Staff sabbaticals: an examination of sabbatical purposes and benefits for higher education administrators

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STAFF SABBATICALS: AN EXAMINATION OF SABBATICAL PURPOSES AND BENEFITS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS

by
Katherine Leigh Wildman

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Policy and Leadership Studies (Higher Education and Student Affairs) in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

May 2012

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Christopher C. Morphew
ABSTRACT

Sabbaticals have long been linked to higher education institutions and their employees. Sabbaticals have been granted for the development and respite of employees teaching classes and conducting research. However, sabbaticals are not just limited to faculty at colleges or just linked to education. A number of businesses have also turned to sabbaticals to help recruit, retain, and develop employees and administrators. This study examines the practice of administrative sabbaticals to provide empirical research regarding sabbatical policies and benefits for administrative staff (professional, exempt staff). This study provides empirical research to understand how sabbaticals benefit institutions and their employees and how sabbatical policies are structured, conceptualized, and communicated.

Content analysis and qualitative inquiry were used to examine sabbatical granting institutions and the individuals who use sabbaticals. This multi-institutional case study sampled a variety of institutional types in the United States. Data were obtained from 20 sabbatical policies (representing a total of 166 institutional locations) and nine semi-structured case study interviews with both the sabbicants and the administrators of the programs. The data for this study were analyzed through Amabile’s organizational creativity theoretical framework. An extensive literature review on sabbaticals both inside and outside of academia provided the foundation for the study. Furthermore, document analysis of sabbatical proposals and final reports provided important background information. This study answered the following questions: How are staff sabbaticals structured and used at colleges and universities? How do administrators and sabbaticants in colleges and universities conceptualize and communicate individual and organizational benefits of staff sabbaticals? How do these individual and organizational benefits compare to the sabbatical policy?
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Educational Policy and Leadership Studies (Higher Education and Student Affairs)
in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

May 2012

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Christopher Morphew
Graduate College
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Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Katherine Leigh Wildman

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Policy and Leadership Studies (Higher Education and Student Affairs) at the May 2012 graduation.

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Debora Liddell

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David Grady

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Kenneth Brown
To SJG
(1958-2010)

I’ll float a graduation invitation to you when the big day arrives...it was after all, one we
dreamed of together and one of your last requests of me. Your passing and my time
without you has been a cruel and *Wicked* experience but it reminds me that...

“Because I knew you, I have been changed for good.”

Some may view this as my most profound achievement – but we both know that
discovering our life and love together was so much bigger.

All my love always and forever,
Your “Mrs. Rockefeller”
No doubt every institution of higher education would like to grant sabbatical leaves to members of its staff if finances permitted. Or at least every college administration would subscribe to the idea. Such a leave is no more than just recognition for past work accomplished and the promise of greater worth to the institution.

Ralph E. Heiges
*On Sabbatical Leave, 1954*
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PREFACE

This topic developed during a special president’s session at the 2008 Association of the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) conference. The panelists were experts in various staff recruitment positions and talked at length about the ridiculous and idiotic experiences that upper level administration (presidents and other top officials) endure due to the stress of their scrutinized positions. The panelists cited drunk driving convictions, affairs, and other actions that cost these top officials their jobs, cost the institutions their reputations, and in some cases prompted the termination of the employee and the costs of hiring a new employee. The panelists thought that universities should work to “take care” of their top officials. After all, these universities spent time and energy to bring these top-level officials to the institutions, and the officials maintain a great deal of knowledge and therefore contribute to the institutional memory. As I continued thinking, I realized all higher education administrators could benefit from a similar amount of “care.” In fact, those that “give care” might be another important group to receive these benefits. Reflecting on my own semi-sabbatical experience, I wondered about others with similar sabbatical experiences and the benefits to both the individual and the institution. I hope this study makes a contribution to the sabbatical literature and offers ways to not only “care” but also motivate, reenergize, and reinvigorate hard-working higher education administrators.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Suppose you were to come upon someone in the woods working feverishly to saw down a tree.
“What are you doing?” you ask.
“What can’t you see?” comes the impatient reply. “I’m sawing down this tree.”
“You look exhausted! …why don’t you take a break for a few minutes and sharpen that saw?” you inquire. “I’m sure it would go a lot faster.”
“I don’t have time to sharpen the saw,” the man says emphatically. “I’m too busy sawing!” (Covey, 1989, p. 287)

Sabbaticals have been used within higher education as a means of faculty development, recruitment, retention, and renewal (Bai & Miller, 1999). Sabbatical is defined as a purposeful, paid, concentrated period away from daily work for professional and/or personal development. This definition encompasses the broadest view of sabbaticals and is adapted from Zahorski (1994). With the recent increase in economic challenges faced by higher education institutions, administrators have begun looking for new and productive ways to transform their workplace environments and creatively compensate their non-faculty professional employees during tight financial times (Newman, Couturier, & Scurry, 2004). Concurrently, the number of sabbaticals available to administrators is increasing. The College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR; 2005, 2010) reported that sabbaticals for administrators (exempt-staff/non-faculty) are on the rise and have grown over 5% since 2005. With the survey reporting data from over 70 administrative sabbatical-sponsoring institutions (CUPA-HR, 2010), it is surprising that sabbaticals have received little anecdotal attention and even less empirical recognition. Of the research available, most of the literature pertains to faculty sabbaticals in the academic arena. Given that faculty sabbaticals already have a lengthy history in higher education, this study examines college and university sabbatical policies, purposes, and benefits for higher education administrators (non-faculty employees) in the United States. An analysis of how individual and
organizational benefits compare to the stated sabbatical objectives in policies and proposals is the purpose of this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study addresses gaps in the sabbatical literature by (a) examining sabbatical programs and policies for higher education administrators (non-faculty), (b) contributing empirical evidence on staff sabbatical opportunities and benefits to complement anecdotal reports, and (c) investigating and contrasting sabbatical purposes and benefits to the organization and the individual. It has been said that research informs practice and vice versa. In this study, the practice of offering sabbaticals is leading the argument. Although there is a modest amount of research on faculty sabbaticals, the literature addressing sabbatical practices and policies for administrative staff is limited. This study examines the practice of administrative sabbaticals to provide empirical research regarding sabbatical policies and benefits for administrative staff (professional, exempt staff). The following research questions guided this study:

1. How are staff sabbaticals structured and used at colleges and universities?
2. How do administrators and sabbaticants in colleges and universities conceptualize and communicate individual and organizational benefits of staff sabbaticals?
3. How do these individual and organizational benefits compare to the sabbatical policy?

To answer these questions, the researcher conducted a content analysis and purposeful case study of institutions with formal sabbatical policies. Conducting case studies allowed for in-depth understanding and meaning from a variety of perspectives. Given that a case study design has “proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (Merriam, 1998, p. 41), this study used research and multiple case studies to collect information about different cases that share similar sub units (Merriam, 1998).
Sabbaticals have been described as a concentrated period of paid time away from daily work (Zahorski, 1994) during which the participants can direct attention and energy to their own development as well as to the development of the institution (Bai & Miller, 1999). Although there have been many definitions of sabbatical leave, the definition used in the current study, which includes (a) a concentrated period of time and (b) compensation (i.e., paid time away from daily work), delineates sabbaticals as a unique employee benefit different from other types of leave.

Administrative or exempt staff are an important component of the higher education institution. These staff are often highly educated, hold multiple degrees, and provide education and services such as co-curricular programming, crisis and safety management, fundraising, and guidance for students to register for classes and receive health care and personal counseling (Barr & Desler, 2000b). For this study, the words administrator, practitioner, professional, and staff will be used synonymously for professionally educated, exempt, higher education administrative employees. As institutions seek to enhance their staff development opportunities, it is important to study how sabbaticals benefit this unique group of professionals. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine sabbatical benefits, purposes, and policies for higher education administrators.

Statement of the Problem

Sabbaticals are a time-honored professional tradition for faculty within higher education institutions in the United States (Dunlap, 1980, Randall, 1922). Historians disagree about the early 19th-century origin of academic sabbaticals. Some maintain that in 1880, Harvard University President Charles Elliot offered a sabbatical opportunity to recruit a prominent researcher from the Johns Hopkins University (Bai & Miller, 1999; Zahorski, 1994). Others state that in the same year, Elliot instituted sabbaticals as a benefit for high-quality teaching faculty who needed rest and rejuvenation (Eells & Hollis, 1962). Regardless of the origin, sabbaticals remain an important component of
college and university employment (Cooper, 1931) and continue to fulfill purposes that include recruitment, retention, and development for organizations (Kramer, 2001). For employees, sabbaticals have been viewed as a valuable compensation benefit and as a means to help staff refresh, renew, and learn new skills (Kramer, 2001). However, employers, legislators, and other stakeholders have recently raised concerns about sabbaticals. This group has often viewed sabbaticals as an expensive benefit given to faculty who already have a flexible work schedule and generous compensation. They consider sabbaticals as a luxury during difficult economic times (Adams, 1994) and cannot justify time free from daily work responsibilities while budgets are severely slashed and the workforce reduced or receiving salary cuts (Brown, 2006; Lively, 1994; The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2010). Over time, the populist perception of sabbaticals has migrated from a necessary professional development, recruitment, and retention method to an expensive employee vacation or break from everyday work with little to no organizational reward. Because of this new perception, sabbaticals are often targeted as a disposable practice to remedy organizational financial gaps (Brown, 2006; Lively, 1994). Given economic pressures and public misunderstandings about sabbaticals, it is not surprising that research on non-faculty staff development policies and practices is limited. Clarification and further understanding of issues associated with sabbaticals will help to address these complex problems (Brown, 2006).

Sabbatical Reputation is Unclear and Misunderstood

Historically, sabbaticals have been viewed as a mandatory period of rest. Agricultural land was given a sabbatical or seventh year of rest and workers were granted a seventh day of the same. These rest periods were crucial for maintaining agricultural production and the vitality of workers. Skipping forward several thousand years, contemporary society has maintained some of the early sabbatical traditions. Workers are usually allotted a day of rest, and breaks during the work day are recognized as necessary for rejuvenation, renewal, and motivation.
However, sabbatical leaves are often viewed by those outside of higher education as freedom from institutional accountability, ranging from not answering emails to enjoying world travel. Because not all higher education employees are allocated a sabbatical benefit, some employees view the arrangements as unfair (Kramer, 2001). To add to this perception, sabbaticals have been offered as part of severance packages for released employees or as compensation for work accomplished (Mangan, 2011; Moule, 2008). Used in these ways, sabbaticals are not given as development opportunities but are used for reward or compensation with little benefit to the institution (other than possibly protecting it from a lawsuit when offered as part of a severance package).

The sabbatical literature has reported many benefits beyond the perception of sabbaticals as a form of vacation or severance package. Sabbaticals have been linked to motivating innovation and research in both educational and corporate settings (Kramer, 2001). Other professional benefits cited in the literature include the development of career knowledge and skills; increased time for research, teaching, and continuing education; and opportunities for travel and new experiences (Hubbard, 2002).

Furthermore, sabbaticals have been cited as assisting with institutional goals such as improving recruitment and retention, developing institutional loyalty, increasing productivity and efficiency, cross training employees, increasing morale, and supporting the institutional mission (Kramer, 2001).

In addition to enhancing professional and organizational development, sabbaticals can enhance personal development. Personal benefits for developmental leave include reducing burnout, achieving balance, increasing reflection and job satisfaction, and promoting growth and motivation (Axel, 1992; Brown, 2006; Carr & Tang, 2005; Kramer, 2001). Thus, sabbatical programs have been cited as providing numerous benefits to both the individual and the organization.
Economic Context

Recent economic concerns have plagued colleges and universities. Between 2007 and 2009, the U.S. economy was hard hit by the Great Recession, which deeply affected housing, job, and world markets (A reading list: Greatest hits of the great recession, 2010). As a result, education, specifically higher education, experienced severe budget reductions, travel restrictions, and staffing freezes (Fischman, 2010). The failing economy also drastically reduced state allocations for public institutions and crippled endowments for both private and public institutions (Blumenstyk, 2009).

Because of tight budgets and the call for increased oversight, legislators and other governing bodies began to examine how to close financial short falls. For legislators who are looking for ways to save on allocations, sabbatical policies are an easy target. Sabbaticals are often viewed as a lofty vacation period free from accountability and work with little benefit to the organization. As a result, state legislators have challenged the use of sabbaticals in higher education. In Iowa (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2010), sabbaticals were under review in the state legislature while in other states, such as Colorado (Lively, 1994) and New York (Claire, 1971), sabbatical policies have endured similar government scrutiny.

In the face of budget cuts and staffing reductions, it might seem inappropriate to discuss the benefits of sabbatical programs that have been perceived as an unnecessary luxury. However, discussing sabbaticals during difficult economic times is not new (Axel, 1992; Nelsen, 1973). In fact, sabbaticals or administrative leave programs were a topic of discussion during the Great Depression of the 1930s and 1940s (Cooper, 1931; Persoff, 1945) and again during the economic downturn of the 1970s (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1976; Kimball, 1978; Levine, 1977; Warner, 1979). During both of these periods, economists and leaders viewed sabbaticals as a way to boost the morale of overworked staff and to more evenly employ more Americans.
Making the Case for Formal Institutional Staff Development Policies

Making the case for professional development participation has been difficult for many employees. The literature has highlighted the importance of institutional and supervisor buy-in to ensure the success of professional development programs (Bryan & Schwartz, 1998; Corderman, 2008). Without key personnel support, formal staff development policies are likely to be treated as informal practice, as they are in many cases (Gaskell & Morrill, 2001; Kramer, 2001; Neidle, 1978). When addressing the importance of staff development programs, one author wrote:

Staff development and training for university and college professional staff remains unevenly provided for at the local level, despite the commendable developments and support nationally. In those institutions where the Head of administration, Director of Personnel and other heads (a) place value on it and (b) devote resources to it, significant opportunities exist. However, the onus is often still very much on individual staff members to press their own case for training, and the tendency remains then for them to be offered an external short course to cater in an ad hoc way for an immediate need. Coherent, career-long, in-house pathways of development are still few and far between. (Partington, 1996, p. 10)

Professional library organizations have called for established staff development policies to ensure the continued development of employees in an ever-changing environment (Critten, 1998; Partington, 1996). These library organizations have indicated a need for comprehensive institutional policies that place a value on staff development for professionally educated staff. Even with legislative and economic concerns, some organizations continue to cite the importance of offering sabbaticals and in some cases creating new sabbatical policies (Utah Higher Education Staff Association, 2006).

Sabbatical policies are not a new concept. In the last 40 years, scholars and practitioners have discussed the notion. Although not current, Nelson’s study underscores the demands on many academic administrators, including the growth in responsibilities and increasing pressures that can lead to a need for renewal. Nelson (1973) wrote:

Several forces have led to the increase in interest in administrative leave programs – the growth in both numbers and responsibilities of college and university
administrators, increasing pressures on administrative personnel, recognition of
the need for professional renewal at a time when effective leadership is crucial to
higher education. (p. 318)

The literature on sabbaticals for non-faculty is limited and offers little information
outside of the faculty arena, with lack of delineation among staff, administrative, and
faculty groups. For faculty, the empirical literature on sabbatical policies is also scarce.
Much of the research focuses on evaluating the policies themselves with little critical
analysis of how the policies meet the needs of the institution or individuals (Eberle &
Thompson, 1973; Thompson, 1972).

Yet administrative sabbatical policies are available in many institutions. For
administrators, the CUPA-HR collects information on various benefits, including
different types of leave at U.S. institutions of higher education. In 2010, CUPA-HR
reported that 17% of institutions offered sabbaticals (as formal paid leave) for exempt
administrative staff and 4% for non-exempt or support staff (CUPA-HR, 2010). With 470
institutions reporting, formal sabbatical policies for non-faculty were more prevalent than
might be expected. In the CUPA-HR study, separate data were collected for faculty,
exempt staff, and non-exempt staff. In the same survey, sabbaticals for administrators
(exempt staff) were up 5% from 2005 (CUPA-HR, 2005, 2010). The survey illustrates
growth in formal sabbatical programs over the last 5 years. Moreover, this bi-annual
survey does not collect information regarding informal sabbatical policies, including
negotiated leave experiences or unwritten traditions that are portrayed as sabbaticals but
do not have an official policy behind them (Neidle, 1978). In many cases, these are given
to long-standing administrators to finish degrees or develop projects. These experiences
for staff have been cited anecdotally (A. Borst, T. Hicks, L. Kelsay, K. Mindrup, personal
communication, November 13, 2010; M. Hicks, D. Stewart, personal communication,
November 14, 2010; C. Pettitt, personal communication, May 7, 2011; L. Emerick,
personal communication, May 6, 2011).
Introducing sabbaticals as an institutional benefit continues to occupy institutional and organizational agendas in Idaho (Idaho Freedom Federation, 2011) and Utah (Utah Higher Education Staff Association, 2006). However, literature related to these benefits is sparse, and legislative disagreement and economic concerns over sabbatical policies make this a ripe area for policy research (Marker, 1983).

Problem Summary

While there are studies on sabbaticals in education, there is still room for rich qualitative empirical research on the emergence of institutional sabbatical policies. Because of this qualitative gap, it is time to more fully understand staff sabbaticals’ purposes and benefits for administrative professionals and organizations. Across a broad spectrum of institutions, further research on sabbaticals is needed within and between institutions to understand contextual institutional trends and how they pertain to sabbatical purposes and benefits. The purpose of this study was to explore the individual and organizational components of staff sabbatical policies and experiences for higher education administrators and to investigate the purposes and benefits of sabbaticals both inside and outside of the academy.

Sabbatical Literature: Further Analysis

Anecdotally, sabbaticals have been revered as a premiere professional development experience in both the academic and the corporate sectors. Because current empirical literature on sabbaticals is limited, a broad investigation of sabbaticals both inside and outside of higher education is needed. This section will examine the literature on sabbaticals and policies broadly defined.

Sabbatical Literature

Sabbatical literature can be divided into two groups: academic and corporate. The literature regarding sabbaticals in academia pertains mostly to faculty and their research, teaching, and service. This sabbatical literature pertaining to faculty has reported sabbatical outcomes such as an increased number of research publications or improved
teaching evaluations (Bai, 1999; Bai, Miller, & Newman, 2000; Boening & Miller, 1997). Moreover, much of the literature is a reflection of individual sabbatical experiences (Reynolds, 1990). However, Stine’s (1987) dissertation evaluated the benefits of and support for sabbaticals for faculty members. Similarly, Iravania (2011) holistically examined sabbaticals, detailed all of the benefits associated with sabbaticals, and organized them into categorical groups. Because the work of administrators includes responsibilities other than teaching and research, it is important to examine the literature regarding non-faculty, which is primarily from the corporate world. Prior research on sabbaticals in both areas reveals many positive benefits. This study used Stine’s (1987) framework for finding sabbatical benefits and Iravania’s (2011) categorical organization of benefits in addition to the theoretical framework of organizational creativity.

Similar to academic sabbaticals, corporate sabbaticals aim to improve the work of corporate employees (Brown, 2006; Collins, 2005). As a result, published research in this area focuses on improving employee motivation and therefore overall production. As such, sabbaticals can be found in organizations where creative efforts are paramount. Corporations such as Google, Apple, and Hallmark Greeting Cards have utilized sabbaticals for staff as an important springboard for inventions, creative problem solving, and innovation (Kramer, 2001). Furthermore, many corporations view sabbaticals as a crucial recruitment and retention tool for gaining and keeping a stellar workforce (Axel, 1992).

Also notable is the large body of sabbatical narratives. In both the corporate and the academic worlds, sabbaticants have generated written reports and articles regarding the details of their sabbatical experiences (Nouwen, 1998; Reynolds, 1990). Although this culture of writing makes a contribution and offers insights into the benefits, outcomes, and drawbacks of sabbaticals, it provides a limited view of the experience. Because of the limited empirical research available on this topic, this study used both types of literature to guide the literature review.
Administrative Leave in the Professional Development Literature

Because administrators face challenges that are distinct from the challenges of faculty, administrators look for development opportunities in different areas. In many cases, these offerings are known as “professional development” and incorporate a wide array of activities from informal mentoring and trainings to formal conferences and exchange programs. In this literature, a handful of studies have examined sabbaticals as one component of staff professional development. Staff development programs tout their assistance to staff in a number of areas, including seminars, professional education programs, workshops, mentoring relationships, professional conferences and presentations, professional writing, exchange programs, community service, and others (Battiste, 1991; Fishbeck, 2006; Grace-Odeleye, 1998; Lewis, Cavalier, Hantman, Waechter, & Yamakawa, 1994; Roberts, 2007; Scott, 2000). Although considerable research has examined various types of professional development, no empirical research exists on the benefits of administrator sabbaticals. Darby Roberts’ (2007) study on preferred methods of professional development indicated that less than 2% of the surveyed population chose sabbatical or career leave as their preferred method of professional development. In her study, the findings for sabbaticals as a professional development method were most prevalent for senior student affairs administrators, although they did not see this as a common option (Roberts, 2007). However, Roberts did not acknowledge that the findings could be a result of the limited number of people who either have the opportunity for or the knowledge of sabbatical programs.

Battiste (1991) asked higher education professionals to identify their professional development activities during the past 2 years. The majority of the respondents reported participating in staff meetings, seminars, and workshops, and serving on college committees. In sequential order, very few respondents reported participation in graduate work, college retreats, mentorship, or exchange programs. According to Battiste’s study,
in comparison to other professional development methods, exchange programs that offered time away from the employees’ current position were limited. However, the study results suggested that “graduate work, short seminars/workshops, exchange programs, staff meetings, national and local conventions, and mentor relationships are helpful to the staff in enhancing their professional skills” (Battiste, 1991, p. 116).

**Theoretical Framework**

Sabbaticals are a multi-faceted experience. The leave contributes to the personal and professional aspects of individuals in addition to the organizational components of an institution. As such, sabbaticals are offered for various reasons, including recruitment, retention, and professional development. In addition, both the organization and the individual participate in the sabbatical process. To address these factors, the researcher utilized a theoretical framework to define the specific perspective of the researcher in analyzing and interpreting the data (Yin, 2009, 2011). The theory used to frame this study is organizational creativity. Because organizational creativity does not target one specific benefit such as career development or motivation, it offers a broad interpretation of sabbatical benefits and applies to the workplace and workforce aspects of the study.

*Organizational Creativity*

Amabile’s work on organizational creativity is a new field of study (Shalley & Zhou, 2008) that examines how creative organizational *processes* affect important outcomes such as morale, productivity, the organizational environment, and workplace rewards. Amabile’s findings reveal ways in which organizations can foster more positive environments and promote the need for employee autonomy, organizational support, and challenge (1983, 1988, 1998). The sabbatical literature also echoes these themes. Furthermore, both literatures highlight how factors such as resources, techniques and motivation influence the workplace and workforce.

Amabile noted that creativity can be both an *outcome* and a *process*. This study used Amabile’s framework to examine the outcomes of the experience for both
individuals and organizations and to identify ways in which the sabbatical process can benefit both entities (Amabile, 1988). Sabbatical products are the direct and/or tangible benefits of the experience. Sabbatical products can be the outcomes like the acquisition of further knowledge in a specific area, an innovative idea, or a completed project or study as witnessed by studies that examined specific benefits (Amabile, 1988; Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008; Mumford, 2000; Shalley, Gilson, & Blum, 2000). On the other side, the sabbatical experience as a process is an indirect and/or intangible benefit of the experience. Sabbatical process benefits may offer increased morale, retention, recruitment, or job sharing as experienced in similar organizational creativity articles (Amabile, 1988; Shalley et al., 2000). Viewing the sabbatical from the dual perspectives of product and process allowed the researcher to examine the experience more holistically and to more accurately identify the benefits, both tangible and intangible. Benefits are largely conceptualized by organizations as products. However, using this dual perspective of both products and processes helps identify all benefits that arise, not just tangible product benefits.

Application of Organizational Creativity

Organizational creativity is used in this study to (a) evaluate all possible sabbatical benefits as creative outcomes without specificity or bias toward one kind of benefit; (b) to evaluate the benefits as products of the experience, but also as an important process that might reveal different benefits; (c) to see how these benefits connect to both the individual and the organization; (d) to honor the focus of this study (i.e., not to include other aspects that outside of the focus of this study, such as cost or organizational support of the experience); and (e) to explore how workforce and workplace factors (resources, techniques, and motivation) contribute to the experience. Applying organizational creativity in these areas provides an important first look at the experience. A further description of these areas is explored below.
**Evaluate benefits without specificity.** As higher education faces both budget constraints and the need to generate more productive and effective organizations (Adams, 1994; Blumenstyk, 2009), it seems relevant to look at the organization from new and innovative viewpoints. Historically, sabbaticals have been viewed as an opportunity for the development of new perspectives and innovation (Avakian, 1987). Faculty have taken sabbaticals to conduct innovative research, enhance their teaching pedagogy, or diversify their knowledge (American Association of University Professors, 1971). Yet, little is understood regarding how administrators might benefit from sabbaticals or what types of innovation are possible. According to Amabile and Mueller (2008), “We cannot pretend to understand excellence in organizations or the people who work within them unless we understand how they invent, explore, and create things that have never existed before” (p. 59). Because the theory does not frame the sabbatical experience within preconceived outcomes such as knowledge, reflection, productivity, and transformation, it provides an open forum for all benefits. Organizational creativity offers a broad perspective that is crucial to fully understand the array of benefits. Given this study is purposeful in nature, the framework must permit innovation through the results.

**Evaluate both products and processes.** Sabbaticals offer unique products and processes that need to be examined through different lenses. For example, previous empirical studies have touted sabbaticals as significant contributors toward increased research publications or better teaching evaluations (Miller & Bai, 1997). However, many intangible benefits, such as an increase in cross-training of employees, have yet to be evaluated in the empirical literature. These benefits are just one example of how a sabbatical opportunity for the sabbaticant might spark a process of cross-training for current employees who assume the responsibilities or training for the temporarily vacant position. Therefore, it is appropriate to use Amabile’s theory of organizational creativity to discover the creative processes in addition to the innovative outcomes of the sabbatical experience for administrators and the organization.
Evaluate benefits for individuals and organizations. In addition to providing an unbiased platform for sabbatical products and process benefits, the framework for this study must encompass all benefitting populations. Organizational creativity’s broad platform also allows for benefits from both individual and organizational perspectives to be explored. Theories such as Schön’s reflective practitioner theory (Schön, 1991), for example, could provide valuable insights about how individuals make sense of their sabbatical experience but would leave little room for organizational benefits such as the cross-training of current (non-sabbaticant) employees or increased institutional loyalty of sabbaticants. Exploring all possible benefits of the experience for all populations will offer helpful insights to help craft institutional and governmental policies.

Honor the scope of this study. When little is known about a topic, many questions are asked to obtain more information. Because there is little written on sabbaticals for administrators, many people question the benefits and purposes and also how it affects financial matters, contracts, benefits, and other employees (Claire, 1971; The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2010; Lively, 1994). With little known about the topic, it is first important to understand the benefits and purposes of sabbaticals before further studies can be developed. As a result, this study will focus only on the purposes and benefits associated with sabbaticals. Future studies might choose different theoretical frameworks when examining more specific parts of the experience.

Explore workplace and workforce factors. Additionally, organizational creativity is used to understand how workplace (organizational) and workforce (individual) factors contribute to the sabbatical experience. Simply knowing about sabbatical benefits will not offer much contextual information about how to replicate the experience. Therefore, the researcher used organizational creativity to examine how a sabbaticant’s motivation or the institutional support associated with the experience contributed to the beneficial outcome. Literature in this area concentrates on three main factors which include (a) resources, (b) techniques, and (c) motivation. These three factors are used to outline how
workplace and workforce factors contribute to the sabbatical experience. For example, a sabbaticant who has significant support from his or her supervisor and institution (support techniques), has the knowledge and skill set to examine learning using institutional resources such as libraries and institutional knowledge (resources), and has a curiosity to learn for the sake of learning and an institution that is able to implement that learning (intrinsic motivation) will have the best chance to benefit from a sabbatical. Using Amabile’s theory to understand workplace and workforce factors of motivation, resources, and techniques added important context to this study.

Organizational Creativity Summary

Using organizational creativity to frame the varied creative benefits of the study, the researcher viewed sabbaticals in terms of beneficial products and processes for both the organization and the individual. As a result, benefits may serve as tangible, measureable outcomes or as a contributing force for intangible, often immeasurable benefits. Chapter 2 offers a detailed look at how organizational creativity has been used to explore each of these areas. Furthermore, the study used workplace and workforce factors of resources, techniques, and motivation to understand the context of sabbaticals for the employee and the institution. Given that the literature on this topic is limited and offers no hallmark study that evaluates benefits for administrators and also benefits to the organization, it is essential to include these concepts as fundamental literature contributions. It is for these reasons that organizational creativity was chosen to frame this study.

Significance of the Study

In 1973, Nelsen referred to administrative sabbaticals as an idea that should “continue to grow, for the sake of both administrators and their institutions” (p. 324). It appears that policies for sabbaticals have increased whereas empirical research on the experience has not (Brown, 2006; Sima, 2000). This study will contribute to the literature on sabbaticals during a time when sabbaticals are under widespread scrutiny. This study
offers an understanding of sabbatical policies and provides much needed empirical research on how the sabbaticant experience benefits both the organization and the individual.

Organizational Benefits

The findings on organizational benefits may assist organizations and therefore professional development programs at a variety of institutions. Utilizing the theoretical framework, one organizational sabbatical *product* could be a more knowledgeable or trained workforce or the prestige of having more professionals with terminal degrees. The sabbatical experience as a *process* may offer increased morale, retention, recruitment, or professional cross training of employees. Both *process* and *product* are important organizational components of the sabbatical experience. This study may provide creative strategies for staff development programs plagued by economic concerns, tight resources, and limited personnel. Senior administrators could use the results of this study to build or grow a staff sabbatical program on campus. In return, the sabbatical process might indirectly contribute to a more innovative or knowledgeable classroom environment for students. Departments and divisions may witness better teamwork and a renewed push for innovation. This study will also provide case study examples of sabbatical programs to guide employees. These examples can be used to design a formal or ad hoc policy using sabbaticals as a tool for professional development. Other process benefits of sabbaticals to institutions include increased efficiency, versatility, and productivity; stronger programs; increased morale; increased loyalty and organizational reputation; and better recruitment and retention of employees (Zahorski, 1994). During tight budget times when salary increases, professional development funding, and other extras are stagnant or reduced and staffing positions are frozen or eliminated, the retention of high performing employees can also serve as a cost-saving measure for fiscal and human resources (Bamber, 2004; Bounds, 2000; Brown, 2006; Cowling, 1998c; Kramer, 2001).
Individual Benefits

The literature also indicates a number of personal benefits that can be attributed to sabbaticals. In terms of process benefits, sabbaticants are more rejuvenated, relaxed, rewarded, and autonomous; gain new perspectives; and build professional relationships (Zahorski, 1994). Product outcomes of sabbaticals include increased knowledge, degree attainment, and productivity; travel and exchange experiences; and completion of service-related experiences. In some institutions, employees have the opportunity to take a staff sabbatical leave whereas other employees do not. This study benefits administrators at institutions both with and without sabbatical leave policies for administrators by offering much-needed empirical research to show the benefits of sabbaticals for both the institution and the individual.

Understanding Sabbatical Policies

This study highlights benefits associated with sabbaticals and also explores how sabbatical policies are structured and used at institutions. This means that an analysis of the sabbatical policy in conjunction with inquiries about how the sabbatical “works” is also an important contribution to the topic. Because sabbaticals appear to be misunderstood, it is important to understand the policies and their similarities and differences.

Implications Summary

Although this is a purposeful case study of sabbatical-sponsoring institutions, the implications from this study are widespread. The number of institutions with sabbatical leave policies is growing (CUPA-HR, 2010) as institutions and organizations lobby for innovative professional development opportunities for employees (Idaho Freedom Federation, 2011; The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2010). Furthermore, as administrators work to find creative and innovative solutions to support staff during crippling budget crises, sabbaticals can offer important resource-saving measures for organizations and individuals (Brown, 2006).
Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations of previous sabbatical research. Sabbatical writings focus primarily on faculty experiences rather than on administrative or non-faculty experiences, sabbatical opportunities are mostly viewed as a benefit for faculty rather than for administrators at institutions of higher education, sabbatical programs are largely conceptualized as an individual benefit, the literature on institutional benefits that might be associated with these programs is limited, little is known about informal sabbatical policies or professional development leave negotiations, and no studies were found that examined the variations in administrative sabbatical programs in higher education. Although this study cannot address all of these issues, an important limitation is not including informal or negotiated sabbatical policies of institutions, which is an area for further research.

This study was based on higher educational institutions in the United States only. Although sabbaticals are available and, in some cases, are more prevalent internationally for both faculty and administrators (Battiste, 1991; Gaziel, 1995; Goodall, 1980; Iravania, 2011; Moltke, Schneevoigt, & Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, 1977), this study focused only on U.S. domestic sabbatical opportunities. The researcher examined only non-profit institutions. Although the for-profit sector of higher education is growing, its missions and goals are different from those of non-profit institutions. Furthermore, accessibility to these institutions and their policies was limited. Only predominantly white institutions (PWIs) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) were used for this study. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs), among others, were not included because these specialty-serving institutions were not easily accessible to the researcher. Furthermore, information-rich institutions with available sabbaticants and administrators were selected. Therefore, institutions without sabbatical policies or sabbaticants were not included, contributing to a sampling limitation. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge a
shared language and vocabulary (Merriam, 1998). Although this study attempted to avoid language-specific jargon, the shared values and understanding are tightly woven in the words and experiences of the researcher and the committee.

