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Report Number 2026.10/4000.03

Promotions, Tenure, and Sabbatical Leave Report

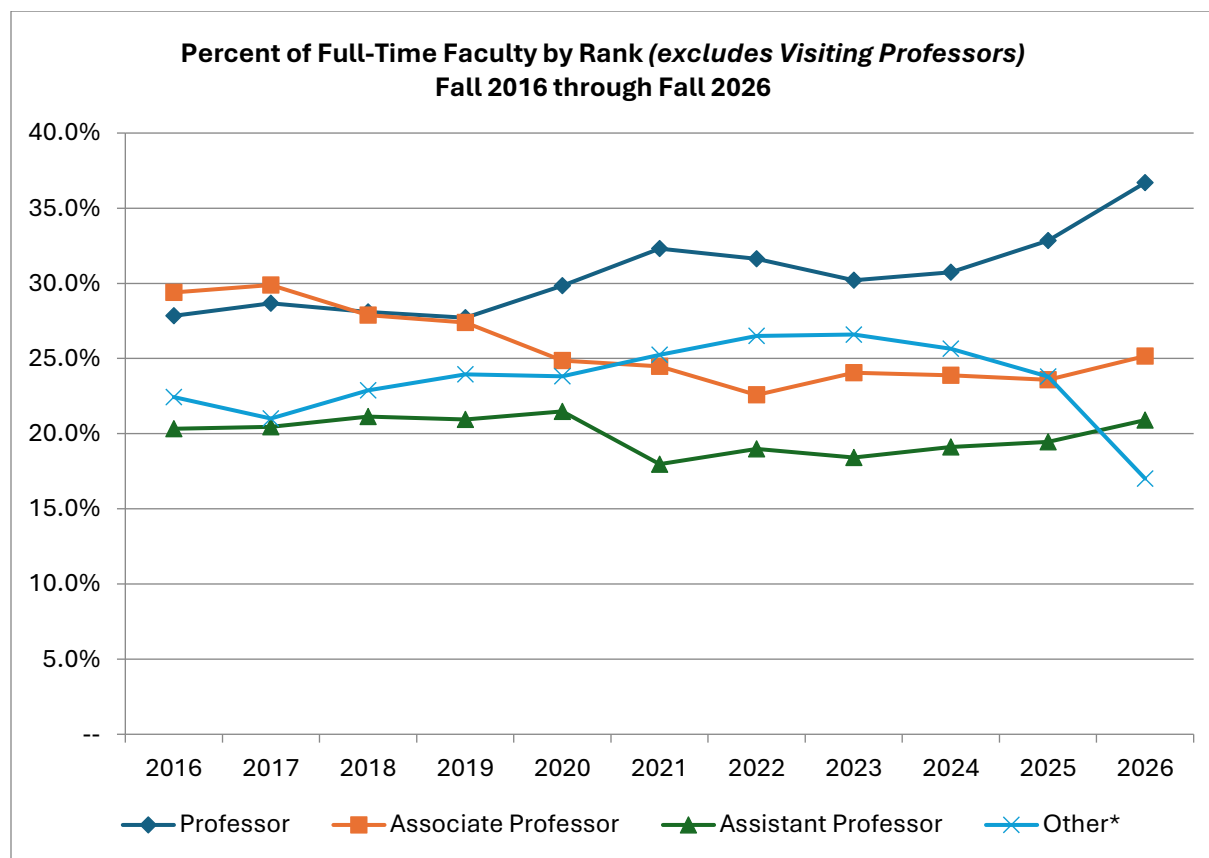
Executive Summary

Promotion, tenure, and sabbatical personnel decisions that take effect in Fiscal Year 2027 were completed in the fall and spring of Fiscal Year 2026. The Appointment, Salary, Promotion and Tenure Policies (ASPT) document describes promotion as two changes in rank: Assistant Professor to Associate Professor and Associate Professor to Professor. Tenure is awarded to faculty that have demonstrated to peers and the administration that their teaching, research and service meets or exceeds the University standards. Sabbaticals are professional development opportunities available to faculty to complete a proposed project; during the sabbatical, faculty are reassigned from other professional responsibilities. The accompanying pages outline the application and review process for promotion, tenure, and sabbaticals. Also provided are summary data on this year's applications, rank distributions over the past decade for tenured faculty, and lists of the Fiscal Year 2027 changes in status.

