordance with Subd. 3 below.

d. Should more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the faculty on an FTE basis of any particular department or program be eligible for and request such a leave, the sabbatical(s) shall be granted in accordance with the following priorities:

1. faculty who have not yet received a sabbatical; then
2. faculty whose sabbatical was postponed by this provision; then
3. faculty with the longest service since their last sabbatical.

After the three priorities are applied and there remains an unresolved conflict, the immediate supervisor shall determine which sabbatical plan shall be granted. In making this decision, the immediate supervisor shall consider the unique opportunities presented in the competing sabbatical plans that may be lost due to delay.

In such circumstances, the President/designee shall grant such leave to twenty-five percent (25%) of the faculty within the department or program on an FTE basis.

e. Leaves taken for reasons of professional improvement directly relating to the faculty member’s university responsibilities shall be counted as time served towards eligibility for sabbatical leave up to a maximum of two (2) years.

Subd. 3. The faculty member’s proposal for sabbatical leave shall include a written plan consistent with the purpose outlined above and an indication of the term(s) that the faculty member intends to be on leave. Sabbatical plans are subject to approval by the President/designee. Except for those ten (10) year sabbaticals described in Subd. 2 above, the President’s decision is not grievable. The plan must include a signed agreement to submit a written report of the results of the sabbatical to the faculty member’s immediate supervisor upon conclusion of the sabbatical leave. The faculty member shall agree in writing to return to the university after the conclusion of the sabbatical and provide twelve (12) credits of instruction or an equivalent amount of non-credit generating faculty work for each semester of leave taken. Upon return to the university after the conclusion of the sabbatical, the faculty member shall submit a written report of the results of the sabbatical to the faculty member’s immediate supervisor. In the event the faculty member fails to follow the intent of his/her plan or to return to the university to provide the aforementioned service after the conclusion of the sabbatical, the faculty member shall refund to the university salary paid, not including benefits, during that sabbatical period. The return service obligation shall be waived if i) the university retrenches or otherwise terminates the faculty member’s employment at the conclusion of the sabbatical, or ii) if a documented medical condition precludes the faculty member from
resuming work as a faculty member. The refund obligation shall be reduced proportionately by the amount of service provided by the faculty member following the sabbatical. Any separation payments due to the faculty member shall be reduced by the amount of any refund amount due and owing at the time of separation.

**Subd. 4.** Sabbatical leaves may be granted for one (1) semester, at full base salary, or for a full academic year at eighty percent (80%) of base salary. For part-time faculty members, the amount of sabbatical pay shall be adjusted pro rata.

**Subd. 5.** Faculty members on sabbatical leave may accept scholarships, fellowships, grants, or employment during the sabbatical leave, provided such scholarships, fellowships, grants, or employment afford experience which serves the purpose of the sabbatical leave.

**Subd. 6.** A faculty member shall be eligible for continued group insurance benefits as provided by law during the course of the leave.

**Subd. 7.** In those cases where the Administration has denied sabbatical leaves for budgetary or staffing considerations, or where replacements for sabbaticals were not provided, the Administration shall provide a summary of such actions at a meet and confer.