Other limitations include concerns regarding self-reported data from individuals and institutions and any political ramifications of these data. Further research should collect data on all institutions that offer sabbatical policies to complement this study.

Conclusion

This study was designed to explore the practice of administrative sabbaticals to provide empirical research regarding sabbatical policies and benefits for administrative staff (professional, exempt staff). Chapter 1 provided an overview of the study, a statement of the problem, the research questions, the theoretical framework, and the significance of the study. In Chapter 2, a review of the literature provides detailed insight into the relevant literature in topical areas of sabbatical history and offerings in various professional fields in addition to the theoretical framework. The research procedures are presented in Chapter 3 and include the collection, coding, and analysis of data. It offers a specific description of the sample population, which includes individuals and institutions, as well as the selection and development of the sample. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the data and includes a content analysis of sabbatical policies and characteristics of the sample populations (institutions and individuals), Chapter 5 presents an analysis of sabbatical benefits, Chapter 6 presents the individual case study analysis, communication, and contributing factors. In summary, Chapter 7 provides final outcomes along with limitations and implications for practice, policy, and future research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study examined the practice of administrative sabbaticals to provide empirical research regarding sabbatical policies and benefits for administrative staff (professional, exempt staff). Because of the limited empirical literature in this area, it was important to cast a wider net to gather information-rich publications that addressed sabbaticals in various professions. This literature review begins with an overview of the study terminology to help define the language associated with sabbaticals and administrators. An overview of sabbaticals in the second section provides a general base of knowledge, and the third section describes literature on the theoretical framework of this study. The fourth section explores how the historical roots of sabbaticals are evident both inside and outside of the ivory tower. Conclusions and implications for further research are presented at the end of the chapter.

Information for this literature review was obtained from various libraries across the United States via interlibrary loan and from a multitude of databases including but not limited to ProQuest Dissertation and Thesis Database, Academic Search Elite, Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), and Google Scholar.

Study Terminology

Before presenting the literature on this topic, it is important to identify the multiple descriptors used for staff sabbaticals. It is not surprising that the terminology describing sabbaticals is so varied because the literature represents an array of disciplines, each carrying unique features, benefits, and limitations. The current study used the following terms to collect literature on this topic: staff sabbatical, professional development, developmental leave, continuing education, college or university, and professional preparation. Although these terms are derived from both inside and outside the academy, they are frequently used in higher education jargon (Battiste, 1991; Bryan...
& Schwartz, 1998; Fishbeck, 2006; Lemoine, 1986; Schwartz & Bryan, 1998; Scott, 2000). Other terms include administrative sabbaticals (Scott, 2000), leave (Avakian, 1987), staff development (Corderman, 2008; Grace-Odeleye, 1998), internship programs (Milstein, Bobroff, & Restine, 1991), exchange programs (Aceto, Bryan, & Young, 1987; H. E. Wilson & Wilson, 1963), time grant programs (Association of Research Libraries, 1973), leaves of absence (National Education Association of the United States, 1943; H. E. Wilson & Wilson, 1963) and most prominently, professional development (Cooper & Miller, 1998; Harned & Murphy, 1998; Holmes, 1998; Ignelzi, 1995; Lawing & Others, 1982; Moon, 2004; Winston, Jr., & Creamer, 1998; Wood, Winston, & Polkosnik, 1985). Because faculty sabbaticals have such a long history, they are most frequently the focus of the literature (Bai & Miller, 1998; Bai & Miller, 1999; Bai, Miller, & Newman, 2000; Boening & Miller, 1997; Carr & Tang, 2005; Sima, 2000; R. Wilson, 1999).

The lack of empirical literature on administrative sabbaticals necessitates an exploration of the sabbatical literature outside of academia. These studies describe administrative leave programs as paid educational leave (Levine, 1977; Mace & Yarnit, 1987), career development (Gutteridge, Leibowitz, & Shore, 1993), educational reimbursement plans (Longnecker, 2004), quasi-sabbatical or mini-sabbaticals (Durkin, 1976; Keleher, 1993), absences or holidays (Kramer, 2001), educational assistance programs (Fogerson, 2001), extended leave (Thie et al., 2004), sabbatical leave (English, 1985), sabbatical (Feinstein, 1979), and compensated absences (Gauthier, 1993) among others. Among the myriad possibilities for describing administrative leave programs, the term “sabbatical” is most prevalent and provides the clearest definition of the experience. Zahorski (1994) refined the criteria of a sabbatical to include five components: (a) a clearly defined purpose, (b) paid compensation for work, (c) prior service (normally from 6 to 7 years), (d) requirement for returning to the institution, and (e) completion of a report. For the purpose of this study, the following definition encompasses the broadest view of sabbaticals:
Sabbatical is defined as a purposeful, paid period during a concentrated time away from daily work for professional and/or personal development. (Adapted from Zahorski, 1994)

In framing this study for administrators as opposed to faculty, the following terms were used: *administrative, student affairs, student personnel, student development, higher education administrator, administrator, professional staff, middle management, and human resources.* Using these population groups, this study focused on the most common terms found in the literature: *sabbatical, professional development, and staff development.* The following are definitions of other terms used in this study:

*Higher Education Administrator/Professional/Staff/Non-faculty/Exempt Staff:* All of these words are used synonymously to describe any member of higher education administration. They are “full-time, non-teaching professionals who support the teaching and research missions of the university” (Battiste, 1991, p. 15). In most cases, these administrators are professionally educated with degrees beyond the bachelor’s level whose primary responsibilities do not include teaching. They might include student affairs practitioners, deans, directors, and other professionals working in these offices. These terms do not include administrators who maintain faculty rank and therefore are eligible for sabbaticals under their tenure or faculty contract.

*Sabbaticant:* “a sabbaticant is the recipient of a sabbatical leave” (Stine, 1987, p. 9).

*Sabbatical policy:* written and customary, systematic approaches to offering sabbaticals to higher education administrators (adapted from Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, & Rice, 2003).

*Sabbatical Administrator:* the person(s) who are responsible for granting sabbatical leaves. They are usually deans, vice presidents, department heads, committee chairs, or supervisors, and may vary depending on the institution. These are usually not human resource professionals but are connected with the interworking of the sabbaticant.
**Professional Development:** “a systematic process that includes training and development, organizational development, and career development to enhance individual, group, and organizational effectiveness” (Holmes, 1998, p. 19).

**Higher Education:** education beyond the K-12 level; often refers to a college or university.

**Student affairs:** a major administrative subdivision of colleges and universities comparable to academic and business affairs. The student affairs practitioner or professional is a staff member who carries out the responsibilities of the subdivision (Miller, Prince, & American College, 1976).

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**Sabbatical Research Overview**

Various streams of literature were used in crafting this review because little sabbatical research is available regarding sabbaticals for administrators. Therefore, the review focuses on two main areas: academic and corporate sabbaticals. It is important to organize the literature according to these categories because there are distinct differences between the purposes for faculty and for non-faculty sabbaticals. This review will highlight both of these categories in addition to administrative leave policies.

Although empirical research is often the most legitimate contribution to a scholarly literature review, this study also considered anecdotal reports, internal reports, and opinion pieces as important supplements to empirical research because a considerable amount of literature about sabbaticals is anecdotal and appears in various forms. Collecting various forms of literature also helps with triangulation of results. First, many of these publications and articles advise mostly faculty on how to apply for, achieve, plan for, take, and process a sabbatical experience (Avakian, 1987; Warner, 1979; Zahorski, 1994). Although these publications are important on a practical level, they are not empirically grounded. Second, authors write about sabbaticals as vehicles for conducting intensive research, but fail to research the sabbatical experience itself. For example, one article might include the statement, “I was able to take a sabbatical to
conduct research on...” (Frederickson, 2003; Nouwen, 1998). In this case, sabbaticals are viewed as a venue for research and not as a research topic. Third, authors have written about administrative sabbaticals as one of many staff development opportunities (Battiste, 1991; Fishbeck, 2006; D. M. Roberts, 2003, 2007; Scott, 2000). This literature offers little empirical data because it categorizes sabbaticals as a list of choices but fails to explain the rationale for each category or create a broad understanding of the terms. Finally, empirically based sabbatical research is limited to a small number of quantitative studies. Researchers at the University of Alabama (M. T. Miller & Bai, 1997), Jacksonville State University (Meehan, 1999), and Indiana University (Eberle & Thompson, 1973; Thompson, 1972) have conducted similar studies evaluating the demographic characteristics of recipients and their purposes and productivity. The data for these studies were collected by evaluating sabbatical applications and policies and, in some cases, by following up with participants regarding their productivity. These publications offer formal insights into sabbaticals and their position in the workplace. Although some empirical studies explore sabbaticals as a broad development opportunity, no studies were found that explore administrative sabbaticals in any significant or distinctive manner.

The limited information written about sabbaticals begs the question: Why is there so little written about sabbaticals when they are so prevalent? Kramer (2001) noted that too much research on sabbaticals might illuminate unfavorable outcomes, therefore risking the sabbatical opportunity altogether. He also discussed the difficulty in writing about an experience that may not produce immediate or tangible results. Sabbatical experiences are often not quantifiable, making them a difficult topic to study, especially in terms of quantitative measures. Furthermore, because sabbaticals are such a time-honored tradition, others have argued that sabbaticals do not need to be researched because their existence has not been questioned (Dunlap, 1980). Times, however, are changing and sabbaticals are now under scrutiny (Lively, 1994).
A thorough investigation of the empirical literature uncovered a limited number of studies regarding sabbaticals in academia and even fewer regarding the business world. Yet, both academia and the business sector continue to offer sabbaticals as the most cherished of employee benefits (Kramer, 2001; Zahorski, 1994). This literature review will summarize the limited research and information available while framing it within the theoretical framework of organizational creativity (Amabile, 1983), which will add context to this study.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Framework Components

The theoretical framework of a qualitative study helps narrow the findings of the study in terms of a specific theory (Yin, 2009). Organizational creativity was used in this study to (a) evaluate all possible sabbatical benefits without specificity, (b) evaluate the benefits as both products and processes, (c) connect benefits to both the individual and the organization, (d) honor the focus of this study, and (e) examine the workplace and workforce factors of resources, techniques, and motivation that contribute to the sabbatical. Given that this study will identify sabbatical policies and the benefits associated with them, it was important to utilize a theory that explores all of the criteria for the theoretical framework. Therefore, the researcher chose the theory of organizational creativity to frame this study.

First, most of the sabbatical literature reviewed for this study did not include a theoretical framework. The empirical studies and other literature provided important background history and offered topics of interests such as research and teaching productivity (M. T. Miller, 2002; M. T. Miller & Bai, 1997; M. T. Miller & Bai, 2003), motivation (Carr & Tang, 2005), or policies (Rios, 1983). In the rare instance that a theoretical framework was used, the framework focused on a particular sabbatical benefit such as burnout (Fuller, 2003). For this study, it was important not to examine benefits from a specific viewpoint, but rather to discover what the benefits were holistically.
Second, the researcher chose a theoretical framework that provided a way to understand both tangible (product) and intangible (process) benefits. For example, developing projects or protocols is easier to quantify than understanding the depth of institutional loyalty or motivation gained from the experience. Therefore it was important to examine both types of benefits. Third, because this study examined all possible sabbatical benefits for both the individual and the organization, and because these benefits have a broad scope beyond improved teaching and research, a theoretical framework was needed for the learning, development, and organizational components of sabbaticals. Therefore, the framework was chosen because it applied to both individuals and the organization. Fourth, this theory was chosen because this study’s primary focus is to understand the purposes and benefits of sabbaticals. And finally, workplace and workforce components of resources, techniques, and motivation were examined to determine how these factors might influence sabbaticals. Organizational creativity is a foundational theory that helped frame the study in broad terms as further described in this chapter.

**Organizational Creativity Defined**

The researcher chose Amabile’s (1983) theory of organizational creativity to frame this study. Research on organizational creativity is relatively new to the literature; however, studies have shown creativity to be an integral part of individual creativity and organizational innovation (1988). Amabile’s work on creativity acknowledges both the individual and the organizational perspectives and is described by the author as both a process and an outcome or product. Creativity as a process is defined as engagement in “continuously finding and solving problems and implementing new solutions” by “reflection and action, seeking feedback, experimenting, and discussing new ways to do things” (Shalley & Zhou, 2008, p. 4). These processes include intangible or indirect benefits that are difficult to quantify, such as loyalty or satisfaction. Creativity as a product is described as “the production of novel and useful ideas by an individual or
small group of individuals working together” (Amabile, 1988, p. 126) and in terms of organizational innovation, “the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization” (Amabile, 1988, p. 126). These products include tangible or direct outcomes that are easy to quantify such as productivity. Both types of benefits are available in the sabbatical literature and explored through the benefits found in this study.

Organizational Creativity and Sabbaticals

Although organizational creativity has not been applied to sabbaticals directly, organizational creativity has been used to evaluate many workplace and workforce factors. Several recent studies have utilized Amabile’s (1983, 1988, 2008) theory to explore creativity in the workplace and workforce. The findings show both tangible products, such as travel, with intangible processes, such as morale, satisfaction, and retention. For example, Amabile’s work is widely cited and used to explore both creativity and innovation in individuals and in the workplace and workforce. Similar to topics related to sabbaticals, benefits topics include (a) work environment changes in employee creativity at work (Oldham & Cummings, 1996), (b) examining effects of satisfaction and intentions to leave (Shalley et al., 2000), (c) knowledge creation bridge between academics and practitioners (Rynes, Bartunek, & Daft, 2001), (d) the turnover of highly educated research and development professionals (Chang, Choi, & Kim, 2008), (e) how multicultural experiences enhance creativity (Leung et al., 2008; Maddux & Galinsky, 2009), and (e) studies about increasing innovation (Mumford, 2000).

Organizational creativity has been used to test and understand how human resource management strategies might enhance creativity. Mumford (2000) argued that managers should try different interventions at different levels to promote innovation for the individual, group, and organization. For example, Miller and Bai (1997) used a case study to explore post-sabbatical assessments. No theoretical framework was used in this study, and the results showed that faculty believed they were better teachers and scholars although the research did not support this perception. If organizational creativity had
been applied to this study, the authors might have discovered other findings beyond research production and teaching improvement. Both of these beneficial outcomes were gathered through survey data, institutional records, and curriculum vitae reviews. (Other studies have relied only on gathering basic policy details or evaluating sabbatical applications.) Evaluating only these tangible data (the number of teaching awards and research publications), the study made narrow assumptions about the benefits of the sabbatical. The faculty participants felt that their teaching and research improved, but the study did not include other variables that faculty might have been more inclined to see as benefits to their teaching and research. This could have included other product-based benefits, such as increased knowledge or expertise, and process-based benefits, such as motivation and job satisfaction (which could result in greater effort) or gaining new experiences. Furthermore, understanding the employee’s motivation and the support or resources available to the employee would also be important contextual workplace and workforce issues to consider. All of these variables directly affect faculty but were not explored as a sabbatical benefit in this study. Understanding more about these workplace and workforce factors would have greatly enhanced the study and might have explained the difference between faculty perspectives and institutional results.

Understanding how organizational creativity contributes to the individuals and the organizations in this study is critical to fully understanding the benefits of sabbaticals. Amabile’s (1988, 1998) work on organizational creativity offered three basic areas of creativity for individuals and organizations: resources, techniques, and motivation. Motivation is the intrinsic motivation that allows for solutions that are more creative and that influence the work environment. Resources are the expertise, knowledge, or skills on which the project is based. Techniques or creative-thinking skills are the flexibility and imaginative approaches to problems or work.

Several recent studies have utilized Amabile’s theory to explore creativity in the workplace. Issues associated with innovation, downsizing, morale, satisfaction, retention,
and multicultural/cultural/travel awareness all overlap with benefits established for sabbaticals and organizational creativity. Issues associated with products such as travel, innovation, and downsizing together with processes such as morale, satisfaction, and retention, and multicultural/cultural/travel awareness all overlap with benefits established for sabbaticals. For example, Amabile’s work is widely cited and used to explore both creativity and innovation in individuals and the workplace. Similar to sabbatical benefits, topics include work environment changes in employee creativity at work (Oldham & Cummings, 1996), examining effects of satisfaction and intentions to leave (Shalley et al., 2000), the knowledge creation bridge between academics and practitioners (Rynes et al., 2001), the turnover of highly educated research and development professionals (Chang et al., 2008), how multicultural experiences enhance creativity (Leung et al., 2008; Maddux & Galinsky, 2009), and studies about increasing innovation (Mumford, 2000). These themes are important for organizational creativity and sabbaticals, but literature also highlights how these workplace experiences affect the overall process, which in turn affects the overall product. Each of the workplace and workforce contributing factors of motivation, resources, and techniques are explored below in further detail. Figure 2.1 illustrates how resources, techniques, and motivation can be identified according to workplace and workforce factors. The list, while not extensive, offers common examples of how the factors are used in each respective area.

**Resources**

Resources for the organizational workplace include institutional policies, financing of experiences, and the materials available to employees. These resources are the tangible contributions to organizational creativity. For individuals, workforce resources are the human contribution of knowledge and skills they bring to the job (Amabile, 1998). For organizations, workplace factors are the policies, materials, and funding needed to do the job. Both workforce and workplace factors present important resources needed to foster organizational creativity in individuals and organizations.
Without the knowledge or the tangible organizational resources available, the organizational creativity will struggle.

**Figure 2.1. Organizational creativity framework for individuals and organizations**


When dealing with sabbaticals, resources are very important. For sabbaticants or the workforce, having the skills and knowledge needed to conduct research, projects, or publications is essential. For the institution or workplace, the sabbatical policies are an essential resource. Without the knowledge, the skills, or the policy, the sabbatical would
not be available or accessible. Resources provide the essential elements for doing the work.

**Techniques**

This is the area that is able to produce innovative and appropriate ideas or explain how people or organizations approach problems and solutions. In essence it is the factor that details what techniques are needed to complete the work. For individuals (workforce), this is part of the personality that is not afraid to disagree or to think beyond the typical solutions. Other areas include strategic planning or problem solving. Techniques or creativity in this area are often evaluated through personality indicators and other case study (Oldham & Cummings, 1996). However for this study, personal characteristics through personality tests that might contribute to an employee’s thinking were not evaluated. However general personal characteristics of employees were identified from the interviews and are presented in Chapter 4.

Understanding the elements needed for doing the work is an essential contributor of this theory. Organizational creativity also has strong traditions in exploring workplace factors such as institutional and peer support. Institutional and peer support also play a role in the development of creativity processes.

Empirical research indicates that employees who have institutional support to be more autonomous in their work are more satisfied with their workplace but are also more productive (Amabile, 1998, Oldham & Cummings, 1996).

Approaching problems from new or inverted angles is part of innovative thinking in this area. Furthermore, designing a new idea or solution is only one aspect. Designing appropriate solutions is the other part of creativity. Ideas can be innovative, but without appropriateness the solution will not meet its objective. Therefore innovative and appropriate ideas are the best contributions to this area. For organizations, the best ways that organizations can foster creativity is to offer support through a number of different venues. Several empirical research articles discuss the importance of supervisor support
in fostering the creative process (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Shalley, Gibson, & Blum, 2000). In addition, designing policies and procedures that support autonomous decision making is one of the best ways that organizations can support the creative process. The workplace issues include nurturing ideas from start to completion and providing support. Sabbaticals explored through the literature have similarly had a long tradition of peer and institutional support. Beginning at Harvard in 1880 through the present, institutions have continued to offer sabbaticals and businesses have continued to develop them. This support can be individual, but a culture of support can also contribute positively to the organizational culture. Strange (2001) detailed how campus environments (everything from institutional policy to physical construction) contribute to the overall institution. Understanding the individual and organizational support mechanisms is crucial to understanding how techniques contribute to the workplace and workforce. 

Motivation

Because this study asks both sabbaticants and their administrators about the benefits of the experience, it is important to understand how personal and environmental motivational factors may influence their perception of the benefits they articulate. Motivation in this study contributes to how work gets done. For the workplace, motivation can take the form of forward-looking or strategic risk-oriented thinking (Amabile, 1988, 1998). For the workforce, motivation takes the form of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. For example, if an employee finds fulfillment through intrinsic motivation (motivation by the mind rather than by things like money or rewards), they may be more likely to articulate benefits of happiness, satisfaction, and balance. Conversely, someone who is extrinsically motivated may articulate benefits of finding added income or receiving an award for publications or service accomplished during the sabbatical. Institutional characteristics also play into who takes a sabbatical. Although no studies were found regarding the individual qualities of sabbaticants, it seems evident that employees who take sabbaticals are motivated. This is evidenced because sabbaticants
must apply for the sabbatical and in some cases must provide lengthy applications or proposals for the experience (Zahorski, 1994). Furthermore, with several studies providing research on the number of reasons why faculty do not take a sabbatical (Parker, 1994, Zahorski, 1994), it appears there are many obstacles for sabbaticants, including but not limited to family or other job obligations (like an ongoing medical practice for dental educators or consulting business), financial constraints, or administrative duties (Parker, 1994). Based on these obstacles, it appears that motivation is necessary to start and complete the application to initiate a sabbatical. In addition, for administrators whose workload is not in a cyclical academic process (starting and ending classes in the traditional academic schedule), arranging for a sabbatical can be cause for additional motivation by the employee to provide work and/or duty coverage, division of responsibilities, and arranging for the financial allocation of the sabbatical. Furthermore, for administrators who have a less autonomous work schedule (compared to faculty), working with supervisors to facilitate the experience can also be cause for negotiation (Axel, 1992; Kramer, 2001).

Understanding how these factors contribute to sabbaticals strengthens the understanding of how benefits are articulated by participants, particularly sabbaticants. Understanding creativity can be difficult. Amabile (1998) separated creativity into three major factors of resources, motivation, and techniques. In a practitioner-related publication, she simplified it even further to include motivation, creative thinking skills, and expertise (1998). Regardless of the naming of the categories, the meaning of the areas is consistent. Amabile also showed how these categories of organizational creativity can be applied to both individuals and organizations. Amabile asserted that the intersection of these three factors, as seen in Figure 2.2, promotes the most effective organizational creativity. Figure 2.2 shows how these concepts are interrelated and contribute to a holistic picture of organizational creativity factors for the institution and individual. Applying the theory to sabbaticals, institutions that can provide both
workplace and workforce contributions in the following areas of resources, techniques, and motivation are at the best odds for a creative sabbatical experience. Furthermore, the study examined how these factors helped frame the sabbatical experience and benefits.

**Resources** are, in a word, knowledge-technical, procedural, and intellectual. Sometimes this is called Expertise in some models of organizational creativity.

**Motivation** is the inner passion to solve the problem at hand and lends itself to creative solutions rather than external rewards like money. This is most immediately influenced by the work environment.

**Techniques** determine how flexibly and imaginatively people approach problems. Do their solutions upend the status quo? Sometimes this is called creative-thinking skills.

Figure 2.2. Adaptation of Amabile’s (1988, 1998) organizational creativity framework for both individuals and organizations


Note: The dark-colored center indicates the intersection of resources, techniques, and motivation where workforce and workplace factors create the optimal experience.
Important pieces of Amabile’s theory correspond and contribute to organizational creativity. First, Mumford (2000) identified that the work environment and work events are part of organizational human resource management strategies that might enhance creativity. In this study, the author argued that managers should try different interventions at different levels to promote innovation for the individual and the organization. These themes are important for organizational creativity and sabbaticals, but literature also highlights how these workplace experiences such as support, challenge, and autonomy affect the overall process, which in turn affects the overall product.

When applied to sabbaticals, organizational creativity provides new insights on process and products of the sabbatical experience for organizations and individuals. Miller and Bai (1997) used a case study to explore post-sabbatical assessments. No theoretical framework was used in this study, and the results showed that faculty believed they were better teachers and scholars although the research did not support this perception. If organizational creativity had been used in this study, the authors might have uncovered other findings beyond research production and teaching improvement. Both of these beneficial outcomes were gathered through survey data, institutional records, and a curriculum vitae review. By evaluating these tangible data only (the number of teaching awards and research publications), the study made narrow assumptions regarding the benefits of the sabbatical. In this study, faculty reported that their teaching and research improved, but the study did not include other variables that faculty might have been more inclined to see as benefits to their teaching and research. By using organizational creativity, the authors could have broadened their study to include other measures of teaching and research. This could have included other product-based benefits like increased knowledge or expertise and process-based benefits such as motivation and job satisfaction (which could result in greater effort) or gaining new experiences. All of these variables directly affect faculty, but were not included or explained as a benefit in this study. This is just one example of how organizational
creativity helps identify more subtle or less evaluated benefits that are noted anecdotally in the literature but are rarely empirically tested.

Organizational Creativity in the Workforce

Other individual characteristics such as a person’s creative tendency or abstract thinking also contribute to how benefits are articulated. However, these characteristics were not used in this study because of the complexity of the creative evaluations. To honor the nature of this study, only these limited factors were evaluated. The orientational tradition of qualitative research through organizational creativity was used to ground this study. Organizational creativity is used to help understand the benefits articulated by the participants and to explain the connections between the policy and the individual or institution. Additionally these connections might help explain why certain institutions think differently about sabbaticals. Without this, there might be information regarding the policy but not why participants think differently about individual characteristics, need for peer support, and so on.

Because sabbaticals are a unique and often innovative process, the researcher studied them within the framework of organizational creativity. Amabile (2008) said it best: “We cannot pretend to understand excellence in organizations or the people who work within them unless we understand how they invent, explore, and create things that have never existed before” (Amabile & Mueller, 2008, p. 59). According to this perspective, benefits might come as expected results of the experience or as new or innovative discoveries.

Amabile noted that creativity can be both an outcome and a process, and the researcher viewed sabbaticals in both ways. This study used Amabile’s framework to examine the outcomes of the sabbatical experience for both individuals and organizations, but it also looked for ways in which the sabbatical process benefits both entities. For example, one outcome or product of a sabbatical could be further knowledge in a certain area, increased perspective, or a completed project or study. The sabbatical
experience as a *process* may offer increased morale, retention, recruitment, or job sharing. Both *process* and *outcome* are important components of the sabbatical experience.

*Organizational Creativity Critiques*

Much like sabbaticals, organizational creativity has some myths associated with it. First, organizational creativity does not mean only the production of creative products. Many people think of creativity in terms of outstanding talent to create art projects or innovative design work. However, organizational creativity embraces a broader definition; it looks at new ways of thinking, problem solving, or innovation in any area (Shalley & Zhou, 2008). This might include innovation in work, research, teaching, supervision, and programming or beyond. Second, similar to sabbatical research, organizational creativity is not always studied when economic times are good. Amabile and Conti (1999) evaluated organizational creativity during a business downsizing to explore how creativity was affected. The authors noted a decline in creativity at a large high-tech firm after the downsizing but identified modest creativity gains over time.

*Theoretical Framework Summary*

The purpose of this study is to examine the practice of administrative sabbaticals and provide empirical research regarding sabbatical policies and benefits for administrative staff (professional, exempt staff). However one cannot evaluate sabbatical policies without understanding some key components involved with the workforce and workplace factors (mainly resources, techniques, and motivation). Understanding how these workforce and workplace categories contribute to the sabbatical can also contribute to how these benefits are divided into creative processes and products.

Sabbaticals have been characterized as a period of new thought or innovation (Avakian, 1987) in both thought and practice. Viewing the sabbatical from the perspectives of a *product* and a *process* allowed the researcher to explore the experience more holistically and to more accurately reflect the benefits, both tangible or direct and
intangible or indirect, of the experience. Organizational creativity in both its forms is the theoretical framework for understanding sabbaticals in this study.

**History of Sabbaticals**

The term “sabbatical” has been used most frequently in the literature to describe a career leave opportunity. The root of this word has a longstanding history and provides a foundation for this literature review. The history of sabbaticals will be explored in terms of both the practical application and the etymology.

*Sabbatical Religious Heritage*

The term “sabbatical” is derived from the biblical reference to the Sabbath, which is the Hebrew word “Shabbat,” meaning rest. Kimball (1978), in his sabbatical history, illustrates the early biblical roots of the word “sabbatical.” His research attests that Old Testament law commanded that laborers work the land for six years and let the land rest during the seventh year (*Leviticus* 23:39, King James Version). The year of rest was credited for restoring important nutrients to the soil so that it would yield improved crop production. Today, many farmers still practice crop rotation and provide an opportunity for the soil to be replenished.

There are other ways in which “sabbaticals” have been incorporated into everyday life. For example, the typical week in the United States, as well as in a number of other countries, is centered around six days of work and a seventh day of rest (Kimball, 1978). For many individuals, this day of rest is used for religious observances. The weekly observation of sabbatical is rich in Hebrew and Christian tradition. Kimball identified four sabbatical themes from the Biblical Hebrew translation:

(i) spiritual, mental and physical regeneration for the human being; (ii) economic renewal of resources and facilitation for the market place; (iii) social equality to aid those who were unable to cultivate natural resources; and (iv) education of people about their faith and their purpose in the world. (Kimball, 1978, p. 304)

Kimball (1978) described sabbaticals as providing rest and service for the self and the community. He noted the need for a balanced self, community, and resources, and also
added the importance of knowledge acquisition during these formal break times.
Kimball’s synthesis highlights the purpose of sabbaticals as rest, service, and education.

*Sabbaticals in Higher Education*

The intersection of religious tradition and early higher education in the United States is unavoidable because sabbaticals have served similar purposes in both contexts. During this time, sabbaticals were used both for rejuvenation and to increase scholarly productivity (Rudolph & Thelin, 1990). Institutions were established as opportunities to build the new nation. Higher education literature first identified the use of sabbaticals and paid leaves of absence in the 1880s at Harvard University (Rudolph & Thelin, 1990; Thelin, 2004). In two different accounts, Harvard University president, Charles Elliot, used the sabbatical idea either to entice scholar, Charles Lanman (Shainblum, 1999), from his current teaching post at the Johns Hopkins University or to publicly tout that sabbaticals were used for the health, rest, study, and especially the research needs of the Harvard faculty (Eells & Hollis, 1962). After Harvard initiated a sabbatical program, other institutions embraced the idea. By 1930, at least 56 institutions were hosting sabbatical programs for faculty; however, each of the institutions used different rationales for implementing sabbaticals on their campuses. For example, the Report of the Special Committee on Sabbatical Leave at Dartmouth College (Special Committee on Sabbatical Leave, 1922) indicated that the role of the sabbatical was to “render the recipient more useful to the college” (Eells & Hollis, 1962) as a teacher, a researcher, or an administrator. The college considered the money spent to reimburse the workforce as “valuable to increasing the efficiency” of the overall teaching environment. Others viewed sabbaticals as a venue for academic travel (Jons, 2008). The sabbatical experience continues to be credited as a significant contributor toward faculty development in higher education (Bai & Miller, 1999; Boening & Miller, 1997).
Sabbaticals as a Workforce Solution

During the 20th century, sabbaticals were not limited to faculty at institutions of higher learning. For example, Albert Morton Persoff (1945) in his book, *Sabbatical Years with Pay*, outlined a carefully executed work force plan that included a year of sabbatical leave to resolve massive unemployment following World War II. His plan was modeled on the year of rest as found in biblical and agricultural traditions and as widely used in higher education. He viewed the work force as a rotating carousel of workers; when one set went on sabbatical, another set returned to the work force. This unique plan offered sabbaticals to the entire U.S. work force and received national attention. Although Persoff’s plan was not implemented in its entirety, a U.S. sabbatical leave program called, “A Universal Worker Self-Renewal Program,” offered many advantages that were later incorporated into the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 (Kramer, 2001). This type of leave gave credence to the general importance of leave programs on a national level and supported the holistic development, health, and wellness of personal and family obligations (Bamber, 2004). Although family leave is an important concept and could be part of a sabbatical experience, it was not addressed within the scope of this study.

Work force issues were not a concern only for Persoff (1945). Two years earlier, the Committee on the National Education Association of the United States Tenure (National Education Association of the United States, 1943) disseminated a report regarding teacher leaves of absence during World War II. The report addressed the effects of teacher absence on the classroom because of military obligations and how substitute teacher contracts should be negotiated in light of their interim purpose. According to the report, many cities did hold employment positions for male teachers who were drafted and did not offer contracts to substitute teachers because of the temporary nature of their employment (National Education Association of the United States, 1943).
In their 1987 book, *Time Off to Learn: Paid Educational Leave and Low-Paid Workers*, Mace and Yarnit (1987) offered another societal call for the continuing education of the entire work force. The authors carefully crafted arguments regarding educational inequality in the United States. They viewed education as an important driving force that allowed low paid workers (often in unreliable jobs) to move up the social and employment ladder. By promoting education, they worked to break the often unbreakable glass ceiling that some workers faced based on their lack of education, experience, or background. These strategies might be learning literacy skills, retooling for new and emerging careers, or gaining career confidence (Mace & Yarnit, 1987).

In addition to fulfilling varying purposes throughout history, sabbaticals have varied in length. Whether encompassing days, weeks, months, or years, sabbaticals have been individualized according to the respective field. In education, for example, traditional sabbaticals have tended to span a 3- to 6-month period, but mini-sabbaticals have also been offered. Some articles describe mini-sabbaticals as a 2-week (or slightly longer) break from everyday activities (Keleher, 1993). Often these types of experiences have a varied amount of time, and the experience is negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

**Historical Summary**

Sabbaticals have a long history beginning in biblical tradition and continuing in academic and corporate settings. A number of publications have described the purposes and benefits of sabbaticals beyond the role of employees in academia. Sabbaticals have been used for everything from farming to increasing the national work force to providing research opportunities. Based on the literature presented, sabbaticals are a career opportunity found in both educational and non-academic sectors. Understanding the history of sabbaticals is important to the wide range of purposes and benefits that they offer to a multitude of careers. The benefits of sabbaticals contribute to the professional and personal development of employees in addition to serving the needs of the organization or society. Because administrative sabbaticals are less typical outside of
higher education, it is important to understand which professions offer them and how they are utilized. Gaining an understanding of the benefits, policies, and challenges of sabbaticals in other professions will help to explain how sabbaticals can be beneficial to higher education administrators. Therefore, the literature review is organized in the next section as sabbaticals outside of academia, sabbaticals inside academia, and sabbatical policies.