Promotions

Faculty seeking promotions submit the documentation required by their Department or School Faculty Status Committee (DFSC/SFSC) and their College Faculty Status Committee (CFSC) guidelines. The department/school committee, the college committee, the Dean, and the Provost evaluate faculty promotion materials from November to April. A recommendation letter is written by each of the committees. Recommendations to deny a promotion application can be appealed to the Faculty Review Committee. All recommendations (DFSC/SFSC, CFSC, Provost and FRC) are forwarded to the President for consideration. For FY2026, 21 faculty submitted materials that were considered for promotion to the rank of Professor. Promotion was awarded to 20. For promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, 22 individuals were considered. Promotion was awarded to 20.

Illustration 1: Percent of Full-Time Faculty by Rank, excluding Visiting Professors, Fall 2016 through Fall 2026



**'Other' includes Faculty Associates and unranked faculty.*

The lists on the following pages provide the name and department of faculty receiving promotions effective in FY2027.

Table 1: Faculty promotions from Associate Professor to Professor

FACULTY NAME	DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL NAME
Dr. Michael Barrowclough	Department of Agriculture
Dr. Justin Bergfield	Department of Physics
Dr. Kristin Carlson	School of Creative Technologies
Dr. Andrew Eberline	School of Kinesiology and Recreation
Dr. Suejung Han	Department of Psychology
Dr. Elise Hurley	Department of English
Dr. Elahe Javadi	School of Information Technology
Dr. Jianwei Lai	School of Information Technology
Dr. Meghan Leonard	Department of Politics & Government
Dr. Uttam Manna	Department of Physics
Dr. Kevin Meyer	School of Communication
Dr. Barbara Meyer	School of Teaching and Learning
Dr. Michael Rossler	Department of Criminal Justice Sciences
Dr. Elizabeth Sattler	School of Kinesiology and Recreation
Dr. Wondwosen Seyoum	Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment
Dr. Eli Sherrill	Department of Finance, Insurance, and Law
Dr. Anna Smith	School of Teaching and Learning
Dr. Justin Stanek	School of Kinesiology and Recreation
Dr. Jason Whitesel	Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Dr. Matthew Winsor	Department of Mathematics

Table 2: Faculty promotions from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor

