

1 September 30, 2010

2 **S.R. 1003**

3
4 **Title: In Support of Creating a Faculty Sabbatical Leave Program**

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6 **WHEREAS,** Research is crucial to maintaining the University of Texas at Austin’s status as a
7 top tier-university and is rooted in the University’s mission “to contribute to the
8 advancement of society through research, creativity, scholarly inquiry and the
9 development of new knowledge”¹; and,

10
11 **WHEREAS,** A faculty sabbatical is a scholarly endeavor which gives a faculty member the
12 opportunity to leave campus in order “to utilize other research centers, to work
13 with other scholars, or to conduct field research”² which will in turn significantly
14 “enhance the faculty member’s ability to contribute to the objectives of the
15 University”³; and,

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17 **WHEREAS,** A true faculty sabbatical leave program guarantees all faculty one to two
18 semesters of paid leave every six to seven years of teaching service to the
19 university; and,

20
21 **WHEREAS,** The Faculty Research Assignment (FRA), a competitive faculty research leave
22 program that currently exists on campus, allows tenured faculty to compete for a
23 limited number of one-semester paid leave position⁴; and,

24
25 **WHEREAS,** The FRA is “comparable to only a one semester grant”⁵ that faculty at our peer
26 universities may apply for on top of their allotted faculty sabbatical leaves; and,

27
28 **WHEREAS,** The FRA is limited only to tenured faculty, and;

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30 **WHEREAS,** Not all tenured faculty members at our University are able to receive an FRA,
31 given the competitive nature of the grant in addition to the limited number of
32 funds for the grant; and,

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34 **WHEREAS,** Grants like the FRA are far from a true faculty sabbatical leave program; and,
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¹ The Mission of the University of Texas at Austin

² “Sabbatical Leave Program”-- Indiana University <https://extended.indiana.edu/testsite21/media/sabb_acadgd.htm>

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Faculty Development Program” – University of Texas at Austin < <http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/fdp/>>

⁵ Elizabeth Scala, Associate Professor of English, Member of the Faculty Review Committee for the Faculty Research Assignment grant.

36 **WHEREAS,** The need for all faculty to be able to engage in regular sabbatical leave is crucial
37 to increasing a faculty member’s potential to boost the status and reputation of the
38 University; and,
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40 **WHEREAS,** The regular allocation of time and compensation for scholarly research will
41 enable faculty members to not only keep-up-to-date with developments in their
42 field but will also allow them to “return to their post with renewed vigor,
43 perspective, and insight”⁶; and,
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45 **WHEREAS,** Studies and examinations of higher education and sabbaticals have also
46 demonstrated the benefits of regular sabbaticals in the development and
47 satisfaction of faculty members⁷; and,
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49 **WHEREAS,** According to President Bill Powers in his annual State of the University address,
50 this need for faculty satisfaction and productivity, which can be served by regular
51 faculty sabbaticals it should be noted, serves the greater purpose of “increasing
52 our research and educational productivity”⁸; and,
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54 **WHEREAS,** President Bill Powers also states that “diminishing the quality of our faculty
55 would be the single most destructive thing we could do for our overall
56 productivity”⁹; and,
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58 **WHEREAS,** The current lack of a true faculty sabbatical leave program prevents the quality of
59 current faculty members from increasing through faculty sabbaticals and could
60 negatively impact a prospective faculty member’s view of the University of
61 Texas’s opportunities for academic development and research; and,
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63 **WHEREAS,** Such a program will serve as an excellent recruitment tool for the University in
64 attracting talented faculty; and,
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66 **WHEREAS,** A true faculty sabbatical program will provide for enrichment opportunities,
67 improved teaching, the advancement of course curriculum through knowledge
68 that faculty bring back from their sabbaticals and will yield significant benefits in
69 service and research productivity to the University; and,
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71 **WHEREAS,** Many of the University of Texas’s comparison schools as the University of
72 California Berkeley, the University of California Los Angeles, the University of
73 Michigan, Michigan State University, the University of Virginia, the University

⁶ “Stanford Faculty Handbook—Sabbaticals and Other Leaves of Absences”-- Stanford University
< <http://facultyhandbook.stanford.edu/ch3.html>>

⁷ Celina M. Sima. 2002. The Role and Benefits of the Sabbatical Leave in Faculty Development and Satisfaction.
New Directions for Institutional Research. Pg. 69-75.

⁸ “President Powers Delivers 2010 State of the University Address.” --
<http://www.utexas.edu/news/2010/09/15/powers_2010address/>

⁹ “President Powers Delivers 2010 State of the University Address.” --
<http://www.utexas.edu/news/2010/09/15/powers_2010address/>

74 of North Carolina—Chapel Hill as well as Texas State University currently have
75 true faculty sabbatical programs; and,
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77 **WHEREAS,** In order to remain a competitive university, we must both emulate and improve
78 upon the programs established at our comparison schools that place many of these
79 institutions at the top of national rankings; and,
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81 **WHEREAS,** The University’s Faculty Council Research Policy Committee has expressed the
82 need to create such a faculty sabbatical leave program; and,
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84 **WHEREAS,** This proposal has garnered support from President Bill Powers and former Vice-
85 Provost Stephen Monti¹⁰, and;
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87 **WHEREAS,** Faculty Council has indicated “ that such a program should be operational in 3 to
88 4 years”¹¹ despite current budgetary constraints; therefore, be it,
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90 **RESOLVED,** That the Senate of College Councils supports Faculty Council’s initiative to create
91 a faculty sabbatical leave program at the University of Texas; and, be it further
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93 **RESOLVED,** That this resolution be sent to President Bill Powers, Executive Vice-President
94 and Provost Steven Leslie, Dean Neikirk, Chair of the Faculty Council, and
95 Alexandra Loukas, Chair of the Research Policy Committee of Faculty Council.
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¹⁰ Loukas, Alexandra. Faculty Council’s “2009-2010 Report of the Research Policy Committee”

¹¹ Ibid.

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Sponsors: David Liu (Policy Director, Senate of College Councils)
Faculty Affairs Committee