Sabbaticals Outside of Academia

Although sabbaticals are often primarily associated with the educational sector, a number of other professions and industries offer leaves because of perceived or actual benefits. While often focused on the bottom line, productivity, and fair practices, these businesses offer leave opportunities for everyone from blue collar workers to highly educated managers and professionals. Several other occupations, such as nurse practitioners (Keleher, 1993), judges (Robbins & Federal Judicial Center, 1987), United Steel workers (Robbins & Federal Judicial Center, 1987), lawyers (Kramer, 2001; Robbins & Federal Judicial Center, 1987; Re, 1995), government administrators (Kramer, 2001; Robbins & Federal Judicial Center, 1987), and counselors (Furbish, 2009), and large successful corporations, such as McDonalds, Nike, Sun Media, Hallmark Greeting Cards, Xerox Corporation, American Express, Wells Fargo, Apple, and Adobe systems (Axel, 1992; Kramer, 2001), have offered sabbatical programs to their employees. Many of the professions with established sabbatical programs are associated with high-touch, high-energy occupations that involve dealing with clients, patients, or people in crisis, or that require intense creative energy. These professions (e.g., doctors, counselors, and clergy) are represented in many of today’s higher education systems, but are described here because of their prominence outside of higher education. A number of organizations, institutions, and businesses believe strongly in formal leave or sabbatical programs as part of their organizational structure and human resource development.
Axel (1992) examined a number of corporate sabbatical opportunities during the 1990s and noted that the increase in sabbaticals in the corporate world benefited both employees and organizations. She interviewed 17 human resource executives for corporations and other organizations. From this information, she identified different sabbatical trends, which included (a) traditional sabbaticals, (b) leaves for personal growth, (c) social service leaves, (d) extended personal leaves, and (e) voluntary leaves to meet business needs. In addition to revealing the nuances of these programs, she found a number of benefits and drawbacks. These companies reported benefits in recruiting, retention, avoiding burnout, and increasing morale, and underscored their dedication to public service. Drawbacks were a lack of human resources, reluctance of employees to ask for a sabbatical during uncertain economic times, and overall costs. Axel concluded, “Today’s employers and employees continue to value career continuity and a strong attachment to the workplace” (p. 8).

Brown (2006) explored if sabbaticals for corporations were meeting the stated objectives of business. In a quantitative master’s thesis, Brown collected the beneficial sabbatical contributions of 11 sabbatical-offering businesses. The author compared the results of the survey to the stated benefits found in the written sabbatical policy. Brown found from human resource directors of these companies that sabbaticals are successful (100%), help attract and recruit staff (77%), retain staff (89%), are a popular benefit (89%), help learn something new (55%), provide community service (55%), refresh and re-nourish employees (100%), create loyalty and commitment to the company (55%), deter burnout (100%), and boost morale (88%). Although Brown’s study was limited by a very small sample size for a quantitative study, it provides a recent comparison of sabbaticals and their purpose and benefits. In addition, the study adds to the limited empirical literature on sabbaticals in the workplace. Brown indicated that among the
various benefits of sabbaticals, they were often given in 3- to 4-week blocks, were paid, and were not given to staff employed less than 3 years.

Morale, motivation, retention, and burnout reduction were the findings of Carr and Tang's (2005) small literature review on corporate sabbaticals. Although their review was not empirical research, they offered suggestions on implementation strategies and highlighted organizational concerns for financial expenses in relation to salary, benefits, and replacement costs. Cope (1958) also evaluated fringe benefits and prestige items of which sabbaticals were included.

CNN (2010) reported that 19 of the 100 best companies to work for offered fully paid sabbaticals. Included in this list were creative companies such as DreamWorks Animation SKG and Adobe Systems, financial institutions such as Deloitte and American Express, technology companies (Semas, 1997; Solomon, 2000; White & Trachtenberg, 2005) such as Intel and Fed Ex, and established companies such as General Mills, Price Waterhouse (Earls, 2005) and Ralston Purina (Greengard, 2000). The varied professions in this short list challenge the myth that only artistic or educational institutions need sabbaticals for their employees to gain knowledge and recharge. This list of other corporate sabbatical policies highlighted consulting firms, credit card companies, and postal services as sabbatical subscribers (Bradford, 2001; Carr & Tang, 2005; CNN Money, 2010; Rogak, 1994; Sheley, 1996; Toomey & Connor, 1988). This information is not new. Bradford (2001) found that business sabbaticals increased from 11% to 15% within a 2-year span in 2000, illustrating that sabbaticals in the work force are a benefit available to employees. Much research in this area is anecdotal (Bast, 1992; Cook, 1994) but offers important insights into the financial viability, priorities, and reasons for sabbaticals in the workforce. Organizations that are interested in fostering a positive reputation may want to consider the trends in this literature (CNN Money, 2010).
**Sabbaticals for Lawyers and Judges**

Several anecdotal articles have highlighted the importance of sabbaticals for lawyers (Johnston, 1993). One account reflected on the importance of empathy gained by the sabbatical experience. Genty (2000) and Re (1995), both law professors, stated that lawyers often lose sight of the humanistic aspect of their clients and their problems. They reported the sabbatical experiences helped gain a new perspective. Robbins (1987) wrote his book about various types of judicial sabbaticals. From judges to lawyers, Robbins offered practical knowledge about how these sabbaticals were negotiated in the system.

**Sabbaticals for Medical Professionals and Medical Scholars**

Sabbaticals are frequently available in the medical field. Doctors, nurses, midwives, dentists, and others have been encouraged to take advantage of sabbatical opportunities to enhance skill development or perspective (Carmack, 1987; Keleher, 1993; Neidle, 1978; Parker, 1994; Tiedje & Collins, 1996). Several authors discussed medical sabbaticals as a venue for diversity education (Warner, 1979). They asserted that a profession with an increased understanding of diversity will care for diverse populations more effectively. Without this crucial outlook, these practitioners could make incorrect diagnoses because of language or cultural issues. Moreover, medical professors often use sabbaticals to provide patient care, which helps to increase their knowledge of current medical trends. Other programs have helped medical professionals to identify new learning opportunities for students, such as internship or exchange programs (Warner, 1979).

**Sabbaticals for Counselors and Counselor Educators**

Not unlike medical professionals, counselors benefit from sabbaticals. These practitioners spend considerable amounts of time working with people who have difficult problems and situations. These professionals benefit from time away to help gain balance, continue their studies, extend their perspectives (A. Batrick, personal communication, April 29, 2011), or experience renewal. Furbish (2009) studied how the
work-life balance was changed by a period of time away from work. He concluded that leave opportunities are “win-win situations for employees and employers” (p. 44) to achieve both personal and professional goals.

Sabbaticals for Religious Leaders

Similar to counselors and medical professionals, clergy care for the well-being of their congregations and communities. Sabbaticals have long been noted as an important factor in rejuvenating religious leaders and giving them a reprieve from their intense work (Clayton, 1969). Fuller (2003) examined sabbaticals as an important factor for reducing burnout among Nazarene clergy, and Wohlrabe (2003) reviewed how sabbaticals can contribute needed skills for clergy mission work.

Sabbaticals in the Military

Several studies have looked at sabbaticals for military personnel (Fleming & U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA, 2009; Gerlach & U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2009; Thie et al., 2004; Yardley, U.S. National Defense Research Institute, & U.S. Navy, 2004). The Navy launched an internal study to determine the type of leave options that might best serve employee needs (Yardley et al., 2004). They evaluated three different retention options for Navy seaman: (a) return former employees to service, (b) provide a 1-year leave with benefits (no salary), and (c) provide a 3-month leave for all surface warfare officers who were at sea. The program was needed because the group was experiencing retention issues with personnel who were away from family and friends for extended periods of time. The National Defense Research Institute found that allowing former service members to reenlist was the best option of the three available. They determined that the 1-year leave program would have a positive effect but the 3-month leave program would have a negative effect because the number of officers gone would exceed the resources available to staff the ship. An increase in morale was also a significant benefit of the program.
In a similar report, the same group conducted an internal audit for the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Thie et al., 2004) on the feasibility of sabbatical opportunities for military officers. After evaluating the sabbatical literature and internal policies, procedures, and services currently available, they conducted a return-on-investment analysis. The report recommended implementing a flexible range of extended leave programs including (a) sabbaticals instead of required training, (b) requirements for instituting a program (which included merit and need and was only open to certain positions), and (c) a call for continued evaluation of new programs.

Workforce Sabbaticals Summary

Exploring sabbaticals for employees outside of education helped to underscore the various ways sabbaticals are used in the workplace. Applying the organizational creativity framework to workforce sabbaticals revealed a broad spectrum of benefits. From corporate innovation and recruitment to individual motivation and rejuvenation, there are considerable benefits for sabbaticals outside of the academy. This literature and theoretical framework helped to broaden the perspective that sabbaticals can be an important employer tool, offering benefits beyond improving teaching and research in an organization. Organizational creativity helped the researcher organize the findings according to the type of product or process benefit and beneficial population as shown later in Table 6.2. This will help organizations to understand sabbatical benefits that might remain unexamined though using a specific beneficial lens. Furthermore, the theoretical framework applied to workforce sabbaticals helps to explain how the benefits might specifically pertain to the organization and the individual. Overall, understanding the benefits helps the organization market the experience and communicate stated benefits to internal and external offices. In addition, understanding the benefits of these experiences helps institutions assess how the benefits are assisting both individuals and the institution. Businesses want to know that benefits, in particular those that could affect the bottom line, contribute to the organization, their mission, and in some cases, the profit
Organizational creativity presents an open forum to discover these uniquely beneficial populations. However, it is also important to acknowledge that although sabbaticals are available in academia, they are most prominent in the ivory tower.

**Sabbaticals in Academia**

*Sabbaticals Logistics Overview*

In the higher education literature, the length of time an employee spends away from the traditional work environment had been described as a sabbatical. Although policies differ by institution, most offer full or partial pay while the employee is away in exchange for service years. For example, for 6 years of service at some institutions, an employee is eligible to take a one-semester sabbatical at full pay or a full-year sabbatical for half pay (Bess & Dee, 2008; Daugherty, 1980; Eberle & Thompson, 1973; Zahorski, 1994). In other institutions, librarians must take a 6-month sabbatical after 10 years (Gaskell & Morrill, 2001). Some institutions require shorter or longer intervals of service and offer different ratios of pay based on years of service. In higher education, sabbaticals are most often vetted through an application process and approved by a dean or board of directors (Bess & Dee, 2008). There are also programs through the government, such as the esteemed Fulbright Scholar Program (Institute of International Education, 2011), that provide structured sabbatical opportunities. In almost all situations, employees must return to the institution for a specified amount of time after the sabbatical ends. A return requirement ensures that the institutional benefits obtained by the employee are applicable or repaid upon return to campus.

*Sabbaticals for Faculty*

Sabbaticals in academia, specifically in higher education, are a cornerstone for the development of teaching faculty (Dunlap, 1980). This coveted professional development opportunity is available to many faculty who have gained institutional tenure (Zahorski, 1994) as a way to complete research (Rudolph & Thelin, 1990; Zahorski, 1994), improve teaching (Sima, 2000; Zahorski, 1994), or complete graduate work (Daugherty, 1980;
Ingraham & King, 1965). A number of attributes define a sabbatical, including amount of time away, payment, qualifications, return to service, and a post-sabbatical report (Zahorski, 1994). By far, empirical articles and other publications on faculty sabbaticals are the most prevalent in the sabbatical literature.

Boening (1996) studied sabbatical application patterns from 1986 to 1996 in his doctoral dissertation, and Miller and Kang (1997) explored post-sabbatical assessment measures through case studies. These quantitative studies examined all accepted applications for sabbaticals at the University of Alabama between 1989 and 1994. The data, based on the 151 faculty studied by Boening (1996), aimed primarily to explore research productivity and secondarily to evaluate teaching performance. Information was collected via survey, and evaluation of the curriculum vitae was submitted. This information allowed the authors to examine research productivity 3 years before and after the sabbatical. Teaching performance was evaluated through various teaching awards and honors. The study concluded that sabbaticals are given as a “reward for hard work rather than quality enhancement” (Boening, 1996, p. 14). Teaching performance in Boening’s study was used as a platform for discussion rather than as a conclusive result. The study also cited the limited empirical research on sabbaticals and called for further justification and reporting of sabbatical experiences and productivity. “Specific behavioral outcomes, final reports, and post-sabbatical portfolios all provide beginnings to a stronger rationale and defense of this traditional form of faculty development” (p. 15).

In a similar study, Sima and Denton (1995) explored reasons for and products of sabbaticals at a Midwestern public research institution. The study focused on institutional policies regarding sabbaticals and the reasons that faculty gave for applying for sabbaticals. The results of the study confirmed that faculty had completed their sabbaticals according to their sabbatical plans. Special emphasis was placed on the importance of the post-sabbatical report as a way to collect data on the productivity of the sabbatical. The authors noted that broader categories, beyond better teaching and more
research, are critical for understanding the benefits of a sabbatical. Furthermore, the authors called for a study on the relationship between sabbatical leave and travel as an important part of collaboration and understanding.

Bai’s (1999) exploratory dissertation studied the benefits of sabbatical leave for faculty and the institution at research, doctoral, and comprehensive institutions. He also examined the criteria that senior academic administrators used to evaluate these benefits. After collecting data using an open-ended survey, Bai found that “sabbaticals benefit both faculty and the institution. Although faculty are the greater beneficiaries of the sabbatical leave, institutions will also improve and advance as a result of this type of faculty professional development” (pp. 130-131). Further findings illustrated that the different types of institutions have no bearing on the sabbatical outcome for the faculty or the institution. The senior deans, provosts, and vice presidents agreed on criteria to use to evaluate the outcomes of sabbaticals. These included:

1. How well a sabbatical plan is implemented.
2. The number of publications, presentations, artistic products, or other research productivity increased.
3. The value and quality of the publications, presentations, and other tangible research or scholarly products.
4. Whether new research areas are pursued or new skills, new techniques, new methods, and new knowledge are applied. (Bai, 1999, pp. 132-133)

These criteria were weighted differently depending on the mission of the institution.

Benshoff and Spruill’s (2002) survey results showed personal and professional benefits for 45 counselor educators based on self-reported answers to open-ended survey questions. Participants were recruited from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) and were required to take their sabbatical within a 5-year period. The study concluded that participants seemed to place a “higher priority on personal and social development (including personal renewal, time for family and friends, and networking with colleagues) than reported by non counseling faculty” (p. 42) in the other literature. The study also commented on institutional benefits including “positive publicity (24%), increased prestige (24%), and enhanced status” (p. 42), which
are rarely emphasized in the academic literature. The individual benefits were motivation for employees (51%), increased productivity (38%), new perspectives, skills, and knowledge (24%), and improved teaching/benefits to students (20%). Overall, benefits to personal and professional lives confirmed other literature on sabbatical benefits. These included rejuvenation, opportunity to travel, self-exploration, increased productivity and professional skills, and networking. Less common were the benefits to the institution of more motivated employees, increased productivity, new perspectives, and increased prestige and publicity for the institution. Researching the benefits to the organization was critical for this study.

Jarecky and Sandifer (1986) conducted a qualitative study of 70 medical faculty members who were eligible for or had taken a sabbatical. The study touted the benefits of sabbaticals to the individual and the institution but indicated that institutions did not often provide a way to use the information gained. Furthermore, sabbaticals were difficult to schedule because these faculty were also trying to balance their clinical responsibilities, which were not easily transferable. Overwhelmingly, sabbaticals were viewed as positive experiences based on self-reported data for increased productivity, renewal, and self-confidence.

Perhaps the most recent study regarding sabbaticals was conducted at the University of Tehran. Hooshang Iravania (2011) analyzed quantitative data in 2004 from 120 randomly selected faculty members as part of a study examining organizational planning and processes. After synthesizing the data, the author found that outcomes of sabbaticals were best classified in five categories in which the percentages are the explained variance: professionalization (32.4%), psychological/cultural effects (19.3%), social-scientific capacity-building factor (17.8%), institutional productivity explaining (10%), and individual’s motivation factor (8.9%). Conclusions of the study reported ways to improve faculty sabbaticals, including strategic planning and proper policy making. Iravania’s contribution to the literature moves beyond simply identifying specific benefits
and provides benefit themes for more concise organization. The organization of these benefits helps delineate the variety of sabbatical benefits and illustrates sabbatical benefits beyond professional development.

The literature review of sabbaticals found that sabbaticals for faculty have been positively linked to increases in research and teaching, but it did not address the third pillar of the faculty role, service. Studies are needed to explore service and how the institution benefits from sabbatical policies in the service arena.

*Sabbaticals for Primary and Secondary Teachers*

Early historians cited sabbaticals as a university benefit, and it is unknown when sabbaticals were first offered within elementary and secondary education. A 1927 study was conducted on the prevalence of sabbatical leave for public school teachers (National Education Association of the United States, 1927). This early study defined sabbaticals as “any definite plan whereby teachers may be granted leave of absence covering a semester or more of the school year, for professional improvement with some salary during such leave” (p. 3). The study identified 30 cities with sabbatical leave programs for public school teachers. Among the stated benefits listed in the “Good Results of Sabbatical Leave” as reported by the superintendents of schools included better teaching, increased professionalism, culture, increased scholarship, renewal, change of perspective, inspiration, recruitment, and promotion within (National Education Association of the United States, 1927).

Finding support was a theme in two dissertations on sabbaticals for teachers. Ellis’ (1945) dissertation examined sabbaticals in the State of Pennsylvania after the passage of the Sabbatical Leave Act of 1937, which was created to stimulate teachers to maintain their teaching efficiency. The results of this study concluded that although the opportunity was available to participants, they did not take full advantage of it. Recommendations included finding administrative and economic support for employees to take advantage of the opportunity. O’Brien’s (1988) qualitative dissertation focused on
Massachusetts teachers who participated in the Lucretia Crocker Fellowship. Rejuvenation, alienation, re-entry adjustment, leaving their position, and the crucial involvement of the school administrator were all outcomes of this study.

**Sabbaticals for Librarians**

Librarians are one of the few non-teaching professionals to whom sabbaticals are regularly offered (Association of Research Libraries1973; Gaskell & Morrill, 2001; Oldroyd, 1996; Switzer, 1993). Although librarians are often considered staff or administrators, their appointments may be generated from academic affairs where sabbaticals regularly occur. Similar to faculty, librarians are offered other traditional perks such as tenure. Although this is a common practice, policies vary greatly by institution. Faculty aside, the literature on sabbaticals for librarians is more numerous than for other non-faculty professions, although the majority of the literature is advice, opinion, or news story rather than empirical research (Reynolds, 1990). These articles detail how sabbaticals are used for internships/fellowships, exchanges, conferences, travel, and study/research (Hubbard, 2002), and highlight the importance of self-exploration (Michelozzi, 1984) and professional development (Gaskell & Morrill, 2001) to librarians.

Gaskell and Morrill’s (2001) study was designed to assist library administrators in the maintenance and establishment of travel policies, sabbaticals, and study leaves. The authors stated, “The data and sample policies should provide information with which library administrators can sway academic administrators to specifically include librarians in sabbatical and study leave policies” (p. 3). The study sampled selected small colleges and universities on the East and West coasts of the United States affiliated with the Association of College and Research Libraries. Based on a 47% return rate, the study survey examined travel, sabbatical, and study leave policies at these institutions. The study was guided by five questions with nine sub-questions regarding sabbaticals and study leaves. Sabbaticals were defined as “paid leaves for such activities as planned
programs of research, writing, or travel” (Gaskell & Morrill, 2001, pp. 34-35). Fifty-six percent of respondents indicated that librarians were eligible for sabbaticals at their institution whereas 18% indicated that other library professionals were also eligible for sabbaticals. The study addressed sabbatical length, with a 6-month period receiving the largest number of responses for both questions. The survey asked the same questions for “study leave,” which was described as follows: “Absence can be paid or unpaid and generally covers graduate study leave or extensive research projects” (p. 35). The authors separated population groups into five categories including “institutional level,” “library level,” “both,” “union contract,” “other, specify” (pp. 35-36). Official sabbatical policies included in this study were submitted by 10 institutions, all of which listed the policy as part of a faculty development plan or as a function of academic affairs.

A follow-up survey through the Association of Research Libraries was published in December 2009. The survey, which was similar to the Gaskell and Morril (2001) survey, asked two questions on sabbaticals and reported all written explanations regarding the policies. According to the data, 87% of respondents were eligible to apply for sabbatical or professional development leave whereas over 75% of respondents were eligible for paid leave. No differentiations among library personnel were made (Association of Research Libraries, 1973).

Perry (1996), in the chapter on “Continuing Professional Development,” stated the following:

In a climate where development is valued and encouraged, the academic community cannot fail to benefit from services provided by library staff who are flexible, who relish a challenge and, above all, are able to respond positively to the turbulence and change that will continue to characterize the world of higher education. (p. 32)

*Sabbaticals for College Presidents, Deans, and Academic Administrators*

Sabbaticals are sometimes given to high-level academic administrators. Some of these administrators qualify for sabbaticals because they are administrators promoted
within their faculty contract, such as the Director of a Health Center who was hired as a faculty researcher but subsequently performed administrative responsibilities (Arden, 1969). Research in this area is very limited. Nelsen (1973) wrote about the status of administrative leaves, such as the funded Danforth short-term leave program in 1968, which was created to:

1. Provide opportunities for outstanding colleges and university administrators to enlarge their perspectives of current and future educational issues and to renew their inner resources for continued leadership in higher education.
2. Demonstrate the value of such leaves so that colleges and universities might seriously consider instituting their own leave programs for administrators. (Nelson, 1973, p. 318)

The program granted $5000 to each invited applicant to supplement their home institutional salary. The program lasted only 5 years but collected positive feedback from participants who took a sabbatical from their daily work. During this time, they visited other colleges and universities domestically and abroad, increased their scholarly reading, traveled for cultural understanding, studied at research centers, explored research on financial programs of higher education, and also embraced recreation and relaxation activities. To learn more about this program, Nelsen (1973) collected responses to open-ended questions of over 2000 institutions’ governing boards. These were both private and public, 2- and 4-year institutions. Based on a 51% response rate, the survey yielded simple fact-gathering conclusions with no follow-up or further analysis. Basic questions asked about the length of the program, pay, salary, eligibility, and financial support, and if a policy was being considered. Of interest was that 139 institutions had administrative leave programs that were similar to faculty development programs, 66 institutions had shorter leave programs, and 71 institutions hosted unwritten leave programs.

Horner (1970) and McKenna (1977) both wrote personal reflections in *Liberal Education* about their own presidential sabbatical experiences. Both cited the experience as a positive one and used their writings to mentor other administrators and governing boards on offering sabbaticals at their institutions. Both authors viewed sabbaticals as
“not a luxurious fringe benefit for the individual but a sound investment for the institution” (Horner, 1970, p. 557).

As for administrators, Arden’s (1969) *A Sabbatical Plan for Deans* noted among other benefits the importance of cross-training opportunities in the academy while the dean took a sabbatical. The article is another fact-finding compilation of various sabbatical polices, how many institutions offer them, and a handful of nuances between them. In the simple survey, Arden found that 23.5% of institutions had formal sabbatical policies for administrators (1969).

*Sabbaticals and Administrative Leave in the Professional Development Literature*

One of the largest groups of professional administrators on campus are student affairs administrators; therefore, gathering literature regarding this group was important to this study. The student affairs literature has described sabbaticals as one type of professional development opportunity (DeCoster & Brown, 1991; Komives & Woodard, 2003; Kruger, 2000); however, very few studies have examined the intersection of sabbaticals and student affairs or other higher education administration groups.

In student affairs, professional development or employment benefit surveys often do not include “administrative leave” as a development option in surveys, evaluations, and assumptions. However, Roberts (2003, 2007) included sabbaticals in a list of preferred professional development methods. Using a similar kind of “preferred professional development study,” if the assessment tool did include sabbaticals as a professional development opportunity, the results of “sabbatical preference” were negative (Roberts, 2003). Lack of sabbatical experience plays a large role in assessing the outcomes. For example, with a limited number of staff participating in sabbaticals, sabbaticals may continue to report negative results when compared to other professional development methods. Furthermore, when sabbaticals are not included on surveys that request preferred professional development methods, sabbaticals will remain a limited
concept for student affairs staff. Although no studies explore this topic, the lack of literature on student affairs sabbaticals negatively affects familiarity with the concept among professionals.

Battiste’s (1991) dissertation examined how different types of professional development activities were used to enhance job skills. The survey was administered to 68 full-time staff members at the University of the Virgin Islands. The author targeted professional staff defined as “full-time non-teaching professionals who support the teaching and research missions of the university” (p. 15) and included sabbaticals as one of the professional development activities. The respondents to this survey indicated that graduate coursework, exchange programs, short seminars and workshops, and national conventions were perceived as the most helpful in improving job skills and facilitating growth. In addition, the dissertation provided implications regarding appropriate institutional leadership required and the research needed to further professional development scholarship.

Participation in the professional development activities reported as helpful should be increased, encouraged and supported fully by the institution. Also, participation in other activities deemed as helpful should also be continued. Additionally, since very few professionals staff have participated in exchange programs, this concept should be examined carefully to determine feasibility and cost. (Battiste, 1991, p. 117)

It appears that professional development is initiated by the respondents. Professional development should not be left solely up to the individual but must be an integral part of the institution overall plan. The university should establish policies for on-going professional development programming and these policies must be clearly defined. (Battiste, 1991, pp. 117-118)

Comparative research is needed on administrators in business and industry and in higher education. Studies should be done in a variety of colleges and universities. Changes affect individuals and institutions differently. This type of study will be able to show productivity and interest level of the job. Attempts to verify these data with other collegiate populations in the Caribbean would also be desirable. (Battiste, 1991, p. 118)

Research is needed to determine if there is any difference in satisfaction between individuals whose professional development is of their own undertaking and those who professional development is supplied by the institution. (Battiste, 1991, p. 119)
Lemoine (1985) examined professional development for mid-level student affairs professionals at small colleges in the North Central region of the United States. The quantitative study focused on perceived professional development needs. In a multiple response survey that included sabbaticals, the top three preferences for improving “professional skills” (p. 190) were conferences (23%), workshops (20%), and discussions with colleagues (16%). Only 10% of the respondents chose sabbaticals. No discussion of the ranking, preferences, or assumptions was provided in this study.

Staff development at community colleges has also been studied (Bai & Miller, 1998; Hornak, 2009; B. R. Jones, 2004; D. M. Jones & Riegle, 1989; Robles, 1999; Souther, 1986; Waltmire, 1967). An interesting characteristic of community colleges is the limited distinction between teaching and non-teaching employees. Many of the studies listed all community college employees, even faculty as staff, and only in some cases distinguished between professional staff and faculty.

In her study of staff development needs at select Massachusetts community colleges, Souther (1986) found that many groups, including professional staff, ranked sabbaticals as a top staff development need to remain current in their field. In her survey and interview study, professional staff, division chairpersons, directors, deans, and presidents all indicated a need for professionals to have sabbatical leave opportunities. The only group that did not view sabbaticals as necessary for professional staff were faculty members. In a similar study, Taber (1998) found differences in the perception of development needs for faculty and staff in an Alabama community college. Faculty identified instruction and technology as important development needs whereas administrators focused on organizational issues and working together. Taber concluded that understanding the differences between self-needs and perceptions may stimulate fruitful discussions when establishing polices on professional development.
A limited number of dissertations and reports have focused on sabbatical policies in academia and have examined the policies to further understand the variations of each policy and how it works within the institution. According to Sima (2000), “In order to ensure that sabbatical policies continue to be offered by postsecondary institutions, the academic community must now examine and report the relationship between the sabbatical leave and the benefits that accrue to the community and society” (p. 74).

The U.S. Commissioner of Education published the first official record of sabbatical policies in higher education (National Education Association of the United States, 1927). Based on that report, several dissertations examined sabbatical policies (Dunlap, 1980; Rios, 1983). Eells and Hollis (1962) published their findings of 48 pioneer institutions that had early sabbatical policies. The study found that the purpose of the sabbaticals was to assist with institutional needs. Most of the institutions provided sabbaticals for instructional staff, and a few provided an opportunity for administrative officers in special circumstances (Colorado State College, Howard University, and Utah State University, p. 62). Most required at least 6 years of service.

Cooper (1931) examined sabbatical leaves for college teachers. In his study, Cooper examined the components of a sabbatical, the sabbatical status, and the factors that influence sabbaticals. Cooper reported found that 87% percent of administrators found faculty members more beneficial upon their return and found that administrative leave to refresh teachers was a valuable benefit. The most common benefits were (a) “higher scholarship and culture, (b) a broader professional view, (c) increased teaching efficiency, (d) rest and a fresh outlook, and (e) a source of inspiration to other teachers” (p. 82). Negative outcomes included financial and replacement concerns in addition to the retention of employees after the sabbatical.

Several scholars from Indiana University initiated a number of studies to evaluate institutional and individual qualifications for offering sabbaticals. Eberle and Thompson
(1973) investigated 386 institutions to report on the eligibility of administrators in addition to faculty members for sabbatical leaves. The study distinguished institutions by public, private, senior, and junior colleges and by total enrollment (in five categories). The review was “purely a status report of various sabbatical leave policies and plans, and it does not deal with the values which actually accrue from sabbatical leaves” (Eberle & Thompson, 1973, p. 5). The results confirmed the lack of research available, and the authors hoped the study would serve as a tool for institutions looking to create or benchmark their sabbatical policies. The study noted that approximately two-thirds of the responding institutions did grant sabbatical leaves. Administrators (who were separate from faculty in this study) were more likely to receive sabbaticals at public institutions. Tenure was a requirement of approximately 60% of respondents, whereas 60% of senior-level institutions (non-junior colleges) offered sabbaticals for faculty ranks only. Sabbaticals were considered a significant facet of development for faculty and administration. The term “administrator” was not defined in Eberle and Thompson’s study.

Daugherty (1980) explored sabbatical leaves for both faculty and administrators in higher education in 1979. Through an extensive survey of 329 institutions, the author explored institutional nuances to better understand the sabbatical landscape for both employee categories. The results indicated that sabbaticals were offered to administrators without faculty rank or tenure status. The results of the study showed that 78% of 4-year and 65% of 2-year institutions offered sabbaticals. Of those, 49% of 4-year and 76% of 2-year institutions offered sabbaticals to administrators. Tenure was required for sabbaticals among 55% of the total group while slightly less that 70% of both groups needed faculty rank.

Holleman’s (1981) practicum paper presented a simple benchmarking study of nine community college districts in California that examined their sabbatical policies after budget tightening at his home institution. The author collected information from the
other institutions to help build an institutional policy on his home campus that would neutralize the costs associated with sabbaticals. Demographic information, length of absence, compensation, total sabbaticals granted per year, and purposes were collected. The final results presented a sabbatical policy and financial plan for funding them.

In Rios’ (1983) dissertation, *Sabbatical Leave Policy and Practices in Selected Pennsylvania Institutions of Higher Education*, 32 institutions responded to the quantitative survey for an 80% response rate. Of the institutions that responded, over 90% had sabbatical policies, but only 13.8% had sabbaticals available to administrative staff, which included deans, chairpersons, administrators, and other non-faculty. One community college and two universities offered sabbaticals to administrators. Similar studies have been done in New Mexico (Hopson, 1972) and California’s community colleges (Jorgenson, 1974; Legrand & Swanson, 1964).

Very few studies have focused on the interplay between institutional policies within and outside of academia related to sabbaticals. Joseph and Kucera (2004) conducted a comparative study of academic versus business sabbatical policies and found that sabbaticals were used and implemented in very different ways. Some of the differences included:

1. Businesses view sabbaticals as refreshment and rejuvenation while academics view sabbaticals as a benefit to the individual and institution.
2. Businesses see sabbaticals as a benefit or entitlement while academics view sabbaticals as part of the merit system.
3. Businesses allocate sabbaticals by supervisors who are concerned about coverage while academics allocate sabbaticals based on purpose and product rather than solely on coverage.
4. Businesses require no end-of-service report while academic sabbaticals require reports to reflect on the experience and share the benefits of the experience.
5. Businesses have no required return for employees while academics have a required return to service or a financial penalty to reimburse the institution.

In a dissertation study on sabbatical practices and the law, Dunlap (1980) found that sabbaticals continued to serve institutions and individuals within academia. However, from a legal perspective, sabbatical practices were “essentially legally unprotected and unprotectable as a national ‘custom’” (p. vi). Dunlap sought to understand more about how different states handled sabbatical policies within their various legal systems since their inception in 1880. The author recommended administrative action, such as including a sabbatical clause in a contract, to protect this tradition.

Parker (1994) used document analysis and quantitative methods to study sabbatical policies for dental education faculty and administrators, most of whom had tenure. Over 54 schools (840 surveys) were included in the dissertation research and yielded a 94% return rate. The author concluded that most schools offered sabbaticals through a written policy, although the policies varied considerably. Of the respondents who participated in sabbaticals, 33% engaged in activities that supported the academic mission. The author also found positive benefits with regard to productivity in teaching, research, and service, but noted that sabbaticals were not viewed as a means of staying current in their profession.