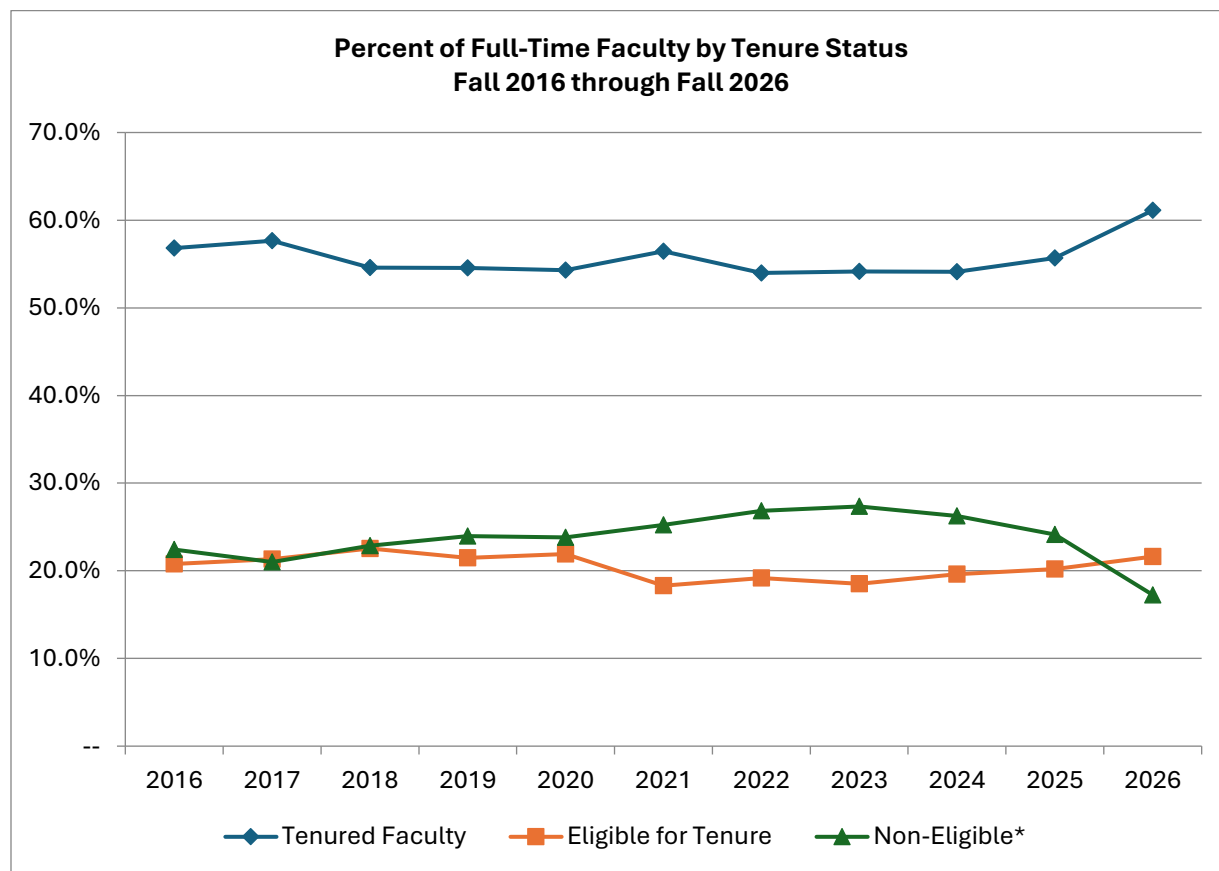
FACULTY NAME	DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL NAME
Dr. Nesrin Bakir	Department of Marketing
Dr. Jill Bisco	Department of Finance, Insurance, and Law
Dr. Jason Cieslik	Department of Politics & Government
Dr. Gregory Corness	School of Creative Technologies
Dr. Mary Deline	School of Communication
Dr. Rosangela Follmann	School of Information Technology
Dr. Melissa Heil	Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment
Dr. Andrea Jamison	School of Teaching and Learning
Dr. Igor E. Kalnin	School of Music
Dr. Meghan Kessler	School of Teaching and Learning
Ms. Katherine Krcmarik	Wonsook Kim School of Art
Dr. Bin Lizzo	School of Kinesiology and Recreation
Dr. Pirmin Nietlisbach	School of Biological Sciences
Dr. Eda Ozyesilpinar	Department of English
Dr. Vivian Presiado	School of Teaching and Learning
Dr. Shelby Putt	Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Mr. Jason Reblando	Wonsook Kim School of Art
Dr. Fernando Severino	School of Communication
Dr. Jay Solomonson	Department of Agriculture
Dr. Erol Sozen	Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Tenure

In the academic community, tenure is a right extended to an individual by a university or college. Once awarded, no person with tenure can be deprived of this right without due process. Tenure normally is not granted before the completion of six years of full-time service at the rank of assistant professor or above at one or more accredited institutions of higher education, including at least three years' experience at Illinois State University. The award of tenure requires the University to consider not only the quality of an individual's professional achievements in teaching, research and service, but also that the candidate's competencies must be in keeping with the long-range goals of their Department/School and the University.

