



UNIVERSITY OF  
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Office of the Provost

**Board of Trustees – Information Item  
Sabbatical Leave Approvals for 2025-26**

TO: President Andy Feinstein  
UNC Board of Trustees

FROM: Kirsten Fleming, Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: Sabbatical Leave Approvals for 2025-26

DATE: February 13, 2025

In accordance with the University of Northern Colorado Board of Trustees Policy Manual 2-3-1001, twenty-seven members of the faculty have been approved for a sabbatical leave during the 2025-26 academic year. Summaries of sabbaticals approved for 2025-26 are attached. Here are the numbers by term of leave (semester or full academic year):

Fall 2025: 8  
Spring 2026: 12  
Academic Year 25/26: 7

**Details on process:**

We began this year's sabbatical cycle with nine previously approved proposals from faculty members whose sabbatical leave was delayed due to resource constraints or for personal reasons. Of those nine:

- Two were approved but delayed until AY 2025-2026 due to resource constraints (Johnson, K. and Kyser).
- Six were included on the list of funded proposals for AY 2024-2025 and were subsequently delayed by the faculty member (Aldridge, Conroy, Johnson, B., Schaberl, Terranova, and Zaremba).
- One had started a year-long sabbatical in AY 24/25 but was only able to complete one semester and must complete the second semester of sabbatical leave in AY 25/26 (Erekson).

Upon confirmation in Spring 2025, three of the above nine either forfeited their approved sabbatical leave (Conroy and Terranova) or chose to delay another year (Johnson, K.), in accordance with 2-3-1001(5)(e). Thus, six of the nine previously approved proposals are going forward for AY 2025-2026.

In Fall 2024, we received twenty-three new applications from eligible faculty members for leaves to be taken in AY 2025-26. All proposals were approved by the faculty on their merits. Of those, two were delayed until AY 2026-27. These two faculty members will be eligible to apply for a future sabbatical as if this delay had not occurred; that is, they will be eligible to apply in 2031 for leaves to be taken in AY 2032-2033.

- One was delayed due to the applicant's continued service in an interim administrative role.
- One was delayed by the PVA Dean due to resource constraints.



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Here is a summary of active proposals and results by college:

College	Prior Active Proposals Confirmed for AY 25/26	New (Fall 24) Proposals	Total New Proposals Approved	Total New Proposals Delayed	Total Funded for AY 25/26
Education & Behavioral Sciences	3	5	5	1	7
Humanities & Social Sciences	0	6	6	0	6
Monfort College of Business	1	2	2	0	3
Natural & Health Sciences	1	5	5	0	6
Performing & Visual Arts	1	5	5	1	5
University Libraries	0	0	n/a	n/a	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>27</b>

The following sabbatical titles and summaries of approved proposals were provided by faculty members during the application process.



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**Funded Sabbatical Leaves  
Academic Year 2025-26**

***New Applications Approved for AY 2025-26***

**College of Education & Behavioral Sciences**

**Todd Allen (Fall)**

*School of Psychological Sciences*

Title: Avoidance, Math Anxiety, and Learning Flexibility

Summary: My sabbatical involves two avoidance projects. One project is a grant about avoidance and math anxiety while the other develops a discrimination task for assessing discrimination in avoidant humans. These activities enhance my professional growth into new areas of research, include student researchers, and enhances UNC's reputation in research.

**Michelle Athanasiou (Spring)**

*Department of School Psychology*

Title: Accreditation Study and Statistics Retraining

Summary: I plan to complete training and collect data related to APA and NASP program accreditation requirements and retool in modern statistical methods and technology. Planning is imperative for successful reaccreditation, which benefits student recruitment, education, and UNC's reputation. Statistics retooling benefits current research and doctoral training.

**Christine McConnell (Fall)**

*School of Teacher Education*

Title: Ecological Experience

Summary: I will complete data collection and analysis on ecological experience and then draft a full-length book manuscript to be submitted for publication. I will engage in innovative research techniques using Auto-criticism, an arts-based research method that utilizes artistic methods for data collection and analysis, including poetic representation.

**Kenneth Parnell** (Spring)

*Department of Applied Psychology & Counselor Education*

Title: Qualitative Research Methodologies

Summary: I plan to attend advanced training in qualitative research methodologies including utilizing software to assist in transcribing, coding, and analyzing themes. I will then use these skills to conduct a study to publish in my area of scholarship on help-seeking. This project will contribute to my courses on research methods and in supporting student research.

**College of Humanities & Social Sciences**

**Britney Kyle** (Spring)

*Department of Anthropology*

Title: Bioarchaeological Investigations into Greek Colonization

Summary: During sabbatical, I will write two publications and restart my NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Site. One article will likely receive media attention (as with my previous work featured in the *New York Times*, etc.). The REU will support students as they engage in high quality, mentored research.