The CUPA-HR collects information on various benefits, including different types of leave, at U.S. institutions of higher education (CUPA-HR, 2005, 2010). CUPA-HR documented sabbatical policies in their ongoing data collection survey of college and university human resource policies. In 2010, CUPA-HR reported that 17% of institutions offered sabbaticals (as formal paid leave) for exempt administrative staff and 4% for non-exempt or support staff (CUPA-HR, 2010). With 470 institutions reporting, formal sabbatical policies for non-faculty were reported to be more prevalent than was expected. In the same survey, sabbaticals for exempt staff were up 5% from 2005 (CUPA-HR,
2005), illustrating the growth in formal sabbatical programs over the last 5 years. Of interest in this survey was the delineation of various kinds of leave, including personal, military, unpaid, new parents, and sabbatical leaves. In addition, the demarcation between employee categories was very clearly articulated as exempt/professional staff, non-exempt/support staff, and benefits eligible faculty. Although the previous year’s information on institutions offering sabbaticals was not available for this study, CUPA-HR provided the most current and relevant information. If available to the researcher, this private information could more clearly identify and compare sabbatical policies available to higher education administrators.

Stine (1987) provided one of the only qualitative research studies of sabbatical policies in higher education. He set out to “discover, describe and discuss benefits of the sabbatical leave to individuals and institutions” and to “discover how these benefits can be maximized” (p. 34). This holistic view of faculty sabbaticals was a great first step in moving beyond a simple fact-finding mission regarding sabbaticals to understanding how sabbatical experiences and sabbatical policy can help both the individual and the institution. Stine asked the questions: “How do institutional policies affect sabbatical leaves? What are the perceived benefits of sabbatical leaves? How can sabbatical leaves be maximized?” (p. 34). Stine found that the faculty benefits cited most frequently were research and rejuvenation. Administrators of the sabbatical programs who were also interviewed supported the process. Stine found that participants experienced both expected and unexpected benefits of sabbatical leave.

Sabbatical Critiques

It is also important to note that not all of the published information regarding sabbaticals is positive. In fact, a number of studies show that sabbaticals are not always a benefit. Additionally there are strong concerns regarding where the money will come from and who will finance the experience (Bradford, 2001).
Miller and Bai (1997) examined sabbaticals at the University of Alabama and found that although faculty reported that they were better teachers after their sabbaticals, the study’s results did not confirm those perceptions. The authors also noted that 60% of respondents said they were not better academic citizens after the experience. Research production and teaching improvement were examined as the primary outcomes of the sabbatical experience.

Boice (1987) acknowledged the prevalence of “uncritical acceptance” (p. 311) of sabbatical programs. He stated that skepticism regarding sabbaticals is due to limited empirical research. His results supported this skepticism by showing that:

1. verified assessments of normal workloads contradict faculty claims of being too busy for additional scholarship;
2. faculty given released time usually persist in old habits;
3. new faculty showed no obvious benefits of a typical released-time program;
4. faculty in released-time programs verbalized real doubts about how to use extra time for meaningful scholarship. (p. 311)

Along with studies that show negative sabbatical outcomes are studies that point out the limitations of data collection methods such as self-reports (Lemoine, 1985) and anecdotal reflections, which are not empirical research (Reynolds, 1990; Zahorski, 1994).

Most recently, Mamiseishvili and Miller (2010) explored who receives sabbaticals and the rationale for granting sabbaticals using the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty data sets from 1999 and 2004. The quantitative study examined how demographic characteristics, career position, and research productivity were related to sabbaticals. The authors concluded that sabbaticals were offered as rewards for performance rather than as development opportunities. Using sabbaticals as recognition was also explored by Eble and McKeachie (1985).

**Academic Sabbatical Summary**

The reviewed literature indicated that the limited research on sabbaticals focuses on faculty members as recipients and highlights positive results of sabbaticals in anecdotal and qualitative studies and mixed results in quantitative studies. The literature
does not clearly state who should be awarded sabbaticals or the rationale or benefits associated with them (Mamiseishvili & Miller, 2010).

Summary of the Literature

In summary, the literature reviewed for this study, which focused primarily on teaching/faculty personnel, identified a number of benefits of sabbaticals and other professional development opportunities. To summarize this chapter and confront assumptions that sabbaticals are only for research, Figure 2.3 is a graphic representation of the varied sabbatical benefits presented in this literature review. Of the 34 most relevant articles/literature reviewed, this study presents empirical and anecdotal benefits as articulated by the authors. Categorized and adapted according to Iravania (2011), each of the benefits is grouped according to a larger theme (Appendix M) delineated as professionalism (mentioned 109 times with top benefits as career development, research and publications, and increasing knowledge), capacity-building factor (96 times with top benefits as increased productivity, teaching improvement, new experiences and innovation), psychological effects (71 times with top benefits as reinvigorating, revitalization and renewal, reducing burnout or stress and increased reflection), institutional productivity (64 times with top benefits as increased morale, loyalty to the organization/commitment to work, retention and compensation), and finally personal (mentioned 38 times with top benefits as personal development, developing interests, uninterrupted time and motivation) explaining an individual’s motivation factor. Although career development is one of the largest benefit categories, the literature results are extremely varied. The data show a significant number of benefits in all five areas. These data underscore the importance of collecting data broadly. With an array of benefits serving a variety of purposes and populations, it was important for this study to avoid collecting data according to a certain viewpoint. Organizational creativity was an important theoretical framework for broadly gathering these data. Given that this list was
created from both anecdotal and empirical literature, the current study hoped to empirically clarify the benefits for higher education administrators.

![A comparison of sabbatical benefits found in the literature review and organized according to Iravania's (2011) thematic categories](image)

**Figure 2.3. Sabbatical benefits according to the literature by benefits**


Note: These benefits were gathered from the beneficial outcomes of the studies listed in this literature review and categorized by conceptual organization offered by Iravania (2011). This graph notes the number of times each benefit was cited in the literature.

The reviewed studies focused on various aspects of sabbaticals including increased productivity, career knowledge, improved teaching, research, and service, travel, continuing education, reducing burnout and increasing balance, job satisfaction, enthusiasm, morale, recruiting staff, investing in institutional loyalty and mission, and cross training employees, which all contribute to employee development. Furthermore,
the literature validated sabbaticals as a good practice for both the personal and the professional development of the employee and the organization. The outcomes of sabbaticals in academic and non-academic sectors make a convincing case for sabbaticals as an ongoing practice. With very few exceptions (Boice, 1987; M. T. Miller & Bai, 1997), the writings on sabbaticals were positive. Many focused on individual experiences and rarely critiqued or downgraded this benefit (Boening & Miller, 1997; Kang & Miller, 1999).

Because sabbaticals have many definitions, it is difficult to ascertain specific sabbatical attributes for easy translation into a corporate or academic setting. The literature provided limited information about the types of leave, if any, that are available to higher education administrators. Although sabbatical leaves are believed to be a valuable asset for development, recruitment, and retention, among other benefits, very little has been written about the experience or its outcomes. Moreover, much of the research about sabbaticals is outdated (Zahorski, 1994). More current research on the general topic of sabbaticals should be conducted, analyzed, and disseminated.

If sabbaticals are valuable (Boswell, 1970; Cloward, 1960), then it begs the question, Why isn’t there more research on the topic? Some scholars argue that when people believe strongly in a concept, such as the importance of professional development or sabbaticals (in the case of faculty development; Goeres, 1977; Hendel & Solberg, 1983), research on the concept is not conducted because of the perception that further justification is not needed. With few resources that address preparation for and re-entry after a sabbatical, there is little information about the learning outcomes of these experiences (Avakian, 1987; Dlugozima et al., 1996; Rogak, 1994; Rubin, 1987; J. C. Scott, 1992). The literature and assessment present a one-dimensional view of the sabbaticant’s experience. Quantitative surveys highlight the most popular or tangible reasons for sabbaticals (mainly to conduct research in academia) (Sima & Denton, 1995) without regard for the indirect benefits of the experience, such as increased institutional
loyalty or support for the institutional mission. Other learning outcomes might involve interacting with someone different from you, reclaiming motivation, or experiencing a different culture. The reviewed literature indicates a high level of satisfaction with the experience not only for increased productivity, but also for the opportunity for more international understanding and general reflection. However, more studies are needed that show the intangible outcomes that result from these experiences.

This literature review clearly indicates how the benefits of a sabbatical program can contribute to both the personal and the professional development of employees and the goals, mission, and effective practices of organizations. Furthermore, with more energized, rejuvenated, talented, and knowledgeable staff, the students, institutions, and colleagues will benefit greatly.

Conclusions and Implications for Future Research

This literature review supports the need for further research examining the effects of sabbatical opportunities for administrators. The literature shows the professional, personal, and institutional benefits of sabbaticals; however, not all of the literature is empirical. Research on sabbaticals as a professional development option must be more tailored, the description must address the planned experience (Merkle & Artman, 1983), amount of time, and purpose for the sabbatical leave (Sima, 2000). These factors are synthesized by Zahorski (1994) and provide an important reference point for future studies.

Conducting research on the outcomes of sabbatical experiences for higher education professionals is one reasonable direction for future research. First, additional research on identifying professional development opportunities (which include sabbatical experiences) as a viable option should be conducted. Researchers should avoid making assumptions about this experience based on a small pool of quantitative data. However, a majority of sabbatical studies evaluating outcomes are quantitative studies. The literature articulates tangible benefits (e.g., research publications, new career skills) but also
highlights intangible benefits of the experience (e.g., motivation, loyalty, renewal). Careful attention should be paid to empirically identifying both tangible and intangible benefits of the sabbatical experience that confirm the literature findings above.

In addition to exploring outcomes, researchers should address the different types of sabbatical experiences of higher education professionals. Researchers should pay careful attention to identifying both the tangible products and the outcomes of sabbaticals and the intangible benefits or processes. Identifying different kinds of sabbatical leave opportunities is foundational to understanding the activity and purpose of the sabbatical activity. Currently there are few large institutions that offer both formal and informal leave opportunities to fulfill a variety of purposes, such as finishing a degree, attending an international conference, or conducting research.

Another component of sabbatical research should examine the logistics of sabbaticals (e.g., who is eligible, who applies) for administrative professionals. There are a plethora of different avenues to pursuing a sabbatical depending on years of service, organizational mission and support, and length of leave. Finally, research should examine self-reported outcomes associated with this experience. These might include tangible benefits such as publishing research, finishing a degree, or completing an exchange program (Christie & Ragans, 1999; Hubbard, 2002; Tilley, 1973) or internship (Armstrong, 2005; Burkhalter, McLean, & Jones, 2004; Kruger, 2000; Lewis, Cavalier, Hantman, Waechter, & Yamakawa, 1994). Close attention, however, should also be given to the intangible benefits of sabbaticals, such as increasing balance, motivation, and rejuvenation, as indicated by the professional, personal, and institutional outcomes in the literature. This might result in development of a qualitative assessment tool to assess particular outcomes associated with these experiences. Important factors to consider might include cost, benefits, governmental provisions that preclude this from happening, frequency, amount of time, amount of pay, eligibility, duration, compensation, who will cover current work load, procedures, applications, who will approve, restrictions and
conditions of the program, difficult issues, and retention/recruitment conditions (Robbins & Federal Judicial Center, 1987).

By examining the current opportunities, researchers can establish how questions and/or interviews should be constructed to assess the outcomes of these experiences. Finally, a more complete synthesis of the data could reveal important findings on leave opportunities for administrative professionals and offer significant implications for future research and practice.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design Overview

This chapter describes the research methods used in this study, including the research design, theoretical framework, research population, instrumentation, data collection, trustworthiness, data analysis, and limitations. This study examines the practice of administrative sabbaticals to provide empirical research regarding sabbatical policies and benefits for administrative staff (professional, exempt staff). Research questions for this study included:

1. How are staff sabbaticals structured and used at colleges and universities?
2. How do administrators and sabbaticants in colleges and universities conceptualize and communicate individual and organizational benefits of staff sabbaticals?
3. How do these individual and organizational benefits compare to the sabbatical policy?

A qualitative research design was utilized to capture insights into collegiate sabbatical policies, the sabbaticants, and the organizations that sponsor sabbaticals. Qualitative research methods were chosen because the purpose of this study was to examine the practice of administrative sabbaticals and provide empirical research regarding sabbatical policies and benefits for administrative staff (professional, exempt staff). Because little is written about sabbaticals, qualitative research offers an understanding of the concepts and nuances associated with them. Sabbatical practices and policies cannot be easily separated from their context; therefore, this study sought to understand programs and policies and the people who interact with them (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005). Organizational creativity was used as a theoretical framework to understand how workplace and workforce issues contributed to the
sabbatical experience. Further explanation of resources, techniques, and motivation, as the factors of organizational creativity, were explored to identify what people think about sabbaticals.

The purpose of using a qualitative strategy (using qualitative data for independent benefits and case studies) for this research was to fully explore the interplay between the policy, the institution, and the individual. Case studies were an important research method for this study because they helped to illuminate the research in light of the campus culture and organizational structure (Hartley, 2004) relevant to sabbaticals. Given that sabbatical policies affect both individuals and the organization, and because these policies are part of the campus culture, case studies were the best way to examine the complex interplay between all of the components. This study focused on sabbaticals as contemporary phenomena within particular institutions or contexts from which they cannot be easily separated (Yin, 1994). These case studies provided rich, critical insights about the sabbatical policy and the personal and institutional gains related to it. The case-study format was used to allow for an unlimited number of (Yin, 1984, 1993, 1994) sabbatical benefits.

This study sought to explore how sabbatical policies and practices are experienced; therefore, multiple case-study sites were selected. Multiple case studies helped to explain how a sabbatical policy varied according to various institutional types and the individual projects and ideas generated by the sabbatical program (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Furthermore, multiple case studies helped to draw conclusions regarding inter-organizational partnerships that were not possible to understand using single case studies (Yin, 2011).

A purposeful case design was used for this study to present the information about each case separately but also as part of a larger effort. For this study, data were presented by each institution but also by overall analysis of all participating institutions (Yin,
The study also examined themes among sabbaticants and themes among administrators of sabbaticals.

Purposeful case studies focus on collecting data based strongly on a theoretical framework. For this study, the researcher assessed how the theoretical framework was evident in each case. In other words, this study examined how organizational creativity influenced and was influenced by the sabbatical experience and policy. Using the theoretical framework, the researcher viewed sabbaticals through the organizational creativity filter of a beneficial product/outcome or beneficial process. Because this study explored the work of higher education administrators, it was preferable to use a purposeful case study research, which is primarily used in the business sector. Furthermore, the theoretical framework also included organizational and individual factors of resources, motivation, and techniques to further understand contextual components.

Finally, this study used document reviews (Yin, 2011), proposals, and a final report as a crucial part of evaluating sabbaticals at the case institutions. The document review illustrated the sabbatical policy and provided relevant background information for each case study. This study utilized content analysis (Neuendorf, 2001) to examine and compare staff sabbatical policies. Sabbatical policies were examined fully to understand all of the components of the policy. In addition, the evaluation of each criterion was complemented by qualitative responses by participants to provide more contextual insights. Participant data (interviews with sabbaticants and administrators) were analyzed by confirmatory analysis. Confirmatory analysis is a method that confirms themes according to previous literature but does not discount new information that might emerge. These data were used in connection with the content analysis of sabbatical policies and the document review from participants.

When the data were collected, benefits associated with the sabbatical policy, administrator interview (if available), the sabbatical interview, and the document analysis
compared and contrasted stated benefits to determine where policies aligned with the benefits articulated by the sabbaticant and administrator. Additionally, a comparison between stated benefits by the sabbaticant and administrator and other relevant comparisons was reviewed. Themes were gathered regarding how the policy was structured and used.

Site Selection

Criteria for Participation

Institutions were selected for this study based on six different criteria: (1) formal sabbatical policy, (2) sabbaticant availability (people who have taken the sabbatical), (3) different institutional types (when possible), (4) information-rich cases, (5) availability, and (6) identifying cases. These six criteria were important to obtaining a purposeful sample that was representative of sabbatical-hosting institutions.

Formal Sabbatical Policy

First, the institution had a formal sabbatical policy open to administrative professionals. Policies are defined as “written and customary, systematic approaches” (Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, & Rice, 2003). For this study, sabbatical policies were defined as “written and customary, systematic approaches to offer sabbaticals for higher education administrators.” Defining sabbaticals is important because a formal sabbatical policy indicated that a sabbatical opportunity was available to the campus community. Although informal or negotiated sabbaticals or career leave opportunities are available to some administrators in academia (Kramer, 2001; Neidle, 1978), these opportunities are often only available to those practitioners who know to request them. Because this study focused on sabbatical experiences, policies, and the institutional professionals who administer them, careful attention was given to selecting institutions that could provide information in all three study areas. Through snowball sampling, the researcher contacted all known sabbatical-sponsoring institutions to participate in the study. All known sabbatical-serving institutions were used in the content analysis of this project. No
specific preference was given to the type of sabbatical requirements found in a particular policy.

*Sabbaticant Availability*

The second criterion was the availability of the sabbaticant. To be included in the qualitative interviews, at least one sabbaticant must be available to the researcher. When possible, the researcher also interviewed the administrator of the sabbatical policy. A sabbaticant ideally would have completed the sabbatical during the past 6 months to 10 years. Because sabbaticals are often given every 7 to 10 years (Kramer, 2001) and because sabbaticals for administrators are often given once during a career, it was important to concentrate the study on the most recent time period while also allowing for participants to reflect on their sabbatical experiences. However, any available sabbaticant was included. Whether the individual was still employed by the sponsoring institution was not relevant in this study. Broadly defining this part of the study allowed the researcher to understand the benefits of the sabbatical for the individual and the organization, even if the sabbaticant had left the institution.

Sabbaticants were found through the human resource office at the institution or through word of mouth. When a formal sabbatical policy was identified, the researcher contacted the human resources offices to assist with the study. Collecting sabbaticants from the institution was exhaustive by asking the human resource office to contact all sabbaticants from the institution to participate in the study. At least one sabbaticant was needed to continue the study. Then, the researcher interviewed sabbaticants according to the criterion listed previously.

The administrator of a sabbatical program was defined as someone who has primary responsibility for authorizing the sabbatical. The person in charge is often not a human resource officer, but rather a dean, division chair, director, supervisor, or committee head who reviews the applications and grants permission for sabbaticals. Because higher education administrators come from a variety of areas within the
institution (student affairs, business affairs, academic affairs, but not teaching faculty), there were multiple possibilities for the role of administrator. For the purpose of this study, only one administrator for each program was necessary. However, if other administrators were involved, they were included as well.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the first two criteria for institutions. In this example, determining if an institution had a sabbatical policy was the first question. Next, the researcher ensured that each of the necessary data collection types were available. Each institution needed one sabbaticant interview, one administrator interview (if available), and a formal written sabbatical policy for the document review. Administrator interviews were included if available. When these criteria were met, the institution was considered for the study. When only a sabbatical policy was available with no sabbaticants, the institution was included in the policy content analysis section only. Call for participation was given to human resource offices in accordance with the research methodology in Chapter 3. This process was open to individuals who contacted the researcher during the open collection period (2 months). Strategic efforts were made to include each institutional type.

Different Institutional Types

The third area examined different institutional types. Because institutional policies can vary by institutional type, this study tried to incorporate many different institutional types as possible. Carnegie classification, size, mission, tradition, and so on, the cases represented different categories including (a) large public and (b) small private. Additionally, specialty-serving institutions such as art institutes, maritime academies, and Hispanic-serving institutions were included. These categories included 2- and 4-year institutions. Achieving balance and variety was more important than looking at specific attributes (Stake, 1995). These cases represented robust examples while also honoring the breadth of institutions available to the researcher and about which the researcher was knowledgeable.
Figure 3.1. Criteria of site selection for the purposeful case study framework diagram for sabbatical policies for higher education administrators

*Information-Rich Cases*

Fourth, institutions with “thick,” (Geertz, 1973) “rich” examples of sabbaticals were chosen (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Institutions were purposefully sampled (Patton, 2002) based on the presence of an active sabbatical program and the access to individuals who had completed the program. Active sabbatical programs consisted of programs with more than one sabbaticant within the last 20 years. Thick, rich descriptions were based on
interview participation by at least one member of the institution. Therefore, participation by the sabbatical administrator was important but not crucial because the sabbaticant experiences could be compared to the policy. Each individual was selected based on the “potential of each person to contribute to the development of insights and understanding” (Merriam, 1998, p. 83) of this study. Because of the small, unique population, each interview offered valuable insights (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, institutions that offered thick descriptions also offered the complexity that other institutions need if they want to consider a sabbatical policy as a role model institution.

Accessibility

The fifth criterion narrowed the cases that were accessible to the researcher and about which the researcher was knowledgeable (Stake, 1995). Participating institutions were located in the United States because the researcher was most knowledgeable about the U.S. system and policies of higher education. Narrowing this study also helped to narrow the implications for practice and policy in the United States. A case study format helped to communicate this qualitative research and possible policy implications to key decision makers. The format provided a structured way of understanding the multiple components of the sabbatical policy and how it benefited both the individual and the organization (Yin, 2011).

Participant Selection

Identifying Cases

For assistance in identifying these cases, the researcher networked with higher education administrators and asked them if they knew about any non-faculty members who had taken a sabbatical. The researcher also located information leads through social media outlets such as Facebook and through electronic communication, personal visits, and conference meetings with colleagues over a 3-year period. In addition, the researcher used the internet to gather formal sabbatical policy information using “sabbatical” “professional development,” and “staff sabbatical” to identify other institutions with
similar policies. After creating this list, the researcher referenced the information with the institutional webpage, human resource office, or individual name submitted. The researcher also verified the name of the administrator or administering body of the sabbatical program and other individuals who experienced the sabbaticals. For assistance in identifying institutions that met these criteria, the researcher collected a list of sabbatical-offering institutions through the snowball sampling method. This site selection approach was used for gathering “information-rich key informants or critical cases” (Patton, 2002, p. 237). At the end of every personal contact, the researcher asked if the individual knew of other institutions. In addition, the researcher asked the educator to pass on the request for study participation to other individuals who had administered or experienced staff sabbaticals to continue the snowball sampling method.

Institutional types selected for this study were chosen to reflect schools in the CUPA-HR study (CUPA-HR, 2010). Although specific names for administrative sabbatical-granting institutions for the 2010 survey were not available, the institutional type of all the respondents helped guide this study. From the CUPA-HR study, 67% were from private and 33% from public institutions. Institutional types for this study were chosen from the top types of institutions, which for the CUPA-HR study included associate’s (19%), baccalaureate (19%), and master’s/doctoral institutions (50%) (CUPA-HR, 2010). Because specialty institutions (medical, art, theology, engineering, education, law, and technology) were limited in the CUPA-HR study, they were not all included in this study. Therefore, this study chose to include both public and private institutions from associate’s, baccalaureate, master’s/doctoral, and a few specialty-serving institutions for this study.

The institutions selected for this study remain anonymous. To protect both the institutions and the study participants, no revealing characteristics of the institutions are available. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of these individuals and institutions (Merriam, 1998).
Contacting Participants

When the institution was selected based on the above-stated criterion, the Human Resources Office was contacted. The researcher requested that the Human Resource Officer send the call for participation (Appendix O) to all higher education administrators (non-faculty and not under tenure or tenure-track status) who had taken a sabbatical. The letter emphasized that the researcher was not asking for names or contact information, only that the officer send the call for participation to the individuals. Sabbaticants contacted the researcher to participate in the study. When the sabbaticant was scheduled for participation, the researcher contacted the supervisor that allowed the sabbatical or human resource office to request an interview. The contact information for these administrators was available freely on the internet or naturally emerged in the interview with the sabbaticant. The sample email for administrator participation in the study is found in Appendix C, and the sample email for sabbatical participants is in Appendix B. These emails contain the purpose of the study, request for participation, and instructions for accepting or declining participation in the study. Sabbaticants had to be willing to submit any relevant primary documents (e.g., policies, reports) that related to the sabbatical policy or experience, if available.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework helped to organize the study. First, the institution had to have a sabbatical policy. After the presence of a policy was established, a person or group had to administer the policy. However, the policy could only be administered when there was a sabbaticant who applied for a sabbatical. Although only one sabbaticant was necessary (and one administrator when available), each case study component was adapted to the case study needs.

Understanding the personnel factors involved in the sabbatical experience was crucial to this research. The important contextual factors for this study consisted of the institutional characteristics, sabbatical policy, sabbaticant, and administrator of the
policy. Because it was crucial that all these aspects were fairly and accurately represented, the researcher used cluster sampling. Cluster sampling (Patton, 2002) gathered information from various groups within the institutional case study. This meant that the study represented a broader and more fairly represented view of sabbatical policy and the recipients of the policy.

This study design was based on interviews of at least one sabbaticant and, when available, one sabbatical administrator. Evidentiary inadequacies were dealt with on a case-by-case basis but adhered to the following protocol:

1. Inadequate amounts or variety of evidence. Although not predicted, if inadequate evidence was provided, the researcher identified another participant who could provide the information. When possible, the researcher collected several names of institutions and relevant human resource offices to interview. This list of possible participants was referenced and the participants were contacted. Whenever possible, the researcher attempted to interview new participants. Technological assistance via video conference call and other technology were used to facilitate this interview when in-person interviews were not available.

2. Institutional participants had a chance to review their own data gathered during the case study interview. The researcher considered any individual’s feedback but changed information only when the data were deemed to be incorrectly represented.

Data Collection

Contacting Participants

When the participants had been selected, the researcher requested that the official sabbatical policy and any other supporting documents or relevant materials be sent to the researcher before each of the case study site meetings. The researcher carefully examined the materials and made notes accordingly. Personal interviews with the sabbaticant
(Appendix K) and the sabbatical administrator (Appendix J) were used to collect the self-reported data. The majority of the questions focused on general sabbatical information and the participants’ experiences as a sabbaticant or sabbatical administrator. This study was designed in March-December of 2011, and data collection commenced from December-February of 2011. Individual interviews were conducted during this time, and the data analysis was completed during the spring of 2011.

When participation by at least one sabbaticant and one administrator (when available) was confirmed, the researcher coordinated interviews with the institutional participants. Participants were interviewed via Skype, an internet video conferencing software, when in-person interviews were not available. Yin (2011) stated that internet conferencing is an appropriate data collection method and can produce high-quality results. Using Skype, both the interviewer and the interviewee were visible to each other. Interviewing sabbaticants and administrators of sabbatical programs offered important insights into sabbatical programs for staff in various institutions and in different campus contexts.

When the participants were confirmed for the study, contact information regarding the participant, institution, interview date, Skype name, follow-up email, notes, and sabbatical policy was entered into a spreadsheet, and other materials were logged when received. All information collected by the researcher was stored confidentially on the researcher’s personal computer in a locked file. Neither the institutions nor the individuals received monetary compensation for the interviews or for the information they provided. As reciprocity, participants received a final copy of the study findings for their information. Individuals decided if they would like to share the findings with their institution.

Institutional interviews were scheduled when the participants were confirmed. Great care was taken to adhere to the Interview Protocol in Appendix F. When possible, the researcher interviewed the campus administrator and followed up by interviewing the
sabbatical participant. This sequence helped to streamline the data obtained by the researcher.

In this study, persistent engagement was achieved by asking participants to complete two interview contacts. The first interaction involved the data collection through an interview. The second interaction was the member checking process. The member checking process asked participants to read the results of the institutional/personal findings and take any fact-changing measures to increase the accuracy of the data. In addition, participants were asked to provide any other insights regarding the experience. Because the study was based on only one interview and one follow-up email, and the participants were engaged in sharing their sabbatical experiences, prolonged engagement in completing the interview was not a problem. If at all, any problems with prolonged engagement fell between the first interview and the optional follow-up email. When this happened, the interviewer worked to encourage further participation by sending a reminder email. Discontinuing cases did not happen in this study.

Participants were given the researcher’s contact information to follow up with any remarks not shared in the interview or follow-up email. Additionally, participants were informed regarding the full interview process; the approximate timeline for the study and the contact information of the researcher was available in the contact emails and consent documents.

*Interview Questions*

A semi-structured interview format was best suited for this study. Because the administrative sabbatical phenomena were not prevalent in the literature, it was important to ask many open-ended questions. Open-ended questions provided the most information about the experience (Merriam, 1998). General and open-ended questions at the beginning helped establish rapport and gain information about the interviewee. The questions were reviewed by the researcher and other qualitative experts to eliminate
leading questions. Probing questions helped clarify the answers and were also a way to gain information about a certain phenomenon. Probing questions allowed the researcher to gain more in-depth information about something that the interviewee said (Merriam, 1998).

This case study was a semi-replication of the research of Stine (1987). While the topic remained similar, the sample populations were different. The design of the study and questions were altered significantly. However, the questions used in this study (see Appendices J and K) were adapted with permission (see Appendices H and I) from the author and were approved by the University of Iowa Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E). Questions were adapted from Stine’s study because they offered important qualitative insights into the sabbatical experience and policy and were similar to those in the faculty sabbatical and business sabbatical literature. After the questions were adapted from Stine’s study, the researcher contacted a group of higher education administrators to review the questions for clarity, use of jargon, and organizational flow (Patton, 2002). Questions for this study, even those adapted from Stine, were piloted with higher education administrators for their feedback to ensure that the questions were worded appropriately for the desired information.

Piloting Questions

Interview questions were first piloted with two sabbaticants and one sabbatical administrator to ascertain if the interview questions fit the research study questions. Participants for these interviews all held Vice Presidents of Student Affairs positions. Because the pool of sabbaticants from sabbatical-serving institutions was limited, the pilot interviews were conducted with higher education administrators from organizations that had a sabbatical policy (either formal or informal) but did not align completely with the mission of this study. This misalignment occurred because this study was based on participants with a formal sabbatical policy whereas the pilot participants mostly had an
informal policy or were an educational organization rather than an institution. Basic concepts of the interview were examined.

As expected, participants were excited to share their experiences and were extremely helpful in offering more resources such as further contacts and essential documents at the conclusion of the interviews. Interviews conducted in an informal way (i.e., treated more like a conversation) seemed to help prompt the interviewees to think about benefits in deeper and more articulate ways. Sabbaticants and the one administrator were more apt to discuss tangible products of the experience such as positions, departments, or ideas implemented as benefits during the start of the interview. After further discussion, participants were able to tap into other informal or intangible benefits such as feelings of overall worth, value, balance, happiness, and efficiency.

One of the most insightful findings of the interview underscored the value of a second contact with the sabbaticant. In interviews with both the sabbaticants and the administrators, they articulated that it had been some time since they had reflected on their sabbatical. The interview allowed them a chance to reflect on their experiences and see how their leadership style, work philosophy, and products had developed or evolved over time. Over the course of the interview, participants were able to deepen their responses using the first part of the interview to reacquaint themselves with the leave and the second part of the interview to reflect on the leave. This “ramping up” was especially necessary for participants who had taken a sabbatical more than 2 years before the interview. Participants generously thanked the researcher for the time to reflect on their experiences. In both cases, the participant left the meeting in a joyous mood. The administrator was helpful but less enthusiastic regarding the experience perhaps because questions focused on policy rather than on personal experience. Presenting a recap of the interview findings (member checking document) in addition to a follow-up interview offered the interviewee a chance to offer any other thoughts after the conclusion of the interview.
Understanding logistics was another important finding in the pilot interviews. In the absence of a formal policy, much of the interviews focused on the logistics of the administrator proposing and organizing the sabbatical before the start of the interview. Arranging things such as duty and/or work coverage, financial compensation, and travel budgets and arrangements was important for the sabbaticants to address. As such, more questions regarding sabbatical logistics, including work coverage and financial compensation, were an important part of understanding how the sabbatical actually worked. For administrators, taking care of these essential details was often part of being granted the sabbatical and was underscored in the pilot interviews. After the pilot interviews, the following changes were implemented to gain a better understanding of the purposes and benefits of staff sabbaticals.

Changes to Interview Questions (for Sabbaticants and Administrators)

1. Add prompt questions to focus on the logistics of the sabbatical including duty and responsibilities coverage, financial compensation for the sabbaticant and the coverage staff, and logistics regarding the origin and implementation of the sabbatical.
2. Questions were tweaked and re-organized to highlight the organizational creativity themes of “motivation,” “techniques (creativity, etc.),” and “resources (personal characteristics).” These questions were often lost in the list of other follow-up questions before they were added.
3. The interviews illustrated the importance of a follow-up contact to gather other thoughts that emerged after the conclusion of the first interview as articulated above.

Changes to Data Collection Forms

1. The question and response log was changed to assist the interviewee in better organizing the data.
2. The researcher developed a benefits inventory based on the literature review content analysis of benefits adapted from Iravania (2011). At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher checked off benefits that were articulated throughout the interview. The interview used the same inventory to assess if there were any other benefits articulated by the participant after the second contact (Appendix N). Using this inventory list allowed the researcher to more closely track the responses of the participants since the responses were broad and often not organized according to the study questions. When not available, the researcher wrote in a new category name.