For FY2027, materials submitted by eligible faculty members were evaluated by the DFSC/SFSC, CFSC, Dean, and the Provost. Tenure evaluation recommendations can be appealed to the Faculty Review Committee. All recommendations (DFSC/SFSC, CFSC, Dean, Provost and FRC) are forwarded to the President for consideration. Twenty-four individuals were considered for tenure. Tenure was awarded to 21. Also, it is important to note that some tenure-track faculty resign, or are not re-appointed, during their first five years at Illinois State.

Illustration 2: Percent of Full-Time Tenured Faculty from Fall 2016 through Fall 2026



**Non-Eligible' includes Visiting Professors and tenure-track faculty who were denied tenure or left tenure/tenure-track*

Table 3: Faculty granted tenure for FY2027

FACULTY NAME	DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL NAME
Dr. Nesrin Bakir	Department of Marketing
Dr. Heidi Baumann	Department of Management
Dr. Jill Bisco	Department of Finance, Insurance, and Law
Dr. Jason Cieslik	Department of Politics & Government
Dr. Gregory Corness	School of Creative Technologies
Dr. Mary Deline	School of Communication
Dr. Rosangela Follmann	School of Information Technology
Dr. Melissa Heil	Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment
Dr. Andrea Jamison	School of Teaching and Learning
Dr. Igor E. Kalnin	School of Music
Dr. Meghan Kessler	School of Teaching and Learning
Ms. Katherin Krcmarik	Wonsook Kim School of Art
Dr. Bin Lizzo	School of Kinesiology and Recreation
Dr. Pirmin Nietlisbach	School of Biological Sciences
Dr. Eda Ozyesilpinar	Department of English
Dr. Vivian Presiado	School of Teaching and Learning
Dr. Shelby Putt	Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Mr. Jason Reblando	Wonsook Kim School of Art
Dr. Fernando Severino	School of Communication
Dr. Jay Solomonson	Department of Agriculture
Dr. Erol Sozen	Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Sabbaticals

University requirements for sabbaticals limit the number of awards to one out of every twenty-five (25) full-time tenure, tenure-track, and continuing administrative professional employees. Eligible staff must have six or more years of full-time service and are limited to no more than one sabbatical leave in seven years. The leave may not total more than nine months. Leave compensation may not exceed the equivalent of four and one-half months' pay at the salary rate in effect during the leave period. An individual granted a sabbatical leave assumes professional obligations to complete the approved project, to submit a report to the Dean, and to return to the University for a period of at least one academic year after the leave. For faculty on

sabbatical leave, classes are typically covered by non-tenure track faculty. For administrative/professionals on sabbatical, a plan to cover responsibilities must be submitted by the applicant and approved by the manager at no added cost to the University.

Faculty requests for sabbatical are submitted to the department chairperson or school director in September. The chair/director evaluates all requests and forwards approved requests to the Dean in priority order. Each Dean submits to the Provost in priority order the approved college applications. The President grants final approval following review and recommendation by the Provost.

Table 4: Sabbatical Recipients for FY2027 by name, department, purpose, and time of the sabbatical

FACULTY NAME AND RANK	COLLEGE AND DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL	ORIGINAL TERM REQUEST	SYNOPSIS
Dr. Jordan Arellanes Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Psychology	Spring	The purpose of this sabbatical are two research initiatives: 1) Finalize & publish quantitative findings from a campus-wide intervention aimed at improving student perceptions of inclusion, diversity, equity, & access (IDEA). 2) Develop & evaluate community-based father/child programs, culminating in a grant proposal to establish a regional fatherhood support center.
Dr. Saskia Beranek Associate Professor	Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, Wonsook Kim School of Art	Spring	The purpose of this sabbatical is to travel to the Netherlands and Belgium to conduct primary research for a book project, "Sailing the Ships of State: Wives and Widows of Dutch Admirals as Cultural Patrons". The travel would also include giving visiting lectures and orchestrating study groups at universities in these countries.
Dr. Christina Borders Professor	College of Education, Department of Special Education	Spring	The purpose of this sabbatical is to conduct an in-depth SoTL analysis of a new nationwide dataset designed to identify current trends in the education of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
Dr. Thomas Buller Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Philosophy	Fall	The purpose of this sabbatical is to complete a book titled, " <i>The Ethics of Neurotechnology</i> ", examining ethical implications of emerging brain technologies such as brain-computer interfaces, neuro enhancement, and neuromodulation.
Dr. Thomas Burr Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Sociology & Anthropology	Spring	This sabbatical will be used to work on three projects: 1) finalize a textbook manuscript titled " <i>Societies: The Big Picture</i> ", which traces the evolution of human societies from very small groups to today's global social system; 2) finalize and submit an article manuscript on how social scientists use secondary historical sources; and 3. start writing a book on the proper use of secondary sources.