**Michelle Low** (Spring)

*Department of World Languages & Cultures*

Title: Diversifying English-language Fantasy Novels with Nüxian Waishi 女仙外史 (The Unofficial History of a Female Immortal)

Summary: This project will produce the first English translation of this 18<sup>th</sup> century Chinese novel into two different English-language versions: one for specialists and students of Chinese literature, history, and philosophy, and an abridged version for popular Young Adult audiences.

**Heidi Muller** (Spring)

*Department of Communication & Journalism*

Title: Innovations in Collaborative Communities Project

Summary: This innovations in collaborative communities project is to publish three ideas workshopped at conferences. This work advances the communication discipline via expanding how we research instructional and dialogic communication. Providing insight into discussion practices in the classroom and in challenging life situations enhances student learning experiences in keeping with valued UNC traditions.

**Erin Noelliste** (Fall)

*Department of World Languages & Cultures*

Title: Historical Studies on the Languages of the Vikings and Goths

Summary: This project investigates new data from Old Norse and Gothic in modern linguistic frameworks. It enhances: professional growth (exploring new linguistic fields); knowledge (explores new data); students' educational experience (delves into language as a human entity); University's reputation (will produce peer-reviewed publications).

**Marc Santos** (Fall)

*Department of English*

Title: Integrating Artificial Intelligence and Writing Instruction

Summary: My proposed article charts a “middle way” through the polarizing discourses on artificial intelligence and writing instruction. I argue that while such technologies threaten to undermine the development of critical thought, they can, if used properly, enhance learning. Students need the critical capacity and technical know-how to assess and engage these emerging technologies.

**Kyle Ward** (Spring)

*Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice*

Title: Enhancing Threat Assessment Protocols: Improving Campus Safety Through Evaluation and Collaboration

Summary: This project aims to evaluate and enhance UNC’s threat assessment procedures through surveys, targeted training, and analysis of national practices. The findings will improve campus safety, refine UNC’s protocols, and contribute to best practices in Behavioral Threat Assessment nationwide.

**Monfort College of Business**

**Cris de la Torre** (Fall)

*Department of Finance*

Title: Developing a Canvas Module to Address High DFW Rates in Finance Classes

Summary: I plan on developing a Canvas module to address business students high DFW rates in finance classes that have a time value of money component. This should help with retention and may lead to a pedagogical publication. I also intend to develop another Canvas module that will help structure a current foreign currency trading assignment with more structure.

**Denny McCorkle** (Academic Year)

*Department of Marketing*

Title: Growing With AI (Four Objectives)

Summary:

- (1) Write a pedagogical paper about the “Students Teaching Students for a More Up-To-Date Social Media Marketing Course.”
- (2) Write a pedagogical paper about “LinkedIn for Social Leadership.”
- (3) Attend several Professional Conferences, and
- (4) Create new course materials to learn more about teaching and using Generative AI in my classes.

## **College of Natural & Health Sciences**

**Lauryn Benedict** (Academic Year)

*Department of Biological Sciences*

Title: Historical and Evolutionary Approaches to Studying Bird Song as a Model Communication System

Summary: During sabbatical leave in 2025-26, I will:

- 1) Write a monograph on the history of research on female bird song in North America
- 2) Visit colleagues to conduct research on avian vocal learning as part of this international collaboration investigating avian learning and cognition: <https://www.manyparrots.org/>
- 3) Develop my international STEM network and leadership capacity to advance equity

**Andrea James** (Spring)

*Department of Biological Sciences*

Title: Explore link between mechanosensation and differentiation during zebrafish eye development/Explore alternative conceptions of chemistry and biology concepts in Cell Biology

Summary: Both lines of research provide students opportunities to engage in active research, grant writing, and publications related to cell, molecular, and developmental biology and establishes a new line of bioeducation research.

**Gulden Karakok** (Academic Year)

*Department of Mathematical Sciences*

Title: Enhancing Mathematical Creativity and Dispositions

Summary: This proposal supports research on the intersectionality of mathematical creativity, identity, and dispositions, developing effective math instruction. It aids in my growth as a teacher-scholar, produces new knowledge on creativity in math education, improve student experiences, and elevates the University's reputation through innovative research.

**Nathaniel Miller** (Spring)

*Department of Mathematical Sciences*

Title: Diagrams in the Geometry for Teachers Course

Summary: This sabbatical project will include work on several interrelated projects pertaining to the scholarship of teaching geometry courses. These include updating my computer system CDEG; writing about how CDEG fits in with Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for GeT (Geometry for Teachers) courses; dissemination of this work; and other related research.