*Audit Trail (Data Transcription and Storage)*

The interview transcription was essential to the data analysis. During the interviews, the researcher took written notes and also used a digital audio recorder. The interviewer kept an observation log of the participant interviews. During this period, the interviewer took abbreviated notes and noted any important non-verbal communications by the interviewee using an interview log (see Appendix G). This log noted any shift in focus, contextual factors, or changes during the interview and yielded important information about the interview environment. Any relevant movement, gestures or reactions were recorded on the formal response log (Appendix G). The log supplemented the interview transcription data and when combined provided a complete picture of the verbal and non-verbal transactions. The interviewer used special notations in the interview log to denote these non-verbal observations (Merriam, 1998). The interview log also noted the context of the actual interview, including the location, time, date, and location of the interview for participants. These contextual details described the flow of the interview.

Each of the interviews had a separate file where documents were stored. These were maintained at the researcher’s home and were scanned into the researcher’s personal computer into a locked file. Once loaded onto the computer, any hard copies were
shredded by the researcher. Complete privacy and confidentiality were maintained. These documents were the sabbatical policy, evaluations, or reports based on the sabbatical experience, application for the sabbatical itself, and other important paperwork regarding the policy. These documents and materials were instrumental in understanding the interworking of the sabbatical administrative procedures and in understanding the sabbaticants’ experiences. The researcher reviewed these documents before conducting the interviews to more fully understand the institution and its employees. These documents helped inform the interviews and were used in overall analyses of the program and the experience.

The interview data were recorded and stored using several methods. Each interview was recorded using a digital audio recorder and downloaded onto the researcher’s personal computer. The audio file once downloaded onto the computer was deleted from the mobile audio recorder. The computer was password protected; therefore, the downloaded audio was archived in a locked computer file and was not accessible without the password. In addition to an audio digital record, written notes taken by the interviewer also provided a record of the interview. These notes were archived by the interviewer and stored in a password-protected file at the interviewer’s personal residence until electronic copies were made. Once scanned into the computer, the hard copies were shredded. Data can be retrieved by contacting the researcher for the information (in accordance with the University of Iowa’s Institutional Review Board). Protecting the privacy of each institution and its employees (like the shredding of documents and password protected electronic files) are in accordance with the University of Iowa Institutional Review Board expectations and requirements. Institutions and the individuals involved received pseudonyms to protect their anonymity (Yin, 2011).

A detailed audit trail provides the necessary information for another researcher to replicate this study. All of the detailed resources and information about this study are available by contacting the researcher. Additionally, a number of important documents,
including the call for participation, confirmation of participation, research questions, and interview protocol, are included in the appendices.

Theoretical Framework

Theory is important in case study design but is the “vehicle for generalizing case studies results” (Yin, 1993, p. xiii). Theory helps link the different cases together, and without it, results would be difficult to interpret (Yin, 1993). This study used the theory of organizational creativity to filter the results. In the description of organizational creativity, Amabile (1983, 1988) and Amabile and Mueller (2008) noted that creativity can be both an outcome and a process; therefore, sabbaticals were viewed from both perspectives. This study used Amabile’s framework to examine the outcomes of the experience for both individuals and organizations and to identify ways in which the sabbatical outcomes and process could benefit both entities. Because there are a multitude of different benefits associated with sabbaticals, and because these benefits are not always assessed or articulated by the individual or the organization, it was important to view the benefits as products and processes. Using this framework, benefits could be classified into categories for easier understanding and evaluation. For example, when employee cross-training was articulated as an organizational process outcome, the benefit could then be evaluated as such. Evaluating these benefits allowed the organization to view how the benefit was helpful to the organization while also providing a structure for further research. Viewing the sabbatical from the dual perspectives of outcome and process allowed the researcher to examine the experience more holistically and to more accurately identify the benefits, both tangible and intangible.

Moreover, organizational creativity constructs of resources, techniques, and motivation helped to analyze and understand the sabbatical benefits for both the workplace (organization) and workforce (individual). Understanding how these factors contribute to the overall sabbatical process was crucial toward understanding the benefits articulated.
A theoretical framework in this qualitative study helped to narrow the findings (Yin, 2009). The theoretical framework also helped to answer the research questions and therefore guided the study’s results. Given that this study explored sabbatical policies and the benefits associated with them, it was important to utilize a theory that addressed both the organizational and the individual contributions of the sabbatical process. Thus, the theory of organizational creativity framed this study.

Data Analysis Strategies

Data analysis in a qualitative case study can be viewed as both a process and a product of analysis. Viewing cases in these areas means that interviewing participants in each institution helped to obtain information on the staff sabbatical policy, but the process of collecting the data from multiple case institutions offered a product that more fully explicated the general staff sabbatical concept (Yin, 2011).

In conducting this study, first the researcher examined the sabbatical policy, interview transcripts, and corresponding materials. To identify the benefits of a sabbatical, the researcher focused on understanding how campuses’ similarities and differences contributed to the complexity of the institutional factors (resources, techniques, and motivation) and explanations of that culture (Strange & Banning, 2001). Next, the researcher identified sabbatical benefits within each case. Finally, the researcher looked at between-campus similarities and differences to more fully investigate the benefits of staff sabbaticals in general terms (Yin, 2011).

Data collection and analysis were conducted separately. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method. This analysis technique used “systematic rigor and thoroughness” (Patton, 2002, p. 489) in addition to a focus on objectivity to frame the results as a theory. Continually reviewing transcripts and documents for common themes and similarities organized the data into categories and subcategories (Yin, 2011). The constant comparative method assured that the information was thoroughly analyzed and avoided simple description or basic reporting (Patton, 2002). Documents informed the
theme categories. This method was appropriate because of the purposeful nature of this study. Given that little was empirically known about sabbatical policies and how they contributed to the individual and organizational components of the institution, the document analysis examined the various policies connected with each institution.

In accordance with constant comparative method, the following systematic data analysis approaches helped the researcher code and evaluate the data in a rigorous manner (Patton, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Throughout the analysis process, a series of codes were assigned to help identify the root of the information. Interviews were first evaluated within their own case before being cross-examined with other institutions. The following data analyses occurred in the fall of 2011 and winter of 2012.

*Open Coding*

During the first pass through the information, the researcher coded the data according to major themes and ideas. Open coding is mining the data for any general themes or ideas categorizing themes into major ideas or concepts. When these were identified, all possible meanings for these words were evaluated according to the participants’ meaning.

*Axial Coding*

Axial coding is the process of gathering themes within the interview data. After identifying the themes, the researcher carefully examined the themes against the theoretical framework of organizational creativity to identify the various benefits according to larger themed categories while also honoring their specific institution and interview type (sabbaticant or administrator). This process revealed significant benefits of the sabbatical experience for both individuals and the organization in addition to sabbatical *products* and *processes* and organizational creativity workplace and workforce factors of resources, techniques, and motivation.
Selective Coding

When axial coding was complete, the major themes offered generalized benefits regarding the sabbatical policy. This process identified key aspects that contributed to a rough storyline that acknowledged the complexities involved in the different institutional contexts and personnel.

Trustworthiness

A number of strategies enhanced the validity of this study to confirm that the data had reliable patterns and reflected accurate truths (Gummesson, 2000). Each type of validity is described below with specific ways each kind of validity was enhanced. These strategies were conducted as described.

Construct Validity

Member checks. After the data were collected from each institution, the researcher electronically relayed the case study interpretation of individual responses to the interviewees to verify the interpretation (Merriam, 1998). During the interview, the researcher also clarified concepts with the interviewee. Information regarding non-verbal reactions or behaviors was not member checked because that information might have influenced the perspective of the participant.

Triangulation. Triangulation is the process of using multiple sources or methods to confirm the findings (Merriam, 1998). This study used triangulation in various forms. Information gathered through the literature review, including empirical research in addition to antidotal and narrative publications, was also included to provide background information. Information was gathered not only from participants in staff sabbatical programs, but also from administrators and decision makers involved with the program within a single case when available. In each case, many of the questions asked of both sabbaticants and administrators were similar. This added a layer of triangulation by finding different perspectives on some important research questions including motivation, support, and communication of the policy. Talking with both sabbaticants and
administrators allowed for an in-depth account of both the individual and the institutional components of a staff sabbatical program. Furthermore, including multiple case sites filtered the findings through different institutional lenses (Yin, 2011). Each of the cases was analyzed to enhance the internal validity of the findings between cases. Talking to multiple parties allowed for the nuances of each case to emerge while also validating or challenging the overall findings (Gummesson, 2000; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2011). In addition, document analysis of the sabbatical policy and other relevant documents and reports (like the final sabbatical report and sabbatical proposal and application) was an important data-gathering and validation tool.

Audit trail. All of the interviews in this study had a clear audit trail for further investigation or replication of this study (Yin, 2011). The data were coded in ways that allow others to more clearly reference where themes originated. The trail is well organized and allows another researcher to determine if the inferences of this study are reasonable according to the data.

Internal Validity

Pattern matching. Each of the interviews was transcribed and examined for similar patterns in the data. Identifying common themes for each finding helped strengthen the overall results. In addition, a tracking chart based on the literature review helped guide the researcher’s pattern matching (Yin, 2011).

Peer debriefing. After each of the in-case and between-case analyses was completed, the author asked colleagues to review the raw data and draw their own conclusions about the findings. Using independent investigators not connected with this study enhanced the internal validity because the author could compare her findings with her colleagues’ findings. This double check helped to validate the researcher’s analysis (Patton, 2002). Peer debriefers were contacted once during this study. Detailed information regarding the selection and protocol of peer debriefers is available in Appendix P.
External Validity

Replication logic. Because this study selected only institutions with information-rich cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), this information cannot be generalized to all institutions or populations, even though the content can significantly contribute to the understanding of the concept of sabbaticals (Gummesson, 2000; Yin, 1983, 1984, 1993, 1994, 2009). However, transferability of the information can guide the sabbatical process at a variety of institutions. The researcher selected this research method because it allowed an in-depth look at a little-researched concept and policy where information was limited (Yin, 2011).

Reliability

Study replication. There are several ways to enhance a study’s reliability. This study was a semi-replication of an earlier qualitative sabbatical study by Stine (1987). Although this study did not fully replicate Stine’s research questions, theoretical format, or faculty population, Stine’s research provided the structural format for this study. This assisted with the reliability because a similar study had already been conducted, and the researcher was able to make changes based on the study and its limitation.

Interview protocol. The interviews were conducted using a formal interview protocol (Appendix F). This protocol provided important quick-reference information for each site interview and ensured consistent interview procedures. An official protocol is essential for multiple case-study research (Yin, 2011).

Researcher as an instrument. The researcher self-disclosed the specific bias that might contribute to the study within this document. As the sole researcher, it was important for me to acknowledge my background as a researcher and my possible bias. Career leave was not a new topic for me. I negotiated an unpaid career leave into my hiring contract at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest to work for 3 months for the Institute for Shipboard Education (Semester at Sea). The institution, which had experienced significant turnover in the residential life position, allowed the negotiated
leave and called on me often to share my global insights and adventures. Because of the experience and my developed loyalty, I stayed in the position almost twice as long as previous employees. My sabbatical was a life-changing experience. As a person, researcher, and instrument, I have also been influenced by my family and my family’s experiences. My mother was also granted a career leave from her elementary teaching position. After serving for over 20 years as an elementary teacher, she was granted a leave to instruct teacher education classes at a nearby institution. She also gained a great deal of experience from this opportunity and was energized in returning to teaching the following year and inspired to further her education. That said, my mother and I have both seen the benefits and experienced some of the benefits to our personal and professional lives through extended career development programs. This is important to mention as I acknowledge possible bias involved in this study.

Limitations of Study

This multi-institutional case study sample was limited to sabbaticants from institutions with a formal staff sabbatical policy. This study did not explore a number of other factors including staff who applied but were not offered a sabbatical experience or staff who negotiated sabbatical opportunities at institutions that did not have a formal policy. Although the researcher exerted great effort to conduct interviews with all sabbatical-granting institutions, only a small number responded. Furthermore, in a few cases, no administrator interviews could be conducted.

A multiple case-study design was the best fit for this purposeful study. However, several limitations were inherent in this design. Response bias and recall inaccuracies could be prevalent in this research study, especially because sabbaticals could have occurred several years previously. Another possible limitation was reflexivity, or telling the interviewer what she wanted to hear (Yin, 2011). This is especially true given that sabbaticals are a beloved benefit and, hypothetically, very few participants would likely
provide negative feedback. Very few written negative remarks about sabbaticals were found in the literature review.

Conclusion

This study examined the practice of administrative sabbaticals to provide empirical research regarding sabbatical policies and benefits for administrative staff (professional, exempt staff). Interviews revealed why institutions offer sabbaticals, how sabbaticals were constructed, and the benefits of sabbaticals for both the individuals and the organization. This chapter outlined the methodological details of this study. Special attention was given to understanding why a multiple case-study approach was appropriate and the criteria for selecting and interviewing the study’s participants. The following chapters offer the analysis of the data, limitations, implications, and overall conclusions.
CHAPTER 4
POLICY ANALYSIS

Introduction

The data presented in this chapter describe the similarities and differences of institutions offering thick, rich information regarding their sabbatical policies. This study examined the practice of administrative sabbaticals and provided empirical research regarding sabbatical policies and benefits for administrative staff (professional, exempt staff). Finally, the study examined if institutions were receiving their identified benefits. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How are staff sabbaticals structured and used at colleges and universities?
2. How do administrators and sabbaticants in colleges and universities conceptualize and communicate individual and organizational benefits of staff sabbaticals?
3. How do these individual and organizational benefits align with the sabbatical policy?

This chapter will review the methodology for the study and will describe the participation of sabbaticants and administrators before presenting the sabbatical policy analysis. Data in the following chapters are organized by the research questions.

Methodology Analysis Recap

An extensive content analysis (Neuendorf, 2001) of institutional sabbatical policies for higher education administrators provided the foundation for this study. An examination of the policies revealed the basis for understanding the sabbatical policies and purposes for the institution and employees. In addition, multiple case studies were conducted during the winter of 2012. Interview questions were piloted with three higher education administrators and adapted accordingly. Virtual interviews were conducted via Skype when in-person interviews were not possible. At the end of each interview, the researcher recorded interview log notes of important reflections (Appendix G). Following
each interview, a transcription was created (Merriam, 1998) and paired with the interview log notes to reveal a holistic representation of both verbal and non-verbal communications during the interviews. After transcription, the researcher evaluated the interviews for various themes and patterns. Both the researcher and a team of peer debriefers evaluated the transcripts for themes and compared them with the researcher’s findings. When finalized, the themes were organized into both multiple case studies (providing between-case analysis) and individual case studies (providing in-case analysis). More details regarding the logistics of this methodology are found in Chapter 3 and results are presented in Chapter 6.

**Participation Results**

Institutional sabbatical policies were evaluated for the content analysis. Thirty-four institutions in 15 U.S. states (30% of states) were evaluated. Institutions included 4-year institutions or systems (groups of schools under general jurisdiction or offering at least a Bachelor’s degree) (85% of the 34 institutions) and 2-year institutions (15% of the 34 institutions). Two (10%) specialty-serving institutions (a maritime academy and an art school) were included in the sample.

Of the 34 institutions, 20 (58.8%) institutions replied to the call for sabbaticants. Non-response rate was 41.2%. Of the institutions that responded (20 institutions), seven (35%) institutions replied affirmatively that they had a sabbatical policy and 11 (55%) institutions replied that they did not have a policy even though union contracts or the institution showed that a written policy was available. Because a written sabbatical or professional leave policy was available, these institutions were used in the content analysis section but not in the call for sabbaticants.

Sabbatical policies were evaluated from a wide range of U.S. states and regions. Table 4.1 shows the U.S. states that had institutions or systems with sabbatical policies that were evaluated. Of the 20 policies examined, four policies were from institutions in the Midwest and four from the Southeast; three were from each of the Northwest, West,
and Northeast; and two were from the Southwest. Although great effort was made to secure an equal number of public and private institutions, 90% of the policies were from public institutions or systems whereas only 10% came from private institutions.

Institutional type also varied among 4-year institutions (50%), 2-year institutions (30%), and varied systems (20%) that included 2-year, 4-year, and specialty-serving institutions such as the maritime academy and art school.

Table 4.1. Institutions With Formal Sabbatical (or Similar) Leave Policies for Higher Education Professionals or Exempt Staff as of January 2012 and Sabbatical-Granting Institutions Included in This Study Organized by U.S. States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States in the United States of America</th>
<th>Sabbatical-granting institutions available</th>
<th>Sabbatical-granting institutions included in this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The institution that represented each policy was contacted to request participation in the study. In response to the request for participation, nine interviews and nine follow-up participant email contacts were conducted (6 sabbaticants and 3 administrators). These interviews involved participants connected with five sabbatical-granting institutions from
the states shown in bold type in Table 4.1. Institutions involved in this study included three large public and two small private colleges. Participants from this study were currently employed at six institutions (because participants did not have to be currently at the sabbatical-granting institution) from four states in the Southeast, Midwest, and Northeast United States.

Participants were two male administrators, one female administrator, two male sabbaticants, and four female sabbaticants. Each administrator was working in a high-level student affairs position and the sabbaticants were working in both student affairs (housing, leadership and service programs, and international education) and the president’s office (clergy). One sabbaticant was not currently at the institution, one participant was retired, four sabbaticants were still employed at the institutions that offered the sabbatical, and one participant left the institution and then returned a few years later. Table 4.2 details the background of the interviewed participants.

Three sabbatical administrators and six sabbaticants completed interviews conducted by the researcher. From these interviews, 78 pages of transcription and three sabbatical proposals (submitted by sabbaticants) were gathered and reviewed. One final report was submitted by a sabbaticant; four participants did not complete a final report and one was still involved in the sabbatical at the time of the interview. In addition, two sabbatical applications/instructions for application were submitted to complement the policies already collected by the researcher.

Table 4.2 illustrates the participants used for this study. Information about each sabbaticant is listed including their role in the study (administrator or sabbaticant), name (altered to protect their identity), observed gender, the title, department and number of years at the institution at the time of their sabbatical, the sabbatical length, region where the institution was located, institutional type (Carnegie classification), and if the proposal and or final report were evaluated. Blocked black areas indicate a category that did not apply. For example, administrators did not take a sabbatical so their position was not
Table 4.2. Participants Interviewed for This Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Role</th>
<th>Study Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Title*</th>
<th>Department*</th>
<th>Number of Years at Institution</th>
<th>Sabbatical Length</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Case Name (if used)</th>
<th>Proposal Evaluated</th>
<th>Final Report Evaluated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticant</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Leadership and Service Programs</td>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>3.5 months</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Public Doctoral</td>
<td>University of Dupont</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticant</td>
<td>Emello</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Campus Pastor</td>
<td>Campus Ministries</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Private Baccalaureate</td>
<td>Prairie Home College</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticant</td>
<td>Donnie</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
<td>University Housing</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>one semester</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Public Doctoral Research</td>
<td>Keillor State University</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticant</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Acting Director</td>
<td>Residential Life</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Public Masters</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticant</td>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student Coordinator</td>
<td>International Diversity Center</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Private Baccalaureate</td>
<td>Prairie Home College</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticant</td>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Student Life</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Private Baccalaureate</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Christine</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Steve</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*At time of sabbatical
listed. Likewise they did not complete a proposal or final report so these areas were blocked. Additionally, “NA” was used to signify when an item in a category was not available. “No” was used to describe material that was not accessible to the researcher but was available. For example, applications were submitted for the sabbatical but could not be located by the sabbaticant. “Yes” was used to denote materials used for analysis.

In addition, 20 available policies were reviewed from the institutions representing the interview participants and beyond. It is important to note that sabbatical policies evolve over time. When possible, the sabbatical policy establishment date and revision dates were included. In some cases, the sabbatical policy and its components had changed. For this study, the content analysis used the current sabbatical policy, not necessarily the policy in place when the participant experienced the sabbatical. Therefore, slight changes in requirements or purposes were possible.

Sabbatical Policy Analysis

This study was guided and organized by the three major research questions. A summary of the results is presented at the end of Chapters 4 through 6. Final recommendations regarding this study are presented in Chapter 7.

The first section of the data analysis answers the first research question, How are staff sabbaticals structured and used at colleges and universities? As stated previously, literature on sabbaticals for higher education administrators is limited. Therefore the researcher conducted a content analysis (Neuendorf, 2001) of sabbatical policies to explore the logistics of the sabbatical experience. The content analysis contributed to an understanding of sabbatical policies and purposes, and the variations within the policies. The researcher examined the logistics of the experience to determine how those details contributed to or detracted from the sabbatical benefits. In addition, the content analysis was supplemented by participant dialogue or other details obtained during the qualitative interviews, follow-up emails, or document analysis. Using this triangulation method, the
researcher provided a full explanation of how the sabbaticals were structured and used by higher education administrators.

Findings of this content analysis are organized according to the categories of the sabbatical policies. This section answers the questions: What are the main parts of a sabbatical policy? Are there trends between different institutions? A document analysis of different sabbatical policies revealed some similar results. The following categories detail particular areas of the sabbatical policies and how institutions view the different requirements.

Information rich cases were identified by snowball sampling of higher education administrators who either experienced or knew of staff who took a sabbatical or from internet searches using methods articulated in Chapter 3. Thirty-four separate institutions or systems were purposefully contacted depending on their ability to produce information rich cases. Of those information rich organizations, 20 institutions responded to the call for participation.

It is important to note that although only 20 policies were examined, 9 (41%) of these policies included multiple campus locations or systems (for example, the State University System) resulting in a total of 166 institutions (11 single campuses and 155 branch campuses as part of the system). This means some institutions with branch campuses had one policy for the organization which provided policy jurisdiction over various campuses within the system. This study dealt with only 20 institution policies, but it is important to note that these 20 policies were spread among 166 institutional locations.

After the 20 sabbatical policies were identified, fourteen components of the policies were evaluated. Table 4.3. illustrates each of the policies and some of the criteria used to evaluate the policy. The word “Yes” is used to denote policies with particular policy components. “No” denotes particular components were not evident in the policy. Each of the policy components is described below in each respective section.
### Table 4.3. Sabbatical Policy Content Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>System</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Eligibility or Bargaining</th>
<th>Inclusion</th>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Application Length of Sabbatical</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Reinstatement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midwest: Public</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West: Public</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>varies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>varies</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>varies</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West: Public</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East: Public</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest: Public</td>
<td>Masters</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West: Public</td>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East: Public</td>
<td>varies</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>North East: Public</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>West: Private</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: "Yes" indicates the policy includes that element; "No" indicates it does not.
Second, qualitative interviews were conducted with higher education professionals from five sabbatical-sponsoring institutions to provide in-depth knowledge about the policy and the logistics of how the policy functioned. Participants were included when they responded to the call for participation and met the studies criterion. These interviews were from five institutions included in the policy analysis. Although the interviews do not represent the view of every organization’s policy, the qualitative data collection does provide context for the themes found in each sabbatical policy. Each of the criteria offers specific insights into how the policies were articulated in written form and the way policies were actualized.

Policy Name

As stated in Chapter 2, paid leave opportunities are identified by many different names. Of the available options in this study, 11 of the 20 policies used the term “sabbatical” as part of the policy name while 19 of the 20 institutions used the word “leave” in the policy title; the remaining institution called it a “sabbatical assignment,” and 6 used the term “professional development.” Other terms used were professional leave (1), educational leave (1), sabbatical assignment (1), or simply “leave policy” (1). Although not all policies were solely for administrators, eight policies indicated the population to which the policy applied: administrators (8), exempt staff (1), or non-faculty (2). Ten policies were written for both faculty and staff.

Naming was also articulated as an important concept in the qualitative interviews. Kim, a public institution sabbaticant, commented about the naming of the policy at her institution: “We refer to it as an educational leave and not as a sabbatical just for clarification because faculty take sabbaticals and university administrators are not faculty, and they are very clear about that, so it's considered an educational leave.” In this comment, the participant underscored the political delineation between faculty and staff groups at her institution and how the policy name differentiated the policy from other leaves for faculty. (A further analysis of the tension between faculty and staff is
addressed in this Chapter 6.) However, this comment and other statements indicate some of the reasons why policy names play an important role in identifying who benefits from the experience. Although this difference was highlighted by the sabbaticants, the term “sabbatical” was consistently used by both the participants and the researcher throughout the interview and research communications. Even in the context of Kim’s comment, the sabbacticant continued to refer to her experience as a sabbatical. It appears that although the naming of the policy was an important distinction for some institutions, the premise of the experience still rings true as a “sabbatical” (as described in this study).

Furthermore, although “professional development” was used as a policy name, many participants referred to the sabbatical as a type of professional development experience like conferences or workshops. Steve, an administrator at a public school, said:

Our human relations department has several professional development opportunities throughout the year. They put on workshops for the various categories of rank at the university, they bring in guest speakers, they have brown bag lunches, they encourage individuals to pursue additional degrees, master’s, doctoral degrees, of which of course there's tuition remission for doing that and so one of the programs again is the sabbatical program where individuals may want to take time off either to go away and study something, or perhaps to complete work on a doctoral degree because they just can't get it done during working hours.

Overall, the policies and the participants used “sabbatical” to discuss their experience. Although they viewed the sabbatical as a form of professional development, the participants also described the experience as something different than typical activities available for continued development. No trends were identified in the policy names regarding the type of institution or purpose or whether the organization was part of a bargaining agreement.

Policy History and Age

It was helpful to understand how these policies evolved over time or how recently the policy was developed. Many participants indicated that they were not aware of the origin of the sabbatical at their institutions. Lisa, a sabbaticant, said, “Well, it's offered
through human resources; I'm not exactly sure when it started, but it's really relatively new.” Emilio, another sabbaticant at the institution, said:

I don't know the history of it and I don't know how long it's been in place … It's not used a lot … I asked for the last 10 years and there were only seven people and we have a fairly good sized staff … that's not a lot of people going on sabbatical.

However, it was not only sabbaticants who were confused about the age of the policy. The institutional policy at Taylor’s institution was dated in the late 2000s prompting the administrator’s comment: “Well I don't know how long it's been in existence. I've been here 5 years…so as long as I've been here, we've had the program within the division of student affairs.”

Two employees, both at private institutions, created or led the committee that helped create the sabbatical policy at their institutions. These long-term professionals (one sabbaticant and one administrator) saw a need for the sabbatical at their institutions and were able to create the policy. Using the institutions’ own campus culture and current issues, these professionals initiated and formalized the policy. Lily, a sabbaticant, said her role as a new vice president, helped create the policy:

The college was at a time when there was much more awareness of the egalitarian efforts, even though the salaries are not egalitarian, in a movement to pay a working wage to the contracted cleaning staff for example, food service staff, and so on. So faculty weren't particularly interested in (the committee) but I had my eye on it…it was termed ‘administrative leave policy’….The college had already a financial support for people who wanted to take courses on their own time related to their field like further counseling courses at the University of (state) branch. It was expanding enormously in our town….So professionally related courses would be supported in some way up to the cost per unit of the local community college or a local (university)…anyone could apply for it and how many people would be allowed to participate in it had to do with how it affected the reasonable workload and so forth, but you didn't get time away; this is night classes or weekends or you could use your vacation time.

In this case, Lily, the private school sabbaticant, used the educational assistance granted to employees and the institutional discussion of egalitarian compensation for staff to lead the committee in designing the sabbatical policy.
Christine, another administrator at a private school said that the policy had “been in existence for ... at least 10 years, but this actual policy is dated June 1, 2009, because that's when we tightened up the procedure and purpose and scope and that kind of thing.” She noted that it was her own sabbatical granted 18 years earlier at a different institution and her legacy at the current institution that gave her the idea.

I had a sabbatical … to finish my doctorate, so I felt like it was only right, and so I've been here since 1991, and in the mid-to-late 90s I had a number of young professionals that worked in our area and some of them would ... want to finish their doctorates, a couple master's degrees, and so I just informally let people use their professional development money and I’d give them time to travel, to take classes and so, we kind of grew into it in a way. One of my staff members was the first one to say “I need to have a semester at the institution full-time and I can't think of any way to do this and work at the same time.” … So I went to council and said, “This person really would like to finish his doctorate, we would like for him to finish his doctorate, what do you think about giving him a semester off?” And so that's how it started. So we did that one and it worked out okay and so from there, there was interest. Now people kind of … people said, oh, this would be a neat … idea and so it kind of went from there.

With these new policies, the historical availability might be questioned. Although the policy dates were indicated on 16 of the policies, it was difficult to ascertain when these were initiated and when they were updated, and if they were updated, what updates were included. The information regarding policy length is available in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Sabbatical Policy Dates or Revisions as Indicated in the Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date created or revised (using the first possible date)</th>
<th>Frequency of policies with this criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960-1969</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1979</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980-1989</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000-2009</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-present</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No date</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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</table>
It appears that the policies were initiated in 1965 and continued through 2011 (2 in the 1960s, 2 in the 1970s, 3 in the 1980s, 1 in the 1990s, 7 in the 2000s, and 1 in the 2010s thus far). Nine of the policies had been updated since the development of the original policy, although policies could have been updated without tracking the revision date in the policy. This means that from this basic information, 15 leave policies were initiated or updated in the 2000s (7 were initiated and 8 were updated in the 2000s). These data reveal an increased trend of either new policies or revised policies within the last 10 years. However, more research is needed to examine how sabbatical policies develop over time. It is not known if the revisions added staff to the list of faculty sabbaticals or how the policies were revised; understanding this recent increase or revisions of policies could help explain why few employees are aware or have taken the leave. (More about this concept is available in the communication section of this Chapter 6.)

It appears that the internal history of the departments was also a contributing factor to the provision of sabbaticals. Sabbaticants felt that the staff at the respective institutions also contributed to the opportunities for a sabbatical. Donnie, a sabbaticant at a public institution said his department:

… had a long-standing history of individuals having completed the degree and having been the recipients of the sabbatical, … I worked for the department for 15 years. … I counted at least five individuals that have worked in the department that have … been recipients of the sabbatical, all under the tenure of that one Director. … I credit it to a … long-standing tradition within the … the division of student affairs. … I think we want to grow the people that are working for us so they can have a better experience and they can just help advance themselves. So I think it comes from a real genuine place where we care about the people, and we want to see them succeed.

Kim, a sabbaticant, indicated that it was the prevalence of faculty sabbaticals that helped justify her opportunity: “I think that the fact that … there was already a faculty member who had sailed on this program helped…pave the way for approval.” Emilio, a private-school sabbaticant, also said that “there was a little bit of history in my department, because one of my colleagues had taken a semester sabbatical.” With several
sabbaticants noting the history of a sabbatical program in their department, it appears that history may be an important contributing factor toward understanding the history and age of the policy.

**Sabbatical Purpose**

Understanding more about the written purposes of the sabbatical policies was the part of the content analysis that took the most time to complete. Overall, there were three components of the sabbatical purpose as articulated in the official policies. First, the policies indicated the aim, purpose, or goal of the experience. Second, the policies detailed what kinds of experiences qualified under the sabbatical policy. And third, the policies indicated who should benefit from the experience. The content analysis found that most sabbatical policies contained these three components; however, in some cases, the sabbatical policy did not address the purpose of the sabbatical and instead described the kinds of activities that were permitted.

*Goal of the experience.* The first component of the sabbatical purpose was the goal of the experience. This information is listed in Table 4.5. The policies for this analysis indicated that the sabbatical’s purpose was for professional expertise, skills, and knowledge beyond job description (10 policies); professional work (7 policies); professional growth and development (7 policies); special projects, achievements, or experiences of value (11 policies); effectiveness (4 policies); reward, such as acknowledgement of service or excellence in accomplishment (3 policies); creative activities or work (4 policies); professional training (2 policies); stay current or abreast of new technology (2 policies), cross-training (1 policy); revitalization (1 policy); personal development/improvement (2 policies); intellectual enrichment/growth (2 policies), strengthen programs and services (1 policy); time away (1 policy); and fellowships, grants, and lectureships (1 policy). One policy specifically noted that the sabbatical purpose was not a reward or a vacation. Interesting to analyze were the words used to reference the various activities. Beyond the activity itself, the verbs used in the policies
were action-oriented and illustrated the kind of work behind the general purposes: enhance (8 policies), improve (6 policies), value (6 policies), increase (4 policies), and develop (2 policies). The following words were used in one policy: foster, discharge, advance, upgrade, facilitate, engage, and strengthen. These action verbs strongly added a sense of achievement behind the purposes of the sabbaticals.

Table 4.5. Sabbatical Policy Purposes as Indicated in the Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sabbatical Purpose</th>
<th>Frequency of policies with this criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special projects or experiences</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional expertise &amp; knowledge</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional work</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional growth</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative work</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional training</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay current</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual growth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths programs &amp; services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-training</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time away</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowships and/or grants</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualifying experiences. The second component of the sabbatical purpose detailed the kinds of experiences that qualified for the sabbatical. The following specific activities as stated in the sabbatical policies showed the purpose of the experience: research (14 policies); study (8 policies); travel (5 policies); taking classes/courses (6 policies); obtaining graduate/terminal degree (3 policies); renewal, both personal and intellectual (3 policies); field observation/investigations (3 policies); attend workshops, seminars, conferences, institutes, lectures, or meetings (2 policies); obtain degrees (2 policies);
formal or informal education/independent study (2 policies); writing (2 policies); community service (2 policies); exchange (2 policies); internships (1 policy); and part-time work in another department (1 policy).

*Who benefits from the experience.* The third component of the sabbatical purpose was who benefits from the experience. The policies indicated the following would benefit from the experience: employee, administrator, and individuals (which includes their work, position, performance, future contributions, potential, and skills), (13 policies); college or university (12 policies); and mutually beneficial, that is, benefiting both the institution and employee (4 policies). The policies also mentioned contributions to the value of the institution (1 policy), service to the institution (1 policy), unit and mission (1 policy), and to enhance the institution (1 policy). No specific themes were identified between public or private institutions in any of the following categories.