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Dr. Damien Cannavan Associate Professor	College of Business, Department of Accounting	Fall	This sabbatical will be used to visit University of Queensland, Australia and work with collaborator Stephen Gray to complete and submit manuscripts from ongoing research in accounting & finance. Cannavan also plans to attend classes and workshops to enhance teaching skills.
Dr. Yi-hsiang Chang Associate Professor	College of Applied Science & Technology, Department of Technology	Fall, Spring	The proposed project will document and analyze the technology-transfer pathway for a model system, Solid State Hydrogen Storage, by examining its project development process, scale-up manufacturing needs, supply chain formation, and workforce adaptation requirements. Conducted in collaboration with Dr. Song-Jen Huang, the study will map the sequence of activities required to advance an academic invention from laboratory discovery to commercial deployment. Because the technology is already patented and has a confirmed buyer, the project will enable continuous evaluation of the transfer process from initial conceptualization through market readiness.
Dr. Abigail Chipps Stone Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Sociology & Anthropology	Fall, Spring	Time to carry out detailed laboratory analyses of artifacts recovered during excavations in Zambia and report these and other data in a series of three peer-reviewed publications.
Dr. Neil Christensen Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Physics	Fall	The purpose of this sabbatical is to continue exploring the structure of particle interactions through the Constructive standard Model for particle collisions. He will work on calculating higher-multiplicity amplitudes involving collisions of up to 5 or 6 particles interacting at once. Each permutation will result in lessons learned and publication. The goal is to enable discoveries at the Large Hadron Collider that are currently beyond reach.
Dr. Laura Finan Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Psychology	Fall	During this sabbatical, Finan will continue research focusing on the sober curious movement given shifts in alcohol use and trends among young people. Her lab will conduct studies that examine cognitive, motivational, and behavioral correlates with engagement in and experiences during sober curious practices (e.g., "dry January"; "sober October").
Dr. Nicholas Heller Associate Professor	College of Applied Science & Technology, Department of Agriculture	Fall	The purpose of this sabbatical is to visit collaborator laboratories at UIUC, SIUE, and MU-Columbia to learn from prominent Crop Scientists and work on written communication skills.
Dr. Michael Hendricks Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department	Spring	The purpose of this sabbatical is to complete a book, <i>Confronting the Hydra: How the Illicit Drug</i>

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	of Politics and Government		<i>Trade Influences United Nations Peacekeeping.</i> The book explores how drug-funded insurgencies complicate peacebuilding efforts, even when UN peacekeeping missions successfully reduce active conflict. The work offers both theoretical innovation and actionable policy recommendations for international actors.
Dr. Susan Hildebrandt Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures	Spring	The purpose of this sabbatical is to advance scholarship and advocacy in world language teacher education, focusing on equity, justice, & language acquisition. The study will examine how mindfulness practices impact language education and language teacher preparation, connecting academic achievement and mental health. As a whole, the research will synthesize research across numerous areas and carry out a meta-analysis that addresses the links among applied linguistics, educational psychology, and neuroscience. The leave will support development of a journal manuscript, conference proposal, pedagogical guide, and facilitation of a CIPD professional development session or series.
Dr. John Hooker Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, School of Communication	Spring	Dr. Hooker proposes to revise the interactive e-textbook <i>Engaging Communication for use in ISU's COM 110 program</i> , aligning it with the newly approved General Education outcomes launching in Fall 2028. He also proposes to study future SoTL research to assess the textbook's effectiveness and promote ISU's leadership in communication education.
Dr. Richard Hughes Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of History	Spring	The primary focus of this sabbatical is completing a peer-reviewed article on a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) study titled <i>Reorienting the Past: Impact of a Survey Course on Teaching and Learning History</i> . This research evaluates innovative pedagogy in HIS136, emphasizing historical thinking over rote memorization, and includes comparative data from multiple course sections. Hughes will also revise and submit 2 articles on 1960s urban ghetto culture: one on "Ghetto Tourism" and another on educational simulation games reflecting race and class dynamics.
Dr. Antony Joseph Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders	Spring	The purpose of this sabbatical is to focus on advancing research in hearing health access and noise-induced hearing loss prevention. Finalize details for the design, implementation, and outcomes of their Custom Earplugs for Farmers Project. An often-overlooked population when it