**Katie Morrison** (Academic Year)

*Department of Mathematical Sciences*

Title: Neuroscience and coding theory

Summary: My research in mathematical neuroscience and coding theory will expand knowledge in these fields while providing me opportunities for professional growth and collaboration. This work will enhance students' educational experiences by fostering undergraduate research and will elevate the university's reputation through high-impact publications and research initiatives.

## **College of Performing & Visual Arts**

### **Michelle Gaza** (Spring)

*School of Theatre Arts & Dance*

Title: Audio Book Narration: Technical Training, Studio Construction, Full-Length Audio Book Recording, and Course Content Development

Summary: I will research and learn how to record, mix, and edit audio books, record my first full-length audio book, and then develop this learning into course content for the Voice & Speech courses that I teach in the School of Theatre Arts and Dance at UNC.

### **Sarah Off** (Spring)

*School of Music*

Title: Research in AI in the Music Industry, Creation of an OER Music Business Textbook, and International Residency with the Cork School of Music in Ireland

Summary: This sabbatical will enhance professional growth, knowledge in the discipline and University reputation by providing valuable research in music business (the use of AI in the music industry and a music business/entrepreneurship textbook) and professional activity in violin performance and will enhance students' educational experiences through applied teaching and recruitment.

### **Jim White** (Spring)

*School of Music*

Title: Illuminating the Silence: Techniques to Develop Confidence in Your Groove

Summary: This proposal is to develop a new drum set method book. The book focuses on body motion and the importance of silence in maintaining a consistent tempo. It introduces techniques using a multi-rod stick and egg shaker to enhance confidence in drum set performance.

### **Ken Womble** (Fall)

*School of Theatre Arts & Dance*

Title: Direct and Produce a Short Film

Summary: This short, based on a full-length screenplay by UNC grad Ben Klingemann, will strengthen my skills as a film acting teacher, and benefit students in two film acting related courses. UNC students and faculty will participate. Making it in the Greeley/UNC area will create enhancements for future film production.

*Previously Approved Applications Delayed until AY 2025-26*

**College of Education & Behavioral Sciences**

**Jim Erikson** (Fall\*)

*School of Teacher Education*

Title: Flow of Literacy

Summary: Work in community literacy projects across the nation with Unite for Literacy, extending existing research and consulting efforts with this social enterprise, including research and evaluation in community-sponsored projects with literacy-stressed low-income communities (such as Bureau of Indian Education; Louisville, KY; Omaha, NE; Yakima, WA; Longmont & Fort Morgan, CO).

**Brian Johnson** (Fall)

*Department of Applied Psychology & Counselor Education*

Title: Developing Multicultural Competence and Applications

Summary: This plan includes: 1) collaboration with colleagues in China to develop/disseminate parenting modules, 2) development of a list of international mental health resources, and 3) independent study into culturally adapted psychotherapies. Work products will be disseminated internationally, enhancing UNC's reputation, and benefiting our students.

**Christine Kyser** (Academic Year)

*School of Teacher Education*

Title: Research and Teaching: Analyzing Data, Preparing Manuscripts, and Teaching as a Voyage Faculty Member on Semester at Sea

Summary: I am proposing to spend one semester focusing on research, analyzing, and writing manuscripts around work with The UNC Future Teacher Conference and classroom pedagogy. My second semester I will teach three courses and develop and lead in-country field work on Semester at Sea.

**Monfort College of Business**

**Philipp Schaberl** (Spring)

*Department of Accounting*

Title: Plan for Sabbatical Leave for Spring 2026 Semester

Summary: The time afforded me during my sabbatical leave will allow me to focus on three key objectives: (1) development and production of a manuscript related to business valuation, (2) completion of an early-stage project with co-authors on how inflation influences the relative relevance of accounting information, as well as (3) actively participate in any searches for department chair or faculty in accounting and any faculty reviews.



## **College of Natural & Health Sciences**

**Michael Aldridge** (Academic Year)

*School of Nursing*

Title: A Delphi Study to Identify Core Psychomotor Skills for Undergraduate Nursing Education

Summary: This project seeks to identify a core list of skills for nursing students to master by graduation. Researchers agree that nursing programs teach too many skills, leading to overall poor skill performance. Teaching fewer skills allows for skill mastery, which students and employers desire for safe patient care.

## **College of Performing & Visual Arts**

**Drew Zarembo** (Academic Year)

*School of Music*

Title: A Zarembo Omnibus Sabbatical

Summary: 1. Compile my handouts into a textbook for MUS 346/546 (the Arranging Fundamental class); 2. Compose my first major Symphony; 3. Travel to and strengthen ties with Colombia, as a follow-up to the PVA trip in October 23.

*\*Continuation of an AY24/25 leave for which only one semester was able to be completed.*

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