**Stated Policy Benefits**

With all of the information regarding benefits as outcomes, it may seem obvious that sabbaticals examined in this study benefited both the employees and the institutions; the content analysis of sabbatical policies also confirmed this assumption, with almost every policy stating the benefits, value, or effectiveness to the employees and the institution. In only two cases, the policies specifically emphasized the mutually beneficial purpose of serving both the institution and the employees. Specific beneficiaries and sabbatical benefits are described later in the chapter.

**Sabbatical Length**

The duration of sabbatical policies for this study varied in length and vernacular. Although some policies indicated the length of sabbatical in terms of the academic year (semester, academic term, January term, summer, etc.), others used different indicators of time (months, days, hours, etc.). Therefore this section is divided into what might be considered similar lengths of time. Eight policies granting up to 12 months of leave were the most frequent whereas one policy used the term “academic year” and one policy
articulated leave for up to two semesters. Two policies granted one-semester leaves. The remainder of the policies indicated other leave lengths, such as 1 to 4 months, up to 6 weeks, up to 40 days, and up to 80 hours. Interestingly, two policies indicated a minimum number of days for the leave, which possibly indicated a distinction between a sabbatical (a concentrated period of time away) and other types of leave. Sabbatical lengths were varied in this study. Of the participants who were interviewed, four were granted leave for 3 months, one was granted a 6-month leave, and the other a 1-year leave. No themes were identified between private or public institutions.

Eligibility/Years of Service

Nineteen of the policies had regulations regarding the years of service to be eligible for a sabbatical. Half of the policies (10) indicated at least 6 years of continuous service (or since the last leave) were required before a sabbatical could be granted. Four policies required 7 years of service, two policies required 3 years of continuous service, and one policy required 5 years of service. The remaining policies indicated a different number of service years in proportion to the length of leave. One policy stated, “1 year for mini sabbatical, 4 years for short-term, and 6 years for extended leave.” Still other institutions had similar requirements of 6 to 7 years of service for semester leaves and 2 to 3 years for shorter durations. Taylor, a sabbatical administrator, said that the sabbatical was granted after “at least of 5 years of service at the institution with a minimum of 3 years within the division.” It is also important to note that years of employment were considered in conjunction with the number of years since the last sabbatical. For example, the policy indicated that employees were eligible only after 6 years of continual service or since the last sabbatical. Table 4.6 shows the frequency of policies distributed by the years of service or since the last leave.
Table 4.6. Sabbatical Policy Eligibility as Indicated in the Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility/Years of Service of continuous service or since last leave.</th>
<th>Frequency of policies with this criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years*</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some policies indicated multiple eligibility time periods depending on the length of the sabbatical.

*Rank*

It is not enough to develop a sabbatical policy; the policy also must indicate to whom the policy applies. In this study, although the policy content remained somewhat consistent, the wording did not. Several policies designated who qualified for the sabbatical whereas other policies indicated who did not qualify for the experience. However, some components in this area were consistent. Because 10 of the policies combined faculty employees in addition to staff, the rank was divided in different ways depending on the population for which the policy was crafted. Criteria in this area included full-time status (5 policies), other employment contracts including 75% time for 12-month employees or full-time status for employees on 9-month contracts, bargaining employees (1 policy), non-bargaining employees (1 policy), staff type such as A &P or exempt staff (7 policies), and finally those staff who were non-faculty (3 policies) or who did not receive tenure or tenure track (1 policy) status. One policy noted that employees serving on the professional development committee were not eligible, and one policy indicated availability for “all staff.” This information was helpful in framing this study because those who were not eligible for the policy were not eligible participants for the study.
Contract Type

Contract type (bargaining, tenured, tenure-track, exempt) also played a role in the eligibility of the sabbaticants. Four policies offering sabbaticals were in accordance with a union contract. Fourteen did not mention union requirements in the contract, and two policies indicated that the leave was only in effect for those not covered by the bargaining unit. Because this study concentrated on higher education professionals, policies that required tenure or tenure-track status were not included. However, in 10 policies, sabbaticals for higher education administrators were combined with sabbaticals for faculty with tenure or tenure-track status. Policies that offered sabbaticals only for tenure or tenure-track employees were not included in this study.

Bargaining contracts were also a topic of conversation for both sabbaticants and administrators at two separate public institutions:

You go to the HR website under the professional development leave procedures, and there’s a form that the employee will complete and again, we have classifications that ‘out of unit,’ ‘in unit’ employees – that means they’re either represented by a union or maybe not represented by a union, that changes, but they’re still eligible. But there may be different guidelines for the folks that are covered by the union such as our police, and nurses, faculty, and so they’ll complete the appropriate form. (Steve, public institution administrator)

There are three unions on the campus: there’s a faculty union, there’s a staff union and a custodial or clerical union, and the staff union contract states that after a seven-year period any administrative staff is eligible to take a six-month paid leave of absence pending the approval of their supervisor. (Kim, sabbaticant at a public institution)

Compensation

Various types of compensation were identified in the policies. Although there were many specifics that differentiated the kinds of compensation, there were some larger themes. In line with most faculty sabbatical policies (Zahorski, 1994), most sabbaticals in this study were offered one semester or a half year at full pay and a full year or full contract at half pay. The language used in these policies could make it difficult to categorize them; for example, compensation was granted in the following allocations as indicated in Table 4.7.
Table 4.7. Full Compensation in Sabbatical Policies for Higher Education Administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Pay was offered for the following sabbatical lengths:</th>
<th>Frequency of policies with this criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One semester</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ contract</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 1-3 months</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 1-5 months</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to one year</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.7, none of the policies aligned similarly with traditional faculty policies (6 months, one semester, up to 1 year, 4 months, ½ contract), and two other policies detailed a sabbatical range in which the longest range (1 to 3 months or 1 to 5 months) also included a traditional length of sabbatical for faculty (Zahorski, 1994). Half pay was allocated in a similar way as indicated in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8. Half Compensation in Sabbatical Policies for Higher Education Administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Half Pay is offered for the following sabbatical lengths:</th>
<th>Frequency of policies with this criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One year/12 months</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two semesters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One semester</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full contract</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 6-12 months</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 7-12 months</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-48 weeks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 illustrates that half pay was offered less consistently in the policies, with half pay allocated most consistently (4 policies) for a year or for two semesters of
sabbatical work. Similar to full pay contracts, half pay was listed in traditional academic calendar segments (half year, contract, semesters).

Full and half pay, however, were not the only ways financial compensation was allocated. One policy indicated that sabbaticants would receive 67% of their salary for a 1-year leave, and one indicated ¾ pay during a 4- to 6-month leave; yet another stated 90% compensation for the first quarter (90 days) and 86% of salary for subsequent quarters; and finally, one policy indicated that compensation was prorated for the number of days used. The most distinctive policy indicated full pay for 4 months of leave but no pay for days taken beyond the 4-month period. The institution in this case noted that using leave in collaboration with annual leave could also assist with taking more days. In this policy, it appeared that the institution was prompting employees to take personal vacation time as part of their leave if they wanted more than 4 months. One policy stated that employees would receive “all salary” seemingly without attention to the period of leave taken, and another policy noted that the sabbatical could be taken with or without pay. Two policies indicated that the salary collected by employees should not exceed either their current salary or more than 2/3 of their salary. Finally, one policy did not discuss compensation.

Benefits

Benefits in this section are described as added compensation items such as health insurance and retirement contributions. Although financial compensation was a major benefit, other important benefits were articulated in the sabbatical policies. Nine policies indicated that benefits were included, and one policy stated that benefits would be prorated according to the salary offered. Benefits were not referenced in 10 policies, leading the researcher to believe that benefits would be offered in those cases as verified by interviews with study participants. However, further research is needed to explore this important entitlement. In addition, no explanation of what benefits were offered was included. It is presumed that these benefits mainly pertained to health insurance,
retirement contributions, and so on. Sabbaticants and administrators from three institutions (both public and private) noted the inclusion of all benefits in their policies. To more clearly articulate the reason, Steve, a public administrator commented, “They’re still on the university payroll and it’s part of their job responsibilities considered as professional development,” and Christine, a private administrator commented, “It’s like they were here – they get their vacation and everything.”

Three policies specifically noted that vacation and leave (such as sick leave) would accrue during the leave period, and two policies indicated that no vacation or leave would accrue. One policy noted that no retirement contributions would be made. Six policies indicated the approval of receiving grants or fellowships to supplement the salary, and in most cases those grant totals could not exceed the base salary of the sabbaticant. Overall, it appears that the extension of benefits while on sabbatical is prevalent.

Reinstatement

Reinstatement is the opportunity to return to a position after a sabbatical experience. Only four policies specifically listed reinstatement as part of the official sabbatical policy. Of those four, three policies stated that employees could return to their current position, and one institution indicated that employees could return to their current position or “to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.” It is unclear why reinstatement benefits were not more clearly articulated in the sabbatical policies. Although no data on this specific policy matter were collected, it could be assumed that the role of a sabbatical is to gain knowledge and then bring that knowledge back to the institution, which would preclude the need for reinstatement in the policy. Of the five sabbaticants interviewed for this study, only one returned to a different position within the university (which had been pre-arranged before the leave occurred). More research on this specific policy logistic is needed to yield more conclusive results.
Return Requirement

Nineteen of the sabbatical policies included some version of a return requirement as part of the formal sabbatical policy. One of the most common return requirements was the submission of a formal written report, which was required by 17 of the institutions. Although most policies simply asked for the submission of a report, very few policies actually stipulated what should be in the report. One institution’s policy stated, “This report should address and include: Purpose and goals for the leave (including the original agenda/timeline), how goals were met or unmet during the leave, benefits of the leave to the recipient and unit, and implementation plan for applying new knowledge.” Although most policies required a formal report, the submission date varied by policy. Six policies indicated that reports should be submitted within 2 months or 60 days of the sabbaticant’s return. Other submission dates were within 30 days/1 month/4 weeks (4), 90 days (2), and 4 months (1), and four policies did not indicate a deadline for the report to be submitted. The one sabbatical policy that did not have a return requirement was a systems-wide policy. It is possible that the institutions at the system schools had a return requirement specifically linked to their own institutional policy or practice.

For this study, of the six sabbaticants who were asked to submit their final return reports, four responded that they did not have to submit a final report and one submitted the report. One sabbaticant (who took her sabbatical over 16 years ago) stated that it was not a requirement (but has since changed according to the policy), whereas the other sabbaticants discussed the experience with their supervisors or presented their dissertation work. It appears that although some sabbatical policies called for a written report, the institutions were liberal when following through with this requirement.

The benefits and outcomes of the sabbatical were not only communicated in a written report. One policy required a presentation of the experience to others whereas another required a presentation if deemed necessary. The policies indicated that this requirement was necessary both to communicate the learning of the experience with the
institution and campus community and to assist the sabbaticant in summarizing an understanding of the experience. Additional information regarding the communication of the sabbatical benefits is discussed in Chapter 6.

Repayment if Necessary

To supplement the return requirement, 19 of the policies indicated that the sabbaticant must stay at the institution for a period of time after the sabbatical experience. Nine policies required 1 year post-sabbatical. Other policies indicated that the employee must stay at the institution for a period equal to the time of the leave (5), a period of twice the leave (2), and in the most extreme case, 2 years after the leave (1). In a few cases, leaves that deviated from traditional semester leaves were prorated according to the time away. In 15 of the cases, departure from the sabbatical-granting institution mandated a repayment of the sabbatical experience to the granting institution. For example, if a sabbaticant took a sabbatical, then decided not to return to the institution at the conclusion of the experience, the sabbaticant would need to repay their salary to the sabbatical-granting institution. Fourteen of the institutions required full repayment whereas one indicated a partial repayment to the institution. One policy indicated that repayment included not only salary but also benefits and contributions to retirement accounts.

Logistical Factors

Sabbatical policies did not specify how work would be accomplished while the sabbaticant was away or indicate if or how much funding or other resources were available to help with coverage by internal or external staff. Furthermore, information about the impact on daily operations was not included in the policies but is an important part of understanding how the policy functions, especially for staff members who often run 12-month essential operations in residential, maintenance, and security offices. In some cases, these offices operate 24 hours per day. Thus, it was important that interviews
with both sabbaticants and their administrators addressed how the policy was actualized for staff. Each of the specific logistical factors is described below.

**Timing of leave.** When employees used the leave was indicated as a major consideration for both sabbaticants and administrators. Taylor, an administrator, said that the timing of the leave was always considered in the decision-making process. He noted that the group examines if:

… a department (is) able to fulfill the duties and tasks associated with that position in a way that will not impede the progress of the department as it relates to the services that it provides students and others.

Christine, an administrator at a private school, noted that the timing of the leave was an important detail that was negotiated with sabbaticants:

Most of the people that have been granted leaves have gone for a semester or in some cases, a January term ... a lot of students are off campus and studying abroad ... so it tends to be a quieter time on campus. So on at least two occasions, somebody wanted to take a sabbatical for January term and spring semester and instead we negotiated a January term and summer just because it was easier to not have to replace them or to replace them at a less strenuous level.

The timing of the leave as presented by the interviews is a major logistical factor missing from the sabbatical policies.

**Staff coverage.** Coverage of responsibilities was a large part of the logistics described by sabbaticants and administrators alike. It appears that since sabbaticals for administrators are less common and the work of staff employees is continual, it can be difficult to find a linear break. In contrast to sabbaticals for faculty, there is little duplication in staff responsibilities, making job coverage difficult to obtain. Emilio, a sabbaticant, noted the unique challenge for sabbaticals for administrative staff in contrast to those for faculty:

Unlike faculty … Joe isn't teaching this class so Jane will teach it, you just kind of fill in the classes. In an administrative office, it's kind of harder to do that…you don't have multiple people doing a similar thing....We are a very hierarchal type of institution, so taking somebody out of the hierarchy, particularly someone who is higher up in the hierarchy, can be quite challenging.
Donnie, a sabbaticant at a large public institution, said that he relied on current staff to fill the void but that the planning process was important. He noted “decisions are typically made at the end of the spring term to give the departments ample time to make staffing adjustments while we were gone.” He continued, that the planning process involved the director and the people who were most impacted. Kim, another sabbaticant, noted that she also made use of other staff members in her office to fulfill her responsibilities:

There was another Assistant Director in the office who was more in charge of supervising the professional staff and…was more in charge of the staff training development programming. At that time she stepped up to be Acting Director, and then some of the Resident Directors stepped in and did a lot of the central office duties on top of working in the halls.

David, another sabbaticant, noted that both job sharing and placement staff were used to fill his pastoral duties.

A lot of sabbaticals on campus have been maybe three months, so if they’re that short, you know just the office staff covers it and if they have a larger staff they can cover each other. In my office there is a smaller staff, our roles are larger, you know it did need to be replaced. When my colleague was on sabbatical before, one of my other colleagues, we also had a replacement. He was gone for six months.

*Financing replacement staff.* Financing replacement personnel (either internal or external staff) was also addressed by both sabbaticants and administrators. While most did not hire replacement staff, one of the institutions did hire outside replacements. It appears that institutions with extra departmental funds or access to the institution’s sabbatical fund are used to finance replacement personnel. Emilio, a sabbaticant, noted that the financing and approval of sabbaticals were different for faculty and staff:

…funding is not established within the institution's budget for administrative sabbaticals or study leaves, so not only did it have to be approved, but funding had to be identified within the department or by my supervisor, again the president in this case, to fund it. And so that raises a little bit of a different category for sabbaticals. For faculty there is within the budget a pool of money and it just limits the number of sabbaticals that could be approved within a given year. There is a budgetary line item for that. In the case of staff, you just have to kind of know you want to get it approved and you have to find funding for it.

Christine, an administrator at the same institution, also highlighted that replacement personnel were hired part time to help fulfill some of Lisa’s duties.
We would replace somebody half time or we would give a coworker some extra money to pick up some of the work. We would…rarely replace at a full rate … which makes it more affordable….We have a little pocket of money in our HR department for these kinds of things and so we can afford probably up to one a year. In one case, somebody else in my area (the Director of our Wellness Program) was one … and we didn't replace him – we just knew there would be a certain amount of stuff that didn't get done.

She continued, “I'd say we have $20,000 in a budget in any given year to do something like this. And depending on who it is, you know it costs more or less.” Finding available money was a concern for organizations as Emilio, a sabbaticant from the same institution, noted:

There isn't an automatic coverage of your position; in fact, right now within my office one of my colleagues is looking at sabbatical in the fall and the president has indicated that you just can’t assume (there) will be a replacement. …(it) varies on the economic finances at that point and where funding may be available, though that’s not a guarantee.

It also appears that the replacement of staff may have been funded internally in the departments rather than institutionally. Donnie said that funding availability from institution funds depended on if the sabbaticant was employed in an auxiliary unit.

There's none provided by our office. So for example, if I'm in the Career Center, and I'm on sabbatical leave, the Career Center, which is partially E & G (Education and General Fund) funded and partly auxiliary, if they're able to come up with the funds to hire a part-time person then they would definitely be able to do so.

Regardless of the financial implications, Lily, an administrator at a public institution, commented that the benefits of sabbaticals far outweighed the associated costs: “…it's good for morale, it’s good for commitment to ongoing learning for everyone. And it’s financially not much of a commitment from the college.” Lily also noted:

This policy was written in a way that would not be a financial burden to the college as much as possible. It would be a staffing burden. But if everybody saw they had a chance to do it in due time and we have a lot of longevity of staff or to prepare themselves for other roles within the college … that seemed to work.

Emilio stated that his sabbatical was a financial benefit to the institution because he was gone for a full year at half salary. He said, “The replacements tend to come at a
lower pay scale because you know, lower experience.” Because Emilio’s sabbatical was a full year, he said, “it was actually a financial advantage of the college … half of my salary could be utilized to cover my replacement and there is only a difference, a fairly manageable difference.”

Finally, Taylor, an administrator at a large public institution, said he had not even thought about financing for a replacement as an issue because as a department, there was never any money directed toward the leave. When asked about how the institution financed the leave, he commented:

I thought the financial question was an interesting one. I guess more so because within the division of student affairs anyway, many times we do without, and so we think of ways of, ‘ok, how can we make this happen?’ without trying to find the added cash which is not there or money which is not there and so we always find some means of making things work and so that was interesting. I never even thought of it from the standpoint of the financial piece of it.

Training coverage staff. Another consideration that administrators faced was not only planning the best time or coverage for their staff, but also training the staff (either current or replacement) in the details of the job. Lisa, an international student coordinator, indicated that training employees on her job was essential.

And so by my going and by my leaving campus for three months we had to set up some structures so that for instance, immigration regulations or advising students and keeping track of them with the SEVIS Protocol. I don't know if you're familiar with the Homeland Security tracking system for international students, but it is pretty important because if you mess up – you mess up somebody’s life. So we did have another person get trained so that she could be doing that work while I'm gone.

Application or proposal materials. There were a variety of different application materials requested in various forms; however, most policies (11) required a formal written proposal or an application/agreement (9 policies) or both. Beyond that, some institutions required letter(s) from supervisor/colleagues or endorsement of supervisor support (9 policies), a CV or résumé (2 policies), evaluations from previous years (1 policy), and a formal document regarding how the work will be completed in the absence of the sabbaticant (four policies).
Sabbatical proposals or letters of interest requested by the sabbatical-granting institutions included a call for a description or nature of the experience (7 policies); dates (5 policies); how the experience related to their current job (5 policies), goals, objectives or work accomplished (5 policies); associated costs (3 policies); expected results (2 policies); location of the sabbatical (2 policies); transition to future career goals (2 policies); invitation or documents related to the leave (3 policies); remuneration or income collected (2 policies); intellectual property gained from the leave (1 policy); timeline of progress (1 policy); awards received (1 policy); how the experience differs from other professional development experiences available to the employee (1 policy); and benefits to the employee (5 policies), department or division (4 policies), or university (4 policies).

*Approval process or granting department or committee.* When the application materials were accepted, some policies indicated the flow of approval. As expected, each process was somewhat different and included approvals from the president (11 policies), supervisor (9 policies), department head (7 policies), board of trustees (7 policies), various vice presidents or chief administrative officers (9 policies), the appropriate approval committee (7 policies), and human resources office (5 policies). It appears that the supervisor had an important role in the approval process for higher education sabbaticants. Using the above-mentioned criteria (which included policies for both faculty and staff) means that supervisors of the vice presidents of that area (many of whom were the direct supervisors of the sabbaticants), 18 in total, had the majority of decision-making power over the opportunity. Several sabbaticants mentioned that their supervisors’ support (e.g., approval, letter, or urging) was instrumental in getting the process going and approved while the rest of the approval process was only procedural. For example, Christine reported that the application moves through the supervisor to the president’s cabinet. She said decisions are usually made by the time it gets to the cabinet. “It's sort of a, ‘yeah let’s talk about timing and how to replace the person’ and it's not
really, ‘should we do this or not.’ At least in my experience nobody's ever been turned
down.” Steve, similarly remarked that the supervisor and vice-president for student
affairs approve the proposal before sending it to the human resource office. He noted that
the application would probably be approved unless the person did not meet the eligibility.

Although understanding the governing body or person that allowed the sabbatical
was important, perhaps even more important was the support of the decision maker in the
sabbatical process. Supervisor support was another important factor highlighted by
sabbaticants. Without this support, the sabbaticants thought the opportunity would not
have been available regardless of the presence of an institutional policy.

I think it depends on what area you work in at the University and who is your
supervisor…As in any institution, it’s political. Are you… expendable?… Are you so necessary to the running of the department that we can’t offer you this
opportunity? You know, legally they can’t do that, because the union contract
states that if you're eligible then, more or less your supervisor has to give the
approval, but there are ways that people will twist things to say ‘no that it doesn't
meet the requirements.’ So there are politics that are involved, and you know
financially for the university to lose someone for however, three months, six
months, and then have someone who has to fill in for those job duties, it is
complicated, but it can be done.

Similar leave policies. Also notable were the number of policies that were similar
to a sabbatical experience (i.e., extended paid time away) but were not called sabbaticals.
Although this study did not explore these other paid time-away programs, it is important
to note that in two of the six interviews, paid extended leave was granted to two different
sabbaticants beyond their sabbatical experience. Betty, another administrator, said she
participated in an institutional grant program that allowed leave away from her daily
work to finish her dissertation. She said the program was “for anyone who's working on a
degree program so they can be working on a bachelor’s, master’s, or doctorate, and it's a
semester leave with pay plus money to your department to hire a replacement.”

Both sabbaticants and an administrator commented on a staff award that granted a
trip with a study abroad or music group for the January term. The awardees were
presented with this paid leave from their work to participate in the class experience with
faculty and students. Emilio talked about the program and even used the term “mini-sabbatical” to describe the program which awards three to four staff based on peer nominations to attend classes during a January-term study abroad trip. He noted:

So it's kind of like a mini sabbatical for some people to really be energized by that experience, and they in turn when they come back at a staff meeting will talk about their experience with the class, connecting with students, being away from the institution, better understanding what the institution does. …I think that's a huge benefit for the institution … if our staff doesn't fully experience the tasks that we do, we lose some of what it is that we are about.

_Sabbatical policy summary._ Overall, policies were structured in ways that provided information similar to faculty sabbatical policies. This included the name, history, purpose, stated beneficiary, length, eligibility, rank, contract type, compensation benefits, reinstatement, return requirement, repayment, application materials, and approval. Policies were consistent in most of these topical areas. The policies, however, did not cover many topics that were specifically related to staff employees. Specific topics included the timing of the leave (best time to take a leave), staff coverage, financing of the leave, or the training of replacement staff or job sharing. All of these topics are specific to staff but were missing in the formal sabbatical policies. Even the policies for administrators only did not contain this important information. Because much of the logistics about the function of the sabbatical were highlighted in the interview, this information was used to triangulate the data with the sabbatical policy and information. Because sabbaticals for staff are not as familiar as faculty sabbaticals, the information about the sabbatical policy functions was important information to include.
CHAPTER 5

BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The second part of the data analysis addressed the research question, *How do administrators and sabbaticants in colleges and universities conceptualize and communicate individual and organizational benefits of staff sabbaticals?* The following section discusses how benefits were articulated by the workforce involved in sabbaticals.

Benefits in this section were identified by examining the interview data transcripts and coding them for benefits articulated in the interviews. During the interview, participants were asked questions regarding the logistics and benefits of the sabbatical or policy. After the interview, the researcher summarized the interview in bulleted form and presented it to each interview participant to gather their feedback. These member checks were an important data analysis method. When the interview was transcribed and coded, the interviewer collaborated with qualitatively trained peer debriefers who also examined the data for benefits.

Using organizational creativity as a theoretical framework allowed the researcher to examine benefits as both beneficial products and processes of the sabbatical experience. However simply listing the benefits according to these macro-level benefits (products and processes) offered little thematic organization. Therefore, benefits were identified independently and were also cataloged as a list of benefits in the sabbatical literature as empirical cataloged by Iravania (2011) (Appendix N). Benefits were placed into thematic categories that best fit the nature of the benefit. While most benefits identified in this study were echoed in Iravania’s (2011) empirical work, some new benefits emerged. When these benefits were identified, they were categorized into thematic areas according to Iravania (2011). These categories were also used in Figure 2.3 to organize and understand thematic benefits in the sabbatical literature. The benefits in the figure show all of the benefits as articulated by the document analysis and
interviews by participants. Benefit categories are listed in order of how often they were used to describe a benefit, starting with the most frequent. It should also be noted that although the themes could fit in various categories, they were organized according to the most frequent benefit noted in the interviews. Limitations of this categorization are addressed in Chapter 7.

Organizational creativity was used as a theoretical framework to understand sabbatical benefits broadly. Organizational creativity was used to understand not only the tangible beneficial products of sabbaticals like increased knowledge or skills but also how the process of sabbaticals contributes to benefits like the cross-training of employees or extended time to concentrate on planning, relaxing or spending time with family. Because organizational creativity does not offer further organization beyond “products” and “processes,” Iravania’s (2011) study on sabbatical benefit categories was used to organize the sabbatical benefits into thematic categories. This was essential to understanding the types of benefits and how benefit types were different according to different data sources. The benefit groups include Professionalism, Capacity Building, Institutional Support, Personal, and Psychological and are explained in Table 5.1. Within these categories, the most prominent benefits and analysis are presented. Each of the benefits is represented in Table 5.1. This table presents the major benefit category with each of the subcategory benefits listed. Each of these sub categories are described in this chapter. After the benefits were recorded, they were arranged into two categories, individual or organizational, according to which population benefited. Workplace and workforce factors of organizational creativity were also identified and are discussed in Chapter 6.
Table 5.1. Explanation of All Sabbatical Benefits by Thematic Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Category</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Organizational</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Process</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Professionalism Benefits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Becoming an Expert</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Job</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life-Long Learning</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development and Conferences</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Support Benefits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Appreciation</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job-sharing</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
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<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-training</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
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<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loyalty/Retention</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time away/Flexibility</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morale</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uniqueness</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Capacity Building Benefits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Experiences, Ideas and Change</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel/worldview</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exchange</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural experiences</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved programs and Services</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Process</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Benefits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family and Relationships</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hobby</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological Benefits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Renewal, Rejuvenation, Recharge, Re-energize, Refresh, Rest</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect and refocus</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and Self-Confidence</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validation</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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</table>
The second part of this question addressed how the sabbatical experience was communicated. Therefore, interview data were evaluated to identify how sabbaticals and sabbatical experiences were communicated. Data from interviews and documents showed that sabbaticals were communicated in various ways. Next, sabbatical policies and proposals were reviewed through document analysis to extract relevant information in response to the research questions. This information was important for answering the third research study question. Finally, benefits were analyzed on a case-by-case basis to discover how each of the benefits was viewed in three specific case studies. However, to understand each benefit, the first part of this section will present the general findings of all sabbatical benefits. This overview will present information in a broad sense and provide a foundation to explore other benefits.

**Professional Benefits**

A common perspective is that sabbaticals are created exclusively for research or study of concepts relating to the job. The findings of this literature review also showed that professional contributions are indeed one specific part of the sabbatical experience. For this study, professionalism dealt directly with the person’s job and included concepts such as career development, knowledge, continuing education or degree, conferences and presentations, professional development, new job or promotion, research, reading, publications, and grants. These concepts also reflected categories from the sabbatical literature review. However, the data in this study suggested new categories to add to professionalism, including learning, projects, and becoming an expert. The following offers a detailed explanation of the each of the benefits in the professional category, including the new benefit areas.

**Knowledge and skills.** One of the most articulated benefits in this study was the acquisition of knowledge. Lily was a sabbaticant who had two leaves, both of which could be considered extended paid time away from work (did not require use of unpaid or vacation leave). In her first leave experience, she attended an administrator’s education
program at Harvard University to polish her skills and equip her with the knowledge to obtain a new upper leadership role within student affairs. She highlighted her thirst for knowledge in the field. “I was there by myself in a hot and non-air-conditioned dorm room going through this material and with people who are very challenging, and it was really reinforcing, intellectually reinforcing. I think I was hungry for that.”

Interesting was the importance of gaining specific skills in addition to knowledge. Although this was mentioned in the sabbatical literature, learning new skills associated with the job was important to participants. Sabbaticants were interested not only in obtaining scholarship but also in obtaining skills that either directly or indirectly benefited their work. For example Lisa, said she spent “many months with Rosetta Stone, trying to learn the language” before she arrived in Vietnam for her sabbatical.

For Lisa, learning a language was not only a skill that she wanted to acquire (a direct or product benefit) but she also wanted to gain the indirect benefits of knowing about another culture’s language and learning to navigate that new culture. By means of language acquisition, she not only learned how to communicate with her international students, but also understood how language acquisition and the challenges involved contribute to the acculturation process that students face when arriving on campus. For Lisa the acquisition of a new language is a process benefit that helped her empathize with the challenges that international students face. However learning the new language is also a tangible product that will allow her to communicate better with the students she serves.

For Donnie, the sabbatical experience indirectly provided skills to be a better manager.

It helped me become a better manager, because while I never micromanaged my staff … I had been there for such a long time that I tended to look at things through my lens and I realized perhaps I wasn't as open as I should have been. So that was an unexpected benefit.

Donnie also noted that not only his own skills were enhanced, but the skills of staff in his area were increased. In reflecting on the experience, Donnie noted that his leave gave
others new experiences that helped them gain new skills. “I don’t think they would've had that opportunity because they were able to gain some additional skill sets, because I was gone.” In the follow-up contact, Donnie reiterated the importance of his new managing skills: “I also think it helped me become a better manager in the sense that it enabled me to delegate responsibility more freely and trust those that worked closely with me.” For Donnie, the process of leaving for the sabbatical caused both he and his staff to gain additional insights but also produced tangible knowledgeable products in the new roles they played.

*Research.* Not surprisingly, the ability to conduct research was articulated as a benefit of the sabbatical. Although some participants, such as Donnie and Betty, used the leave to conduct formal dissertation research projects (products), other participants used research opportunities to explore particular research topics that benefited their position or the institutions as a whole. Some sabbaticants found a way to combine both degree and daily work. Donnie’s personal interest in and involvement with an institution-wide committee helped him frame his dissertation topic while also helping the institution:

I looked at student awareness of institutional policies related to online behavior focusing on illegal downloading of movies, music file sharing as so forth. … I had been tasked with the responsibility of helping craft the university policy. So I thought if I’m going to spend some time crafting policy … Why don’t I see if I can incorporate this into my research study in terms of how aware are students about … to measure their level of awareness of policy and does the awareness have any impact on their participation in file sharing activities. In fact that's one of the ways I was able to push out my data very quickly because I was able to feed back some of that information to that committee that was drafting the university-wide policy.

Using institutional students or institution-specific questions to conduct research was also a benefit identified by sabbatical administrators. Taylor noted that a health center employee conducted a study on student alcohol use and its impact on health, well-being, and classroom performance. Taylor noted, that the study would offer “added insights” regarding the services provided by the health center but also the counseling center. He highlighted using university specific students as part of the survey, case study and focus
groups are ways that the institution can “benefit greatly.” Taylor also commented on the importance of using sabbaticants and dissertation students to conduct research on services provided to students:

If we’re struggling to find other information or data that will be helpful to us in providing services to students, I think it's a benefit to us as an institution to gain added information on added knowledge so that we can progress as it relates to the services that we provide students overall.

After Betty used her first leave opportunity to complete her dissertation, the sabbatical leave was used to complete a research project that complemented the institution’s enhancement plan as part of the reaccreditation process. Specifically the enhancement plan noted the addition of a global citizenship which was an area that Betty saw was not fully addressed in her division.

I really wanted some time to do some reading on my own and some research to find out about what types of leadership training best prepares students for … global engagement. … College leadership development has always kind of included a global perspective, but it hasn't been explicitly discussed so I wanted to research global leadership development, and how does that tie into delivering to college students.

Finally, research during the sabbatical not only benefited individual or departmental interests. Emilio, a clergy sabbaticant, used part of his sabbatical to immerse himself in the culture he was studying to gain a different perspective on biblical readings. This process prompted him to reflect on his role as a researcher when he was immersed in a migrant working community.

There was a disconnect for me as I traveled around the country to be in the position of a researcher who's being paid to just walk around and talk to people. I mean, especially in the middle of an economic downturn, you know it was ludicrous. I’m working with immigrant communities; folks who are barely making it day-to-day. And mostly I'm interacting with them when they're standing waiting for day jobs, you know, for somebody to come and pick him up to give them work for that day….I understand the challenge and I'm very aware of the privilege of being able to do this so.