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Dr. Mijin Kim Associate Professor	College of Applied Science & Technology, Department of Criminal Justice Sciences	Fall	comes to occupational protection against noise-induced hearing loss. Dr. Kim will be a Visiting Scholar at BU working with a collaborator on a textbook addressing the pros/cons of using AI and technology in prisons and addressing recidivism.
Dr. Meghan Leonard Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Politics and Government	Fall	During this sabbatical, Dr. Leonard will continue studies on the erosion of the authority of State Supreme Courts with a focus on how different parts of judicial independence are being violated in the American states.
Dr. Alan Lessoff University Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of History	Fall, Spring	The purpose of this sabbatical is to spend Fall writing two manuscripts while residing in Reading, England. While there, Dr. Lessoff will also visit Germany and the Netherlands where some of the research for these papers began when he was a visiting scholar there. He will use the SP27 semester to finish a draft of his next book project in conjunction with the McLean County Museum of History.
Dr. Ciera Lorio Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders	Spring	Dr. Lorio will use this sabbatical to advance research & teaching in early intervention, caregiver coaching, & language/literacy within Comm. Sci. & Disorders. This leave will deepen expertise, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and enhance ISU's visibility. Key initiatives: 1) expand a professional development study for early intervention providers (REICC), 2) analyze parent-child interactions in shared book reading (ITSBR), and 3) prepare a federal personnel training grant (PPG) in collaboration with Audiology and Special Education.
Dr. Beth MacDonald Professor	College of Education, School of Teaching and Learning	Spring	The goal of this leave is to write & submit an NSF grant to examine how children's subitizing changes across different tasks. Also, to complete analysis and dissemination of the work funded by their ARCS grant. Finally, to extend quantitative research methods and design expertise to forge a new era of research.
Dr. Sumesh Philip Associate Professor	College of Applied Science & Technology, School of Information Technology	Spring	The purpose of this sabbatical is to develop an intelligent wireless security system that can monitor and alert anomalies in a network using machine learning and artificial intelligence techniques.
Dr. Neet Priya Bajwa Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Mathematics	Fall	This sabbatical has four objectives: 1) Analyze 2018-2019 dataset on prospective teachers' reasoning about arrays, as well as transcribing