For Emilio, the process of conducting research not only allowed him to produce a valuable research product but also allowed him to personally connect, empathize and connect (a process) with his own research topic. In Emilio’s case, he saw his research as a
product but also as a process. While research was mostly described as a sabbatical product, the process of conducting research was also mentioned as a benefit.

 Reading. Reading specifically gained attention from the sabbaticants in this study. Gaining the time (because of the sabbatical process) to catch up on new reading material or stay current in the field was highlighted by three different sabbaticants. Betty, a director, said that her busy schedule often kept her from reading and the sabbatical provided more time for reading: “I certainly read more than I can normally read in a given semester. So, it was time to read and think about things and develop plans.” Reading was reported by two participants as specific professional benefits of their sabbatical, confirming the connection to professionalism and intangible process benefits.

 For a campus pastor, reading during the sabbatical was a continuation of his duties; however, the ability to read with others and in different places brought the readings to life:

 The core of my sabbatical was reading biblical stories that have migration as a central component with people seeing it with immigrant communities so just the experience of reading the text with people, seeing the text renewed a lot out of my own understanding of the text and certainly people’s lives. Testimony was quite significant for me and my own understanding of faith and the … sacred narrative in peoples’ lives.

 The sabbaticants also said that increased reading not only was a sabbatical benefit but noted the routine reading remained a post sabbatical habit. Donnie remarked:

 I reengaged in the value of making sure I was reading more in … not only in our field … but in higher education in general. Typically, I tended to focus on what was happening in my world or what I was working on. So now I usually start my morning off reading any number of sites from, not only the Chronicle, but you know, different newspapers so I can get better sense of what's happening … I devote time to reading and researching what's happening in our field. … I’m a lot more intentional now in that respect.

 Participants mentioned reading as a benefit of the sabbatical process rather than a tangible outcome.

 Becoming an expert. Two participants directly noted the expertise that sabbaticants bring to the workplace as an important benefit of the sabbatical process.
Christine noted that sabbaticants “have become sort of experts in these areas and so they're kind of sought after because of it.” Donnie, a sabbaticant from the same institution noted that his involvement in classroom presentations have increased. He notes that it is the process of being away from the institution for a specific purpose has “piqued the interest of other departments and faculty” regarding his expertise. “And so I think in some ways it's made me more valuable to the institution and has allowed me to provide more resources to the institution.”

Other participants noted that their sabbatical allowed them to gain specific knowledge while serving on various committees, studies or policy-making groups. While expertise was seen as a specific product gained by the institution and individual, the process of a sabbatical helped clarify and communicate a sabbaticants expertise area. Categorically, the administrators saw becoming an expert as an unexpected yet professional benefit while the sabbaticants deemed their new-found knowledge as an organizational benefit.

**Education.** Continuing education is centered on completing education or taking classes, a product benefit of the sabbatical. The faculty literature is vague or mentions finishing a degree and in some cases it specifies a terminal degree. The policies reviewed in this study revealed a difference in how the continuing education section was distinguished. For example, while some policies simply noted study or continuing education, others specified that the sabbatical was for finishing a degree, and three noted that the leave was specifically for a graduate degree. This is interesting considering staff who may be eligible for the sabbatical experience may or may not have completed a first degree and therefore would not qualify to use the sabbatical for further education. Donnie, a sabbaticant at a large public institution said of the five sabbaticants in his department, everyone used it to complete some part of their education, regardless of the degree type.
Continuing education during a sabbatical was a benefit noted by sabbaticants and administrators alike. Kim, a sabbaticant from a public school, said that the core of the sabbatical experience was an “educational focus,” whereas Christine, an administrator, said that it gave her time to “take classes.” Taking classes was also highlighted by Betty, a sabbaticant who had already obtained her Ph.D.

I also took several computer classes that I never have time to go to during regular work life because they are very technologically advanced. And I found it difficult to go to one of his training sessions and then go back into the office. And I'm not using what I just learned some of the time to really test out in practice, so having the time again to address this training needs for myself that was an extra bonus.

Education was noted as a tangible process benefit by administrators and sabbaticants alike. Not only were participants able to take classes and complete class requirements, the structured nature of completing formal requirements were easily communicated product benefits of the sabbatical.

Degree. Completion of or progression toward completing a degree was another common benefit noted by participants. Two participants in this study used paid leave to complete a part of their dissertation to meet the requirements for a doctoral degree. Donnie, the sabbaticant, remarked: “So by the end of that sabbatical, I submitted my proposal and was approved, and I returned to work and then I started to collect my data after I returned to work. So that was major!”

Doctoral work was not the only goal in pursuing education. One sabbaticant (serving in an upper level management position and supervising several staff) from a large public institution said, “We actually had staff in our department who used the time off to complete a bachelor's degree, you know, a support level staff who has completed a bachelor’s degree and a number of things.” Obtaining a degree was listed a product benefit by administrators and sabbaticants. However, neither group mentioned how the advanced degree itself benefited the organization.

Career development. Career development was a primary focus in the interviews. Discussed by both administrators and sabbaticants, career development was central to the
thought process and was articulated as general, personal, professional, organizational, and unexpected benefits of the experience. Furthermore, career development was articulated as both a process and product-oriented benefit. Taylor, a public institution administrator, commented that career development was paramount. He noted that sabbaticals are one way to develop his own employees.

It's essential for me to prepare them, not only to do their current job well but … to develop (skills) that will help them in … their next position. It may be at (institution), it may be at some other institution, but I think … they want to improve upon their skills, making themselves … more marketable.

Christine, a private school administrator also said that developing employees is paramount regardless of their rank or intentions to stay or leave the institution. She noted that her staff needs to develop staff who stay or move on to “greener pasture.” She noted, “it's good for everybody to develop.”

Sabbaticants such as Emilio used the sabbatical experience to reflect on their own career and their place in the field and institution calling it a “discerning year” for his own career calling and location. For Emilio, he noted his own “affirmation of both the place and call to this particular community,” but noted that the self-discovery process “may wind up with a different kind of results” for others.

It was not the sabbaticants alone who benefited from the sabbatical experience. Donnie reflected that the sabbatical process for other non-sabbaticants was also significant. Donnie noted that when he returned to work after the sabbatical, the office was doing a great job with their new roles. Donnie said, the Assistant Director asked him if she could continue her coverage roles which landed her in a promotion on campus:

She had asked me if she could keep those areas because she enjoyed doing that and I said that was fine. She did a good job, … ironically I ended up losing her. She took a position with a promotion in another unit on campus but she credited us … for helping her get that other position. She'd served on a number of other committees that have helped her connect to the rest of the campus and some other offices that had really helped her with this new position.
The data highlight career development and enhancement as a tangible product for the sabbaticant, however the process of a sabbatical for certain staff also produce indirect or process-oriented benefits for other non-sabbaticants. This data offers a deeper interpretation into the career development benefits for all staff, not just the sabbaticant, and organizational creativity highlights that benefits for career development include both product and process-oriented benefits for employees.

New job. Although career development is part of the sabbatical experience, it is possible that employees might have a chance to obtain new employment after the experience. The data also provide product and process-oriented benefits for new jobs. As with career development, it was not only the sabbaticants who benefited from new employment. Several colleagues of sabbaticants who helped with job coverage received new positions after their coverage experience. Christine, an administrator noted the sabbaticants temporary departure allowed another employee to gain knowledge and skills for a new job.

We asked one of the Hall Directors who had a master's degree and who was very bright and capable, if she would take on the Director role half-time while she did her other residence life job. … It provided her enough experience so that she stayed another couple years and she went on to this awesome job elsewhere, but it gave her that professional development to, you know, to move forward.

Donnie, a sabbaticant also noted that his sabbatical allowed one of his employees to gain further experiences in his department. Representing Donnie on a committee, where she was able to connect with other departments who saw her work ethic was key to getting her new position. He noted that the committee members were able to see the quality of her work. Donnie said, “So when it came time for that position they asked her to … consider applying and I was supportive of that and I'm glad she had the opportunity.”

New jobs are not only for non-sabbaticant employees. Donnie, a long-time employee at a public institution, talked about his new job experience a year and half after his sabbatical. He noted that he was not looking for the career opportunity but after
finishing his degree (which was the focus of his sabbatical) he realized upward career mobility was limited at his institution. He noted that when a position came available that met his criterion, he accepted the position.

Emilio also stated he was offered other positions after his sabbatical. In addition, at the point of this study, he was interviewing for a senior leadership position within the institution. He noted that while the opportunity is not specifically related to the sabbatical, the leave helped him reflect on how his skills might be used in more flexible ways. He also noted the sabbatical confirmed his work roles and institutions choice but noted that institutions might be nervous about letting an employees take a sabbatical.

Institutions may be quite anxious about that, somebody goes off and they may go off and may be offered another job and that's the element of what happens in a sabbatical. But by and large for me, it's been an affirmation of the kind of institution that I work for, and the renewal and commitment to that vocation and this place.

Lily also noted that sabbaticals can help prepare candidates for promotions, even outside of the institution. She said that sabbaticants may “go to another place to prepare themselves for promotion elsewhere, which actually isn't a bad thing for the college necessarily unless the department's really counting [on them].” Kim, a public-institution sabbaticant, noted that the sabbatical opportunity allowed her to continue her work with Semester at Sea:

The first voyage served as a springboard for me to continue seeking out opportunities for international travel, and fortunately I had the ability to travel on several more Semester at Sea voyages, as well as working – serving as a part-time recruiter to let students out there know that there’s an amazing, unique opportunity for them to travel and to study.

Promotion. Promotions are another type of career development that is prevalent in institutions. Sabbaticals have been used to prepare both the sabbaticant and non-sabbaticant for different job responsibilities which translate into both product and process benefits. Lily, a private school administrator, noted that internal promotions were “pretty common” for administrators at her institutions. She commented that the sabbatical was
helpful to train and prepare current employees. Taylor, a public school administrator, remarked that the sabbatical experience can also prepare employees for promotions:

I always talk about trying to identify employees that we can promote within the division … It's easy to identify the superstars, but I think there are other individuals that are waiting for that opportunity or need a little push to bring them into the limelight and to give them an opportunity to get some experience.

*Lifelong learning.* Although knowledge was highlighted earlier, it seems that a much broader concept of lifelong learning was highlighted by sabbaticants specifically and were identified as a processes. In collaboration with the mission of the institution, Emilio noted that the sabbatical is an extension of the institution’s commitment to the liberal arts model of education. It is a:

commitment to the integrated learning that is very much rooted in the liberal arts education. The mission of the college is lived out by its location. … you get away to think. This is a community where the college is intentionally placed here and you don't you know … You don't sort of happen upon (institution name), unless you're intentionally going there. But it's intended that way …to create a kind of community that focuses itself on learning not away from the world necessarily. ... And a lot of that has to do with the commitments to academic rigor, and those elements of a higher education, but it also has to do with the … broad spectrum of people … (who) play a significant role in the experience of students. So for me I think it’s significant … (for employees) to pursue their own preparation and education. …Not only to be well prepared before they come to the institution but also (to) have avenues by which they can continue to live out that commitment to lifelong learning that the college has at the core of its mission ...

Lily, a sabbaticant at another private school, described a similar concept in her interview follow-up:

[Sabbaticals are a] demonstration of the grand value of a college education for one's life, including and transcending one's job. That certainly is a lesson that our (older) alumni bring back to campus at every homecoming. The experience reinforced for me the truth of the saying, ‘You don't know what you don't know.’ So ... we all need new learning that leads us on unexpected paths throughout life. This experience was along the very lines that were consonant with those values and excitement-in-learning inculcated in me from my years as a student of the liberal arts.

*Professional development and conferences.* Professional development and conferences was another area of professional product benefits articulated by both sabbaticants and administrators. General professional development was mentioned as an important professional activity. Donnie, a sabbaticant, noted that professionals need time
to grow and develop. He said, “We need to seek ways that we can grow professionally, whether it be writing or reading and so forth, and so I have those conversations with the staff, particularly new professionals…”

In the professionalism category, many of the benefits were described as assisting both the organization and the individual (knowledge and skills, reading, education, career development, promotion, and new jobs). Obtaining a degree, lifelong learning an professional development were credited toward benefiting the individual.

As one of the largest benefit categories, both administrators and sabbaticants reported substantial professional benefits of the sabbatical. Even more interesting is sabbaticants and administrators perceived these professional benefits not only for sabbaticants, but also for the colleagues of the sabbaticants and the institutions overall. More regarding the implications of this finding is discussed in Chapter 7.

*Capacity Building Benefits*

Capacity building includes strategies that are used to meet the goals of the institution. For Iravania (2011), capacity building described attitude changes, new ideas, creativity, and improvement of teaching. There were several benefits articulated in the interviews that were also articulated in the sabbatical literature review. These included adaptation, exchanges, flexibility, and new experiences. New categories included in this area but not necessarily represented in the literature review included need for change, collaboration, teamwork, improved programs and services and appreciation. These concepts are explored in this section.

*Collaboration.* Collaboration was another important concept highlighted by participants and was repeated seven times. Discussed by both sabbaticants and administrators and in the proposal itself, it appeared that collaboration of work and a culture of collaboration were important factors. Discussed as an organizational sabbatical process. Taylor said that a spirit of collaboration attracted him to the institution.
There's a lot of collaboration between … units on various projects. We collaborate with the president's office we collaborate with academic affairs on many programs and so the benefits of sabbaticals can carry over not only from the standpoint of the specific department, but the division as well as the University.

Several other groups highlighted collaboration, including Lisa, a sabbaticant from a private institution. She noted collaboration specifically in her sabbatical proposal by writing: “New ideas to assist with projects for the (residential community on campus).” For Kim, the collaboration benefit was not something she received on her home campus but rather was obtained during her sabbatical. She spoke about how the collaboration of working with faculty was helpful in both receiving appreciation and understanding the faculty perspective:

Working closely with faculty on the ship, that was a huge thing for me because on a land campus, you know, faculty and staff are separate. … I learned more about how faculty really do perceive students and student affairs professionals. At the end of the voyage I had several faculty approach me and say: ‘I just want to thank you. I really appreciate the work that you do. I had no idea that existed on a campus.’ So, that was a good thing.

Benefits of collaboration were cited as organizational and individual process benefits only. Collaboration was not mentioned as a product benefit of sabbaticals.

New experiences, ideas and change. The interviews revealed that the need for change (mentioned 3 times) or gaining new experiences was very important. Lisa, a sabbaticant noted that her motivation for going was “just the need for a change.” Lily related that change for her was both professional and personal. She said she “needed a change probably in my personality or new challenge that was intellectual – a deep challenge that was intellectual and personal.” For Kim, the new experiences were something that she embraced. She said, “I was doing something different and I wasn't going through the day-to-day routine.” But she commented that others might not see this as a benefit. She said, “I think a lot of people live with the fear factor. … fear is not ever in my language. People say, ‘How could you ever do that, are you afraid to do that?’” She said she responded, “Why would I be afraid, what's there to be afraid of?” Additionally, Kim needed to change her daily routine. She said she had been at the
institution for over nine years. She said, “I was just ready for a change. I needed to do something different.”

Change was a concept precipitated by several administrators who noted their hard-working staff needed a break. Christine noted that the housing staff is one example of a group that needed a break. She said, a sabbatical “gives people who work really hard a chance away from here and (to) do something totally different.” She continued, that student life staff are especially taxed. “All of the people that have been on sabbatical deal with really hard things day after day, and so to be able to remove yourself and do something new and interesting and stimulating is priceless.”

Providing sabbaticals for change was frequently noted by both sabbaticants and administrators, but they are not the only ones who benefit. Beyond building knowledge from a different area or experience, other staff left to cover the sabbatical leave also benefit. Not only did the new experiences produce change but it also contributed to new ideas and perspectives. Sabbatical administrator Steve said that the sabbatical is a springboard for “new ideas of doing things that will better our programs for students and better the institution so I think both ends benefit.” Taylor noted that the sabbatical experience provides “time to look at your job in a new light, and so those are definitely direct benefits.” Sabbaticant Lisa noted in her application that the goals of the program were specifically for “revitalization and fresh ideas for my work in the diversity center and with international students” and for “new ideas to assist with projects for the (residential community on campus).” Overall new experiences ideas and change were seen as both product and process benefits to both the organization and individual.

*Improved programs and services.* Although the sabbatical literature focused on improved teaching and service, the data from this study focused on improved programs and services. Teaching programs and services were directly related to the daily work of the sabbaticants; for teachers it is teaching, and for staff it is the programs and services they provide. Both sabbaticants and administrators specifically remarked about how the
employee or institution or both would gain from the sabbatical experience. From the proposal, sabbaticants were focused on improving services and programs for students. Emilio noted:

> In my work as part of the core (immigration city) Relief Effort team, I have found that people in the pews in these congregations are hungry for a narrative framework that guides and motivates their response. They are hungry for a way to meaningfully draw, as they do in other aspects of their life and ministry, both strength and direction from the Biblical text. My hope during my sabbatical is to produce resources that can help make those connections.

Likewise, Lisa noted that she hoped to maximize her “immersion experience” and learn how to help international students “move beyond culture shock” and settle into their new culture. Betty noted several outcomes including to “develop a model to guide the infusion of global learning for global citizenship into the programs of CLS” and to “develop new aspects of the living/learning community to include global learning and global citizenship.” Both Emilio and Lisa saw their sabbatical as a product benefit.

Furthermore, three sabbaticants reflected on how programs or services would be improved as a result of the sabbatical process. Kim said, “Professionally, I knew that the more I learned about the world and the more I knew about international travel for students in study abroad programs, the more I can assist students in the jobs that I do.”

These outcomes were also validated by administrators. Steve said that his sabbaticants created “better programs for our students and for the institution,” while Taylor commented that better services are a direct benefit to the students. “I think it's a benefit to us as an institution to gain added information on added knowledge so that we can progress as it relates to the services that we provide students overall.”

With such a pronouncement of improved programs and services in the proposal, it is not surprising that both sabbaticants and administrators perceived benefit to the programs and services on campus.

*Teamwork.* Working together was one idea that was highlighted in the interviews as an individual and organizational process benefit. Participants who helped with job
coverage of sabbaticants were very helpful. Lily noted the group was a “great group and kind and generous … my impression was there were no complaints, and there was no bitterness or anger.” Christine saw teamwork now as a direct benefit of a leave later. She said, “I think they're willing to do it because they know perhaps at some point that they'll have an opportunity to do this as well.” Emilio explained,

> We actually have a collegial team of three campus pastors. …I think that has been huge for us to be able to go on sabbatical. It would be very different if I was the senior pastor, and then my associates have to kind of run the show while I was gone. … People would feel like they had a decapitated office if the senior was somewhere … so I'm glad that we don't have that. …We have a collegial team. So if one of us is absent, so we function quite well.

**Separation.** Interestingly, while teamwork was mentioned in a positive collaborative light, two participants noted that the sabbatical itself could be used to help separate an employee from the institution. Taylor said the sabbatical can be an important turning point for employees who need to finish a degree and move on to other positions and institutions. He noted that he meets individually with staff to talk about their career goals and where they “want to be in the next 5-10 years.” He asks them: “what you need to do in order to get there?” He continued, “I don't want to lose a valuable employee, but I think there comes a time when ... how should I say this, when the job that they're doing is a job where they've done everything that they can do in that position.” Taylor noted that his responsibility is to help them see “it's time for them to move on or move up” and see that preparation as his responsibility. With this perspective separation is seen as a benefit of the sabbatical process for the organization.

In a similar direction, Lily, a vice president and sabbaticant, noted that the sabbatical could be used for recruitment but could also serve the opposite purpose. She said that while there is a requirement to return to the college and is not intended to encourage a departure, she noted that supervisor could use it to identify talents that “might be well served in another area.” In her administrative role, Lily never used the sabbatical in this way, but was exploring other uses for a sabbatical in the interview.
Travel/Worldview. Travel was mentioned as a substantial benefit among participants and administrators alike. Sabbaticants used the experience to explore different areas of the world, visit family, and conduct international explorations among other things. Although travel in some cases was not listed as a direct benefit to the individual or institution, the interviews revealed that indeed travel opportunities were a product and process benefit afforded by the sabbatical experience. In the interviews conducted, five of six sabbaticants traveled internationally as all or part of their sabbatical experience (the only other participant worked on his dissertation during the sabbatical.) For some sabbaticants, the sabbatical purpose was traveling. Sabbaticants Kim and Lily served as staff members on the Semester at Sea program and sailed around the world. Lily explained that her 100 day voyage circumnavigated the globe with 620 undergraduate students whose profiles were similar to students at her institution. She said, “It really was a floating campus similar to my institution, which helped me in my proposal.” Kim noted that the traveling experience helped her connect with countries outside of her own. She explained that the experience made her want to travel more. “It made me want to just keep traveling!” She also noted upon return she read more newspapers and was able to connect her voyage with the current news:

When you see a country that highlighted in the news that you been to and that you can reflect back on the people that live in the country and think about their experiences instead of just saying, “oh, you know that's just a country somewhere out there I don’t need to care about. … On the personal side, it would give me the opportunity to travel. I had a case of the wanderlust early in life, and decided this is a great way for me to incorporate my skills as an administrator in student affairs and to travel.

Likewise, Emilio also saw a connection between his travel and his own worldview. He said, his perspective 10 years after his sabbatical has “shifted my worldview about the kinds of issues I see happening worldwide that I think benefit the work, to how I do my work within the campus.” Emilio and Lisa also included travel as a primary component of their sabbatical experience. Emilio detailed his three travel trips which included the Southeastern, Midwestern and Western United States, Guatemala and Israel:
I spent two months (in) … historically migrant town(s) … It’s primarily people who were either just out of college and transitioning between jobs, or career, or beginning their career and want to volunteer things as well as people working mid-career or at the end of their time … So that’s a community where I spent two months and then the last two, actually a little more six months, I spent two months in Guatemala, where I’m originally from but also a connection to the group of folks I work with … And about two months in Israel … spent primarily initially around my wife's sabbatical; she was also on sabbatical at the same time.

And Lisa’s sabbatical was based solely on her international exchange experience. She reflected on how she benefited from travel. She said, “Well, and I like to think I'm somewhat intrepid, although this experience has shown me that I have to work really hard to be that.” Betty, used her sabbatical to travel to an international conference but also used the travel opportunity to visit family. She explained, “I also had more flexibility to travel and see my family … I could do it on my own schedule … they live all over the country so that was definitely a benefit.” Travel and worldviews were seen as product and process benefits to the individual. No mention of how travel contributed to the organization was mentioned.

**Service.** Emilio noted that beyond service to the institution, he saw his sabbatical as a service opportunity working with migrant populations and using that service to understand more about how the migrant experience connects with his daily work.

I wanted to do something that would come to fulfill, or serve, the larger community not only the college, but I also needed to … do that for my current position and work at the college and then also my personal interests so in terms of what I committed that I would do.

He noted that beyond the actual sabbatical, he was able to use his experience to help the larger community upon return. He explained,

I had several forums and communities that I was in… (meetings with the) mayor and their staff about issues around the migration. Immigration is something that I had researched more prior and also as part of our relief effort in a community near us … I was working with filmmaker on a documentary of the …raid. … Those were sort of community service … disseminating the insight or the work I was doing in community forums, presentations to other churches or social or civic groups.

Additionally, the sabbatical experience for Lily, prompted a institutional and personal call for service when she returned from traveling with Semester at Sea. She said she made
“personal conclusions about my decision to commit more to service in my own life ... I joined the world affairs council, and I joined the Rotary Club, which turned out to be wise on both sides for pre-retirement.” Service was a benefit of the sabbatical process for individuals and the organization.

*Networking.* Among the other process benefits, sabbaticants and administrators noted the prevalence of networking during and after the sabbatical experience. Emilio said that the experience opened doors for a new position within his institution. He said, “Professionally, you know, it's the sabbatical, as well as other experiences around it have opened up some professional opportunities for me that I wouldn't necessarily have thought about before” He continued that at the time of the interview he was interviewing for a vice president position at his institution. He noted that the opportunity to interview “is not strictly related to the sabbatical but I do know that being away from the institution and having a chance to meet a variety of connections” was important.

Benefiting the organization, Kim noted that the networking she did while on sabbatical created greater understanding of faculty and their needs during the program.

Working with colleagues from different colleges and universities, all within student affairs in this small team that we worked with, and just learning how they do things, and being able to take that information back to my campus ... working closely with faculty on the ship that was a huge thing for me… Additionally, the relationships that Kim made have allowed her to continue working with Semester at Sea for the last 16 years, traveling on four more full voyages and seven short-term voyages. Likewise, the new relationships created with faculty were also an outcome stated by Lily. She said, “… the daily living together in the daily dining and talking to faculty and students in intermixing with them. … It was just like our campus but compressed and around-the-clock, and gave me good reference for talking with people.”

*Exchange.* Noted many times providing an exchange opportunity was important for sabbaticants. Kim took a break from her upper-level residence life position to serve as an entry level hall director while traveling with Semester at Sea.
Each of us were I think the average age was 33 of the RDs. So older considering the types of jobs we were asked to perform, but each of us was so excited to be a part of this educational opportunity that it didn't matter, we would've swept the deck if they asked us to do that. …I personally, I was in charge of coordinating recreational activities as well as overseeing a small group of students on the ship.

Exchange was not always described as a direct replacement of working (i.e., you switch jobs with someone else) but rather an opportunity that provided a similar but different work experience. Lisa is a perfect example. She traveled to Vietnam to gain a personal experience regarding international student experiences in a different country.

She commented,

I'm going to be working at an English-language academy a couple hours a week helping students prepare for SAT testing, writing essays in particular, and that's kind of one of my focuses was, to know what young people are thinking about as they prepare for applying to the U.S. or England or Australia. ... why do they want to go overseas for their education? Why do they choose where they go?

Used in this capacity, exchange is a process-oriented sabbatical outcome that benefits the individual primarily. No mention of an exchange or switching of positions was mentioned.

*Cultural experiences.* Culture was identified in several ways through the interviews. Culture was seen as the way in which the diversity of the situation presented some kind of learning or benefit. Benefits were categorized as process-oriented and contributed to the individual. Emilio wrote a lot about culture in his sabbatical proposal:

The goals of my sabbatical are both personal and professional. Immigration shapes my personal life. I was born in Guatemala and have lived in four different countries. … I have found strength in my own life in the biblical migration narratives. This personal identity and experience has shaped my engagement with others whose lives are marked by transition—from students at the college… I have found common ground for conversation with these diverse audiences by connecting contemporary migration stories—my own, those of others, and those of the audience—with the biblical migration narratives.

After the experience, Emilio explained that beyond other benefits, the connection with different cultures was both personally and spiritually beneficial.

This spiritual renewal for me came in some kind of more concrete ways in Israel, there’s lots of connection with my family. I grew up with half of my family Jewish and half of my family (Christian denomination) so there were connections to both things in my life a bit of the pilgrimage being in Israel, we were there
during holy week and Passover, which the year we were there happened to coincide by schedules, both on the same week and so that was a really powerful experience to be able to be in various communities there being a part of that at that experience.

Lisa, like Emilio, was focused on a cultural experience as the crux of her sabbatical proposal, She wrote that the purpose was “living and studying immersed in another culture can give us a greater sensitivity to and awareness of another part of the world and ourselves as we relate to it.” She further explained in her interview that the experience called her to think about diversity differently. “Having to set aside my biases and assumptions … I didn't really acknowledge how deep set my own aversions are … about religious dogma to start with …” She continued, “For instance, the lunar new year holiday here … the mix of Buddhism and kind of superstitions, …(I’m) trying to not give up being me but try to understand what they’re doing … even though it doesn't make sense to me.” Her cultural reflection offered in-depth reflections on the lunar new year and her relationship with her “host family”:

I've had to be … more open and allow the experience to kind of take me in little bit. For instance, my hostess here, during the (special) holiday, they go to the cemetery and they decorate the grave of her parents, … and they put family flowers on the grave, and they burn paper money in various forms like there’s a sheet that looks like it has coins printed on it and then something that looks like gold leaf and then they burn fake, hundred dollar US bills and the idea is that ... this is an offering to her parents that they will be able to use it in heaven or wherever they are, within the coming year. … And they go again later in the year and do it again. And they burn paper clothes for the same reason that the ancestors need new clothes and you know, I don't really believe that it can do what they think it’s going to do, but I went along to kind of see what the whole thing was like. … we've had conversations about religion and what we believe and that's been really nice and I didn't know if I would be able to get to that point with anybody on a personal basis here. Yeah, and I think that that's probably creating a friendship with at least one person and I’ve become friends with more but has been ... It wasn't ... I thought I would ... but it’s also been unexpected and very important to me here.

Likewise, Lily also related that the cultural aspects of the experience were moving. She said noted her own feelings sailing into Croatia. “We were the first ship to go to Croatia since the Balkan Wars… you could see the bullet holes on the side of the city wall into Brovenek. It was really touching and sad, but powerful.” Kim also discussed her intense cultural experience. She recalled,
I remember having a really challenging time with coming back United States and seeing all the stuff that we have, seeing all the stuff that we do. It took me over a year to really come down from that experience and to really understand what I had gone through and to try to help other people understand, which was nearly impossible because one would have to have that experience in order to feel and understand that. In going back to work …I was thinking there was so much of the world out there. There's so much more for me to do and ... I started to think about ways I can do more, and I thought the most basic thing I could do while making a living is to educate others about studying the world in some capacity, and being aware of…issues…in the world.

Teaching. Although teaching was not a main focus of the responses, two sabbaticants commented that teaching was a part of their post-sabbaticant experience.

Emilio said:

I also institutionally have seen myself much more involved in classroom experiences … in part because being away from the institution, and being able to do work that is more clearly articulated and more visible has piqued the interest of other departments and faculty and what I may be able to offer. … in some ways it's made me more valuable to the institution and has allowed me to provide more resources to the institution … I feel the institution has invested in me to discover my skills more fully, and to develop them and in return, I am able to utilize them in a better way for the institution.

Lily also noted that she was also invited to co-teach classes with respected faculty members. “I didn't determine grades or anything like that but I had a role as a lecturer, which I just found passionate and exciting.” These sabbaticants saw teaching as a sabbatical product benefit for both themselves and the organization. To summarized capacity building benefits. Process-oriented individual benefits were prevalent. Only one benefit (separation) was listed solely as an organizational benefit and teaching as the only sole product benefit.

Institutional Support Benefits

Institutional support is an area that explores how the institution benefits from the sabbatical experience. Areas within institutional support include appreciation, job sharing, cross training, rewards, loyalty and retention, morale, time away and flexibility, and uniqueness. Each of these areas is explained in this section.

Appreciation. One of the most surprising areas was the establishment of appreciation as one of the benefits of a sabbatical. Seen as a personal, professional, and
organizational benefit, appreciation was presented by six of the nine participants and included both sabbaticants and administrators. Appreciation was seen as a process benefit.

Betty said, “So, I feel very fortunate,” and Emilio said, “I'm very appreciative of it.” Administrators also noticed how the sabbatical experience affected their employees. Christine remarked that when speaking about her employees, “I can say they are really appreciative of the opportunities they had.” Taylor said the sabbatical was a way for the institution to show appreciation for the employees:

As I look at the current economic times and how tough things are, this is, having a sabbatical program is a means of saying to an employee we care about you, we care about the work that you do, we feel that it's very valuable to us as an institution. And this is a way for us to show our support as it relates to the work that they do.

Appreciation was also voiced as an outcome of the sabbatical experience in different ways. Lily, a sabbaticant, said that the experience allowed her to appreciate the Semester at Sea staff she worked with during the sabbatical:

After India, after the students were so struck by the poverty. Their richness, their personal wealth ... the way they can counsel with the students and bring faculty into that as well. Particularly, the night of the accident, we got him back on board, freakishly so, in the night ... and just really increased my appreciation (of the staff).

Conversely, Kim who also sailed with Semester at Sea as a staff member, said she received appreciation from other faculty on the ship:

At the end of the voyage I had several faculty approach me and say: “I just want to thank you. I really appreciate the work that you do. I had no idea that existed on a campus.” So, that was a good thing.

In another area of appreciation, Kim also said the experience taught her to be thankful for her life’s experiences among other things. She said, “I just became more appreciative of the family I grew up in, the home I grew up in, the friends that I have, the fact that I had the opportunity to have an education.”

Job sharing. Job sharing was also a consistent theme throughout the interviews for both sabbaticants and administrators. Mentioned as an individual and organizational
benefit, sabbaticals were seen as offering process-oriented benefits. When preparing for the sabbatical, the participants often divided tasks among the other employees in the office. Betty, as director of her office, said she divided work among the others in her office. Together they started “working on the summer and coming up in the fall mid-spring I asked people to start those programs, and then I took them back when I came back.”

Speaking of the extra work for staff, Betty continued:

Well, I don't know if they saw it as a benefit. But I think that they some got to do things that they normally wouldn't be doing. For instance, since we have an annual student leadership seminar that happens the first week of February. It is a very large one-day conference held on campus. It’s a committee that puts it together – a collaboration but it’s normally me who oversees the big picture. In July we start working on that so I asked my staff members to get that process going and actually she kept working with it for the whole year so I think that was a very good experience for her to see the behind the scenes and what goes into it.

Lily, also a high-level administrator, used the same procedure:

I met with my senior staff … I asked them what they would want to do. It was similar to when I got this vice presidency, acting vice presidency, and fortunately I had in mind the sorts of things that would need tending during the fall semester like liaison to the student life committee on the Board of Trustees and attendance at the Board of Trustees and it involves compiling reports, and it's one of these invisible things that's very time consuming. Budget was another. Hiring…student conduct … each of them chose something that they thought they would learn from and took that whole chunk and it wasn't onerous…

Kim, who was serving as an interim director, also divided the work among existing colleagues. Everyone in her department helped cover responsibilities in a level above their current one.