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			interviews from 2025-2026 focused on how children coordinate partitioning & iterating, 2) submit one to two manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals. 3) Conference presentation. 4) Refine interview & protocols for next phase of research on children's multiplicative reasoning.
Dr. Ela Przybylo Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of English	Fall, Spring	The proposed sabbatical will be focused on feminist and queer theory, affect studies, and digital humanities. The work centers on developing a digital archive and interactive platform that explores feminist feelings and aesthetics through curated texts, images, and multimedia. The project aims to bridge academic research with public engagement, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and expanding access to feminist scholarship.
Dr. Barbara Ribbens Associate Professor	College of Business, Department of Management	Fall	During this sabbatical, Dr. Ribbens will spend Fall 2026 analyzing data to produce a SOTL paper on data that has been collected over the last decade from the MGT 349 course. The leave will also be used to verify & clarify the design of this course to best provide cross-cultural learning that stimulates the development of cross-cultural intelligence in students. Thus, this project will provide both a publication which shares what I learned, but also another layer of learning for my own growth in teaching this course in the future.
Dr. Rebecca Saunders Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of English	Fall	During this sabbatical, Dr. Saunders will work on completing a book entitled, "African Women rewrite War & Peace".
Dr. John Sedbrook Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, School of Biological Sciences	Fall, Spring	The purpose of this sabbatical is to spend time working with Dr. Amasino at UW-Madison getting going on their new DOE funded (\$1.8M) project using <i>Odontarrhena</i> to sequester nickel from soil. Work on genetically modifying winter rye as a more economically beneficial cover crop.
Dr. Jonathan Seelye Martin Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures	Fall, Spring	Dr. Martin will use the year to focus on Germanic heroic legend poetry as research for a subsequent monograph. The work will target correcting misinterpretations of the genre that have been orally passed down over generations. This will require going back to original archives.
Dr. Michele Shropshire Associate Professor	Mennonite College of Nursing	Spring	The purpose of this leave is to gain professional technical skills in developing video games to describe and compare the use of gerontological nursing concepts within a gamification intervention on the combined dependent variables of perceived satisfaction and learning outcomes in nursing students enrolled in their first nursing courses at ISU.

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Dr. Chang Su-Russell Associate Professor	College of Applied Science & Technology, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences	Fall	The purpose of this sabbatical is to continue ARC-funded work on Intergenerational Environments. This includes writing manuscripts for data collected already, while visiting other institutions continuing to collect data as well. These combined efforts will be amalgamated into an extramural grant proposal submission to the Spencer Foundation.
Dr. Jonathan Thayn Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment	Fall	During this sabbatical, Dr. Thayn proposes to launch a long-term ecological monitoring project in Utah, focused on the impact of the northern tamarisk beetle—a deliberately introduced species—on invasive tamarisk willows. The project will use drone and satellite imagery, machine learning, and field data to assess beetle diffusion, tamarisk dieback, and native species recovery. Dr. Thayn proposes to engage many undergraduates in this project for the next several years.
Professor Elizabeth Thompson Associate Professor	Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, School of Music	Spring	During this sabbatical, Professor Thompson will pursue Body Mapping licensure to codify their expertise and expand the audiences with which they can work. This is an extension of their work supported by a University Research Grant focused on training in body mapping for musicians to support musicians from all applied disciplines, broadening engagement with students outside of the voice area.
Dr. Lisa Tranel Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment	Fall, Spring	In FA26 and SP27, Dr. Tranel will work on two existing avenues of investigation: 1) Sediment deposition in the Illinois driftless area, & 2) Tracing erosion history in the Guadalupe Mountains. Both projects have student participation.
Dr. Andrew Ventimiglia Associate Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, School of Communication	Spring	Work with his Co-author, Ari Kelman (Stanford Univ) on completing a draft of their book entitled, <i>Inventing Feedback: Improvement Machines and the Systematized Self.</i> The book is under contract with MIT publishing, and the manuscript is due Aug. 2027. Gathering data for the book requires visits to Kansas Historical Society Archives, Duke Univ., and Rice Univ.
Professor Laina Reese Werner-Powell Associate Professor	Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, School of Theatre, Dance, and Film	Fall	This sabbatical will be used to travel for pedagogical and choreographic research and to establish new international university connections and travel abroad opportunities for students.
Dr. Maochao Xu Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Mathematics	Spring	The purpose of this sabbatical is to create a predictive tool capable of assessing both the likelihood and severity of cyber breaches across

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Dr. Kevin Zhang Professor	College of Arts & Sciences, Department of Economics	Spring	multiple time periods and industries by developing a state-of-the-art AI-driven learning framework. During this sabbatical, Dr. Zhang will develop a theoretical framework on the role of Industrial Policy on the dynamics of Foreign Direct Investment and Manufacturing Development. The work will compare/contrast this relationship between 3 separate decades spanning 1990 - 2024