From an administrator’s perspective, Steve reported that job sharing was used to cover duties of the sabbaticants because replacement personnel could not fill the role of the director.

We haven’t replaced the individual, mainly due to the nature of what they do, by the time you educate someone and they get used to the duties and responsibilities, the person on leave would be back and the staff are competent enough that they could share the duties and responsibilities and normally the individuals include summer or they take a summer.
Emilio also noted that even when replacement staff were hired, there were still voids in the work accomplished:

But in my case in my office the support staff as well as my colleagues are very supportive and they were willing to make the adjustments that were needed to have someone else come in to replace me for a year and you know that's quite a bit of work for an office to do. Even if you bring in one body ... one warm body doesn't replace a warm body and it requires an awful lot of adjustments and also some realistic expectations about what it means that the office itself has to be on sabbatical to some extent, you know it cannot expect to continue to function in the exact same way while one person is out of the picture especially if it's a smaller staff like is the case for our office.

In addition to job sharing by colleagues left to cover for the sabbaticant, Lisa highlighted another form of job sharing during her sabbatical experience. During her time in Vietnam, she not only completed her own goals and objectives, but was also able to cover the roles of the international admissions recruiter while she was there:

I did a little bit of recruiting the first two weeks I was here, but I don't think I'll do very much more. These were students who are already in our system as inquiries and we just send an e-mail to everyone that said I would be here if they wanted to talk with me and learn more...

It cannot be ignored that the benefits of these job sharing experiences moved far beyond the sabbaticants. Donnie related, “So I think it helps some of the staff. My staff, it helped them grow, and for the organization, um, in many ways it prepared the organization to be stronger.” Lily, a private school sabbaticant, agreed. “My absence was a benefit. A professional development benefit for my colleagues. … [It] doesn't sound like a benefit but I tried to work it that way.”

*Cross training.* Cross training is the training of others to complete a job and is different from job sharing (the sharing of responsibilities, but not necessarily the training of a new skill). Cross training was seen as a process benefit for individuals and organizations. Lisa was the best example of cross training since her responsibilities were very specific to her position. To prepare for her leave from the private college, she had to train her colleagues on a very important immigration tracking software. She said that her colleagues often had the discussion about the compartmentalization of each other’s work:
There are things that I do that nobody else knows how to do and there's things that other people do that I don't know how to do … what if I got run over by a bus? Somebody else needs to know how to do this. And so by my going and by my leaving campus for three months, we had to set up some structures so that for instance … immigration regulations or advising students and keeping track of them with the SEVIS Protocol. I don't know if you're familiar with the Homeland Security tracking system for international students, but it's pretty important because if you mess up — you mess up somebody's life, so we [had] another person get trained so that she could be doing that work while I'm gone.

This benefit was not unexpected since Lisa also wrote about this benefit in her sabbatical proposal: “By sharing my responsibilities during my leave, other Diversity Center staff will expand their knowledge and abilities to serve international students [cross training]. This puts us in a better position to handle increased student numbers and inevitable changes down the road.” Christine, from the same institution, also noted the benefit of cross training. “There was definitely cross-training she had to teach the whole SEVIS process for keeping track of international students. … she had to spend quite a bit of time getting ready, which I think is fair.” Cross training was also referred to by Donnie, a sabbaticant at a public institution. He indicated that cross training trained the personnel not only for his coverage, but also for the jobs they assumed after he left his current position. “When I left permanently, some of them were able to step in and do things that I had done for quite some time.” He also noted that the cross-training for the sabbatical coverage also morphed into a promotion and job training when the employee left. He said, “I don’t think they would've had that opportunity because they were able to gain some additional skill sets because I was gone.”

**Rewards.** As cited by both sabbaticants and administrators, sabbaticals were seen as a reward by participants at two institutions. Yet, both administrators and sabbaticants seemed unsettled about how a sabbatical was articulated as a reward. Betty, a sabbaticant, said, “It's such an important benefit, and I don't know, a perk to receive it. I mean, I feel like I earned it and I wouldn’t have been granted it if I didn't have, you know, a good work record and the like.” The administrator at the same institution commented, “There's got to be a better term, but it's not really a vacation but I think you know what I mean
with the personal time away from the office.” He also said, “I use the term, have they earned it? It should be earned because it is a privilege, it is a benefit, and it is a reward for a job well done.” Likewise, in the sabbaticant’s proposal for leave, she noted the word “justification” and provided a lengthy list of accomplishments and awards that could be viewed as showing past merit as justification for the sabbatical experience. Christine, another administrator, noted that one of the sabbaticants probably was not rewarded enough for her daily work. She said the sabbaticant “probably doesn't get the recognition that she deserves and so to be able to have a 3-month leave is a pretty cool thing.” Even as the sabbatical has components that are considered as a reward; one of the institutions honored staff with an excellence award that rewards participants for good work and honors them with a paid leave opportunity. In addition to rewarding the staff, the institutions often published the sabbatical in publications. Emilio noted his sabbatical was published in an internal publication. Administrators and sabbaticants saw rewards benefiting individuals as a process and product benefit.

**Morale.** Both sabbaticants and administrators agreed that the sabbatical experience and process was a morale contributor for individuals and organizations. Although it may seem strange, Christine saw the extra work that the colleagues received as a contribution to their own leave opportunity. She said, “I think they're willing to do it because they know perhaps at some point they'll have an opportunity to do this as well.” Lily, a sabbaticant and a sabbatical policy creator, said, “This policy was written in a way that would not be a financial burden to the college as much as possible – [it] would be a staffing burden.” She noted that getting everyone on board was not a problem “if everybody saw they had a chance to do it in due time and we have a lot of longevity of staff or to prepare themselves for other roles within the college ... that seemed to work.” Sabbaticant Donnie reported the leave helped cushion the lack of salary increases:

In my opinion, it helped for all the staff that benefited – it's a morale issue. …for those years where staff weren’t receiving salary increases and a number of other
things, the fact that you could have a way to work on either completing some degree... It was good because it was a good morale booster for the staff.

**Time away and flexibility.** Time away and flexibility resounded in every participant interview as an individual and organizational process benefit. Administrators viewed time off as important for several different reasons. Steve perceived the time away as important for the completion of projects. For example, Steve commented that the sabbatical was helpful in allocating time for his staff member to finish a degree. He said, “She had just been down to the wire I think for maybe a year or longer, and just couldn't get it done and worked full time with family and she just had to take the time away from the university.” Equally, Taylor said, “The job can be so demanding that in order for them to do this, they definitely will have to take time off.” He also noted:

Maybe there are things I wish I had time to do (like) … research … studies … related to the job… So sabbatical(s) definitely gives you the added time that you would otherwise not have of doing your day-to-day responsibilities.

Time away was also used to provide a period of time without distractions. Christine indicated that the time away helped to achieve final projects without the day-to-day hassle. She remarked that time away gives you time away “from all the day-to-day stuff that you get to deal with, and I don’t know how else put it.” She also said:

You know, it's great to go to conferences, but you know, sometimes it's such a hassle getting ready to go, and coming back to piles of e-mails and work, that this gets you out of the whole milieu that you're used to being in and you really have a chance to concentrate on whatever it is that you're doing.

For sabbaticants, Betty reported, “It's really the time to stay deeply ingrained in something … so that was very beneficial.” Lily, a sabbaticant, also noted that time away was important. “There's something inherent about a long time of being abroad, I could have gone for just a month to Italy or something like that. It was really important to me, personally.” She also noted, “I believe [it’s a] flexible program with multiple links of time and ways to work it out.” Highlighted by both sabbaticants Betty and Emilio, flexibility was important for providing the kind of work environment that allowed them to be successful. Betty said, “I think it's really the flexibility to do things on my schedule
is have a regular work schedule” while Emilio noted that the experience not only allowed him more flexibility but also showed him what kinds of roles he could play in the institution afterward. He explained,

Institutions may be quite anxious … that somebody goes off and they may go off and may be offered another job and that's the element of what happens in a sabbatical, but by and large for me, it's been an affirmation of the kind of institution that I work for, and the renewal and commitment to that vocation and this place, but and also it has opened up my eyes about saying okay, what are the kinds of roles I can play within the institution and to be more flexible about that about what this could be.

Betty concurred: “So it is just the freedom and flexibility to spend long, long hours just doing the research that I needed to do.” And Christine, an administrator said although one of her staff members was in the office most days, he “didn't have to be accountable to anyone else for the rest of his work. … It was just easier for him to do his projects from here so it’s kind of funny.” Similarly, Donnie reported that his sabbatical experience was very helpful in providing structured time to complete his degree:

One thing the sabbatical taught me was that even if we all have free time, you still have to structure yourself … when I was at the end and finishing my degree, I sort of structured my own mini sabbatical days. … When I was back into working full time so I really got the value of when you're away from your work, you can get a lot accomplished, so I was able to work those into my schedule for the, you know, when I was getting near the end. … I got a lot done when I didn't have to juggle everything in the office.

As a result, Donnie currently incorporated “time away” even after completing his sabbatical. “I find myself blocking time off on my calendar where you don't handle any appointments … that might be reading articles or it might be working on a particular project and just say this whole day is devoted to that particular item.”

Time away was also reported in the interviews to provide an emotional break from the sabbaticants’ work. The best example is Emilio, who in addition to his clergy position, was a central support figure in a large immigration raid near the campus. He shared his story about the need for a rest after experiencing “some weariness:”

…especially after this immigration raid and aftermath of it. I was pretty drained. … I was basically doing two full-time jobs for part of the last three years … [I]
became the go to person for a lot of institutions, and a lot of community needs and individuals, and so being away for a year and not accessible was an important reset button for me and to reenter and give an opportunity for other people in the community to step up … [I'm] not saying that I was the only one doing this thing by any stretch of the imagination, the community responded very fully. But my particular role needed to shift, and I knew it wasn't sustainable, and so part of my motivation was being able to have a good excuse [to leave] … I wasn't saying no to a lot is because I'm committed to it. I needed a break. Physically, I needed some refocusing and again the opportunity to really think and learn about something that I'm passionate about.

Similarly, Kim related that the sabbatical was an important break in her daily work and something that could translate to others. “I think that it's important that people be able to step out of their day to day routine and shake things up so they can learn more about who they are … and come back and be a better professional.” Christine also noted the change of daily routine was important. Sabbaticals give “people who work really hard a chance away from here and to do something totally different.”

Loyalty and retention. Loyalty and retention is another area that both sabbaticants and administrators saw as institutional process and product benefits and for individuals and organizations. On the most basic level, sabbaticants and administrators alike viewed the mandate of returning to the institution after the sabbatical as a tangible retention tool. Taylor, a public institution administrator, commented, “One of the things that we also require is after an employee has been on sabbatical that they at least remain at [institution] for at least 1 year.” Emilio, a sabbaticant at a private school, also mentioned the benefit of returning to the institution. “There's a commitment to return to the institution where … you got to be around for at least a year or two, depending on how long you've been gone.” Christine, an administrator, said that she discusses the leave with future employees. She said, “Over time that has to affect our ability to attract really good people, in effect, we are able to attract really good people and they stay.” She noted that retention was successful.

The sabbaticants indicated that many people returned to their posts. Of these interviewees, all but one was still at the institution that granted the sabbatical. Furthermore, each of the participants noted that there were others who stayed at the
institution. Lily remarked that the only other sabbaticant was the Dean of Admissions or Financial Aid who “gladly” went back to the same position. Christine also commented that of the 10 or so sabbaticants from her small liberal arts institution, they had lost only one staff: “Everybody else is still here, and, I don't know that I can measure...I can’t measure the benefits to that.”

Donnie remarked that he was aware of five sabbaticals in his department and only one of the sabbaticants was still at the institution. He said that the sabbaticants left to find upper level positions that were not available at the current institution. “It really depended on the individual and the circumstances …but some folks left usually a semester after, but they came back and worked a semester and then left may be that summer or fall.” He noted that some staff had trouble understanding the sabbatical experience and assumed the sabbatical was a ticket out of the institution. He said that he really worked with them to understand “just because I'm gone sabbatical doesn't mean I'm going to …bolt jobs.” It was important for him to make a personal commitment to his supervisor. The idea of staff leaving is certainly not ignored by sabbaticants. Emilio also noted that employees might leave the institution after fulfilling the return requirement. However, he also acknowledged the retention that can come from understanding how to fulfill new roles within the institution:

Institutions may be quite anxious about that, somebody goes off and they may go off and may be offered another job and that's the element of what happens in a sabbatical, but by and large for me, it's been an affirmation of the kind of institution that I work for, and the renewal and commitment to that vocation and this place, also it has opened up my eyes about saying okay, what are the kinds of roles I can play within the institution and to be more flexible about that about what this could be.

Christine also noted the retention of staff who were covering the duties of the sabbaticant as a benefit:

We asked one of the hall directors who had a master's degree and who was, you know, very bright and capable, if she would take on in the director role half-time, while she did her other residence life job and it provided her enough experience so that she stayed another couple years.
Several sabbaticants and an administrator noted institutional loyalty as one of the benefits of a sabbatical. Betty, a public institution remarked, “I think very highly of this institution, and I feel like I've been supported.” Betty also noted the sabbatical was an extension of loyalty. “I’ve been here for 27 years… we don't always get the financial compensation that that you might want to get, so I think that something like this has as much value to it as the financial compensation that we get.” Likewise, Donnie noted his own institutional loyalty after the sabbatical. He stated that after receiving all three degrees (bachelors, masters and doctorate) from his institution and working for many years he was very loyal to staying at the institution and finishing his degree.

I felt a lot more loyalty to the institution and felt like I was given this opportunity, I need to make sure that I give back to the institution with my time, but, I also felt that I wasn't going to leave [if I did leave] until the dissertation was done. Finally, Donnie’s administrator, Taylor, said that he saw a “commitment to the institution” from the sabbatical experience. For Taylor, he saw loyalty was also echoed by the participants.

*Uniqueness.* Recognition through the uniqueness of the policy was another process benefit for individuals and organizations. In addition to recruiting, the presence of sabbatical program created a unique benefit on behalf of the institution. Christine, an administrator, said, “We’re all proud to work in an institution that does this kind of thing, cause we know it's fairly rare – I think it is anyway.” Likewise Betty wanted to know if the researcher was “finding it (sabbaticals) common or uncommon,” indicating that she thought the concept could be viewed as uncommon. Donnie reported that he did not know that the staff leave option was unique until he went to another institution:

So when I worked at other institutions an administrative sabbatical was a foreign concept to a lot of other folks and at least in the institutions I'd worked or had been working in, so it certainly has a different view in terms of what – how I view (former institution name) University and what they – how supportive they are of their staff in that respect.

Overall, institutional support benefited individuals and organizations as a result of the sabbatical process in addition to the sabbatical products in the case of loyalty and
retention and rewards. Most benefits in this category were noted as process benefits which offered little tangible results but enormous amount of intangible honors.

**Personal Benefits**

Personal benefits were also articulated in the interviews. Included in personal benefits were personal growth and motivation as echoed in the literature review of sabbaticals. However, there were other benefits that were newly categorized into the personal category during the interviews. These included challenge, family and relationships and challenge.

**Family/Relationships.** Family or relationship connections was one of the most frequently mentioned benefits during the interviews. Five of the six sabbaticants mentioned this as a benefit while only one administrator of three mentioned the benefit directly. Benefits in this area were seen as an indirect benefit for the individual. In other words, they saw the process of taking a sabbatical as beneficial to their family or relationships. Kim and Lily saw the experience as creating lifelong friendships and Donnie, Emilio and Lily noted that the sabbatical allowed for special interactions with family members. Emilio and Donnie enjoyed more “at home” time with their young children while Lily and Emilio choose to travel internationally with their children during the sabbatical as well. Betty and Emilio used the time to visit distant relatives. Of the experiences listed, many mentioned the opportunity to share their sabbatical experience with family or friends as a important benefit. When talking about family benefits, participants struggled with how to talk about this benefit. Emilio offered a response echoed by other participants.

A huge highlight of the sabbatical that can’t put into the proposal - “I'm gonna have a great time with my kids.” It was awesome ... in terms of family time ... It gave us a lot of intense time together and just a lot of fun and we were much more involved in watching our kids learn in different ways outside of the classroom. … Lots of great fun!

**Challenge.** An interesting addition to benefits in this area was the inclusion of a need for challenge among sabbaticants. Three women at three different institutions noted
a need for challenge in their lives and work. Kim noted that the experience sailing with Semester at Sea challenged her to feel like a first-year student again. “Not knowing exactly the environment that I was working in it was exciting, it was a little scary… It was … coming in brand new and not knowing anyone, like starting as a freshman again.”

Similarly, Lisa also noted a need for personal challenge in her life. She wanted to challenge herself to understand the unfamiliar feeling of living in a different country. She said she needed to “take more risks” since she didn’t have a chance to study abroad in college. “I guess I have some inner resources that pushed me to want to … challenge myself at the ripe old age of 56.”

**Psychological Benefits**

Psychological benefits such as health, and renewal, reflection, respected and rest were all highlighted in the sabbatical literature. There was very little difference between the sabbatical literature benefits and the benefits articulated by the sabbatical participants. Additionally, the psychological benefits gained from the sabbatical were a result of the sabbatical process primarily for individuals but for organizations as well. For example, the process of being away from routine work and daily stress offered time away to concentrate on the benefits listed below. None of the benefits listed below were listed in official proposals, but were heavily described as beneficial outcomes of the sabbatical process.

*Health.* Health benefits were articulated by several administrators and sabbaticants. Christine, an administrator at a private institution, noted that intense jobs and dedication can be taxing on employees: “There’s also people who have given heart and soul to the institution for the most part, but you know they've had demanding work, they've been here sometimes, you know, 12 to 15 years, you know, they've had intense, intense jobs and so a semester away is very renewing.” In another area, Christine reiterated, “She's done a lot of different things, she's a good example of somebody who
has done a really good work…(in) pretty intense areas.” Betty also agreed that she was
tired in her position, “…really I was worn out, and I needed a break.”

Renewal, rejuvenation, recharge, re-energize, refresh and rest. Administrator

Taylor noted that sabbatical experience “added a sense of energy” to sabbaticants, and
Christine saw her staff as “really renewed.” Steve reported that he could see the renewal:
“Just physically, I could tell, she was rejuvenated. She has worked here over 30 years, I
believe, and you get your maybe 1- to 2-week vacation every summer, but getting this
kind of time off and just to rejuvenate and get some rest.”

Sabbaticants also noted renewed energy in their positions. Lisa said that the
experience gave her “new energy.” Kim also remarked that the sabbatical experience
gave her renewed energy so that “it did give me that push to stay in the field for a while.”

Emilio reported that the offices also benefited from this experience:

Certainly the offices that are part of the sabbatical experience, I think benefit from
the new vision and energy that comes from the experience of sabbatical. I know
within our office that's definitely been the case. Not only because of the work that
the person on sabbatical does and comes back with some renewed vision and
energy, but then also because the person who comes as a replacement often times
also brings something new perspectives to the office.

When reflecting on her previous leave experience (i.e., before the official sabbatical),
Lily said that leave experience inspired her. “I think I saw it as a real – a kind of
investment in my own development. The summer at Harvard was like adrenaline in a
positive note, without … I felt very alive and challenged and had no responsibilities.” In
Lily’s follow-up contact she wrote that the best unexpected contribution was “a renewed
enthusiasm in me.”

It is also important to report the leave as an important recharging experience.

Betty, a sabbaticant at a public institution noted:

I have had a particularly challenging year in 2009. I had a staff member who was
away on military leave for six months and another staff member who was on
maternity leave for six months…we’re a small office and we have a very large
student population. So, I was definitely feeling worn out to say the least … we
just had to divide the work and everybody was kind to work extra to get it done.
So I was really in need of a just a break, I think, to regroup.
Finally, Emilio also noted that his family was able to accompany him during his sabbatical. He noted his renewal experience incorporated time with his family. “There was (a) significant component of just family time … and so we were pretty intentional about building that into each of the places … rest and you know renewal piece of it was very much a part of it.”

*Reflect and refocus.* In addition to renewal, reflection and refocusing were mentioned as important benefits of the sabbatical experience. Reported as personal, professional, and organizational benefits, the idea of spending time thinking about your work instead of doing your work seemed to have value. Betty noted that the need for her to rethink was connected to her Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator. She explained:

> I needed to have the time to think, because the programs that we run are nights and weekends and I was working every weekend many, many nights just way too many hours doing what I do. So it was a chance again to recharge my batteries, but to do it for professional reasons. … I'm an INFP so, I live in a very ESTJ world … because reflecting is what I need to do so when things are too hectic and fast pace at work that uses up all of my energy and so this was really time … to read and think about things and develop plans. So, the thinking part was very important.

The idea of providing time to think was integral in the feedback of Emilio, a sabbaticant at a rural liberal arts institution in the Midwest. He explained that the mission of the institution and the foundational elements of the sabbatical policy were similar:

*(Institution name) has a commitment to the integrated learning that is very much rooted in the liberal arts education. Division of the college is lived out by its location … so you get away to think. This is a community where the college is intentionally placed here and you don't you know ... you don't sort of happen upon (institution name), unless you're intentionally going there. But it's intended that way to be a … to create a kind of community that focuses itself on learning not away from the world necessarily. … where you can create a specific type of community. … So for me I think it’s significant in that the college had the opportunity to pursue their own preparation and education … to live out that commitment to lifelong learning that the college has at the core of its mission*

*Respect/Self-confidence.* Two administrators acknowledged an increase in the self-respect and self-confidence of sabbaticants. Christine said, “They feel like the college has invested in them and they’re right, the college has invested in them and that's
pretty cool.” Steve, another administrator also acknowledged the sense of accomplishment:

The personal benefits of emotionally, just feeling good about something and the institution is supporting you to go out there and to say “I respect you enough as a professional” and trust you that you're getting go out and because you have to come back and issue a report or maybe follow up with some project or whatever.

*Validation.* Over half of the participants mentioned the importance that the sabbatical had in expressing value for their job and to the institution. Betty related that the experience was a validating one. She said, “And so, I know I love my work. I think that this has helped me enjoy it even more.” Similarly, Donnie also felt validation in his work environment: “I learned that I like to work. I was just doing a different kind of work (than) I was used to. For me personally, I like to get work, I like to be an office environment.” Emilio found validation in his position. He said the experience “certainly made us aware of the fact that there's more to life. Then, you know, then the work that we do then. The work that we do is meaningful and rewarding.”

Both Lily as a sabbaticant and Taylor an administrator saw that sabbaticals can be a validating experience for sabbaticants and the institution. Lily remarked, “It's a way to encourage people's sense of that word ‘educational institution’ and we support people's lifelong learning.” Similarly, Taylor noted that the sabbatical process is a validating experience:

I think everyone wants to feel like they're supported and what they do is valued …this is a means for the University to say ‘yes the work that you do is valued’ and so it's more than just the work itself, it is the process of getting there that becomes just as important.

*Benefits Summary*

Benefits in this study were revealed both in direct words and in the description of actions. Benefits were widely distributed in each of Iravania’s (2011) five thematic benefit categories: Professionalism, Personal, Psychological, Capacity Building, and Institutional Support. In each of the categories, benefits were explained and supported with evidence from the participants’ interviews and documents. No benefits were
reported by only one supporting individual, which helped to validate themes among multiple participants. Benefits identified in this study supported both the individual and the organization. Additionally, benefits were articulated both as tangible sabbatical products and as intangible or benefits as a result of the sabbatical process. Overall most product-oriented benefits were evident in the professionalism category while process benefits were abundantly found in the remaining categories (institutional support, capacity building, psychological, and personal). Further analysis of this and other comparisons is available in Chapter 6. Now that the benefits of the sabbatical experience have been presented broadly, it is appropriate to examine how the benefits are actualized at particular institutions.
CHAPTER 6
INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDY ANALYSIS
AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Introduction

The next area of analysis is the individual case study analysis. This section answers the following question: How do these individual and organizational benefits compare to the sabbatical policy? Now that the general analysis of the policy and benefits has been presented in Chapters 4 and 5, each case is explored to reveal any within-case differences or similarities. The three institutional case studies (one private and two public) are comprised of at least one sabbaticant and one administrator, subsequent follow-up contacts, and a formal sabbatical policy. Some cases include a sabbatical proposal, and in one case, a sabbatical final report. Each of the cases presents a contextual picture of the policy and how the workplace and workplace factors contributed to the sabbatical experience or benefits. Institutional names have been changed to pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

Prairie Home College

Prairie Home College is the pseudonym for a private 4-year residential, liberal arts college located in the upper Midwest. A coeducational institution, the residential college mission affirms the “liberating power of faith and learning, embracing diversity and strive toward the meeting the needs for a common good.” Affiliated with the Holy Church (a pseudonym for the Christian Church), the institution is committed to learning that moves people beyond their own interests to meet the needs for global society in a larger world.

The small college town offers limited opportunities for college employees, yet it is home to many. Full of culture and arts, the small town offers a quiet safe environment for students and employees. The largest nearby city is approximately 1.5 hours away. The institution describes itself as a secluded campus that allows students to think about
engaging in a global world. The college has recruited students from 37 states and 50 countries. Financial aid is presented to 98% of students and tuition hovers slightly below $41,000 per year.

Student affairs staff at Prairie Home College are hard-working professionals who see themselves as loyal to the institution. With a small college, there are limited higher education administration; the staff are required to wear many hats. Students herald the institution for its customer-service philosophy and dedication to the student experience both inside and outside of the classroom. One major co-curricular program, campus ministries, provides daily homilies for students. Additionally, by the time a student graduates, 75% of students will have studied abroad.

Prairie Home College’s sabbatical policy has been in existence for about 10 years but was recently updated to tighten the language and outcomes. The written purpose of the policy is to “provide an opportunity for study, research, and creative activities that foster professional growth and revitalization, thereby enhancing [the College].” Furthermore, the policy indicates the leave should be directly related to the job of the sabbaticant. Interestingly, the sabbatical administrator was also the initiator of the sabbatical policy. She said she supported individual staff to complete their degrees in the beginning, but it was a staff member who needed time away to complete the degree that prompted the leave policy. She noted that she presented the leave policy to the president’s cabinet (of which she is also a member) and it was supported by the group. The administrator was familiar with sabbaticals because she was granted one to finish her dissertation at a previous institution. She said, “This is kind of a negative way of looking at, but it kind of gripes me when the list of faculty members come out every year who are going on sabbatical, and it's a given for faculty, and so this is gives our administrators a chance to do the same thing if they want to.” Lisa, one of the sabbaticants, is under her indirect supervision and said she is thankful for her leadership regarding sabbaticals:
(sabbaticant administrator) is a very important resource, and she's actually retiring … so I was lucky that I applied when I did… but she's she is so supportive of her staff and understands the value of this kind of thing… at least three of them come out of the student life department and you know, that's her department – she just really, really stands up for her staff and sees the value in, in what they need to do to flourish there.

The sabbatical administrator reported that the support for the program is not something that is typical on campus: “There haven't been any leaves from the Development Office or from the Admissions area or from the Finance area…. So I don't know what that says, but I believe in it, so maybe that's part of it.”

Beyond a supportive supervisor, it appears there is a culture of flexibility and collaboration when it comes to various leaves. It seems that for the private schools involved in this study, the need for flexibility was vital to problem solving staff issues with little funding. Because private schools tend to be smaller and offer more generalist positions, a staff member being gone presents a greater staffing burden. The administrator, Christine commented:

I think a person really can't be gone for a whole semester without their immediate work colleagues supporting it because there's just too much that other people have to pick up and I think they're willing to do it because they know perhaps at some point that they'll have an opportunity to do this as well. So, we have people who pretty regularly kind of pick up pieces for other people, maternity leaves or family leave, or whatever, so this is just kind of little bit different form of that.

Support not only from the supervisor but also from other colleagues was a part of making this policy function at Prairie Home College. Interestingly, a small budget was available for the program. The administrator said that they had been able to fund replacement staff to fulfill necessary job functions. She noted that when the Director of Counseling took her sabbatical, she used money to help fund a part-time counselor for clinic hours while the rest of the administrative duties were divided among colleagues. She noted that there is a budget of about $20,000 that helps fund the leave, but also noted that the budget is not always available or always used. Christine said that approximately one sabbatical is granted each year. Additionally, Emilio noted that the college actually saved money since his sabbatical was a full year that required only half pay. This allowed
the institution to redirect his pay to cover the costs of a new employee. He noted that the college only had to pay about $10,000 beyond his salary to cover the costs of his replacement for the entire year.

Structure and use of the sabbatical policy. The application materials are very structured and not only detail the application process but also provide a list of items that should be included in the sabbatical application. Of these, the following questions are asked:

1. Outline how the leave will make you more effective in your position and how it fits into your long-term plan for professional growth.
2. Describe how (the College) will benefit from your leave.

Benefits of the sabbatical. The three participants interviewed from this institution included one sabbatical administrator and two sabbaticants (one was in the middle of the experience), and two sabbatical proposals and one final report were reviewed.

There were some differences in the kind of benefits that were available for this institution. With a mission toward integrating and preparing students for a global world and a 75% study-abroad rate, it is not surprising that internationalization was a hot topic on campus. Furthermore, to contribute toward the global citizenship of student learning, the institution had specific goals to implement in the next few years. Given this focus, it is also important to note that both sabbaticants had significant international experiences as part of their sabbatical, and one proposal noted that having an international experience was the primary purpose of the sabbatical. The international experiences for Lisa were to gain an understanding of the international student experience by placing herself in Vietnam for 3 months while learning the language and tutoring students who were preparing for studies in the United States (and in some cases, even at Prairie Home College).

Likewise, Emilio was planning two international trips that had both personal and professional purposes according to his proposal and interview. He noted that spending
time in Israel would help with his spiritual journey as a pastor whereas time in Guatemala would help him reconnect to his home country. In both cases, he had family connections. His wife, a professor at the same college and had a sabbatical at the same time, traveled with him, conducting her research simultaneously. Additionally, he said that he wanted to expose his children to these different cultures but had hesitations about how to incorporate these family goals into the proposal. He explained how he thought about the proposal and also how the integration of his own passion for global travel was transferred to his family.

… our kids are getting to the age where sports are becoming a little bit more of a big deal for a lot of their friends. We are not crazy sports people, we’re just not we’re not going to have our kid in the traveling soccer team. But that's been one of the places where he's had some pressure from friends because he's very good at soccer so his friends ... shortly after the sabbatical he said to one of his friends who kept teasing him about not being on this traveling team... “Well, my family and I, we're, world travelers...I can't be around for a lot of the practices...” So this is my ten-year old saying, we are world travelers. It's a huge! …that was a huge for us to be able to for our kids to experience an extended period of time in the things that mattered deeply to us…

Benefits in all of the five main areas were articulated by the administrators and the sabbaticants. However, an interesting addition was the acknowledgement of publications. The campus pastor at this institution planned to publish Bible studies and other works as part of the purpose of his sabbatical. Therefore his discussion of publications were evident (even though publications were not mentioned specifically by other participants directly). Emilio said:

Even though I didn't have a specific proposal per se, I indicated that I would be working on specific biblical studies and trying to create a resource that could be distributed as a Bible study … three different publications have come out of that so far … I still have more that I’m working on…

Emilio’s published works (both in print and online) were consistent with his sabbatical proposal to develop Bible study resources while away. His publications were also acknowledged by one of the sabbatical administrators at his institution, confirming that the administrator at this institution was aware of the continued publishing efforts and notoriety the institution gained because of the sabbatical experience.
Outreach. Lisa also talked about outreach in her sabbatical proposal. She saw integrating her sabbatical in Vietnam with international admissions recruiting as a way to help the institution while also saving money and resources. Furthermore, she benefited by learning about the mindset of students preparing to study in the United States, particularly at Prairie Home College. These activities were noted in her proposal but were also mentioned as completed items in her interview. Lisa was able to link her sabbatical experience with the institution’s goals. In her proposal, she wrote that her goal was to achieve “this growth and the need to maintain (institution name)’s presence in the country is noted in the report 2009-2012 International Recruiting Context and Strategies.”

Recruitment. Christine, an administrator at a private school, indicated that the sabbatical experience is important to emphasize when recruiting new staff:

…here's the best benefit: and this is an extended benefit that I’m not sure everyone thinks about, but I do. Every time we hire someone and I’m sitting in an interview and they may ask about support for professional development I talk about the travel budget and the opportunities for professional development, and the leave process and the fact that after six years, they can apply for a leave if they want to and, over time that has to affect our ability to attract really good people, in effect, we are able to attract really good people and they stay!

Overall, Prairie Home College exhibited benefits in all five major areas. Furthermore, sabbaticants from the institution are fulfilling the institution’s sabbatical policy purpose of participating in activities that “foster professional growth and revitalization.” Emilio shared his reflections on how the sabbatical experience has contributed to his daily work, and Lisa, while still on her sabbatical, had some tangible ideas about presenting her experience to the college through the homilies offered to the community. Both sabbaticants noted their continued learning and that a break from the daily routine was much needed. It appears that while the sabbaticants were meeting the purpose of the policy, the overall benefits far exceeded the provisions of the policy.

Keillor State University

Keillor State University is a large public land-grant doctoral/research institution that serves the needs of aspiring undergraduate and graduate students. Located in the
third largest city in a southeastern state, the university community is well-connected with the city. Offering over 2,000 degree programs, Keillor State University serves over 40,000 students. Students are enrolled from 50 U.S. states and over 130 countries. In-state students attending the main campus (there are several campuses) pay just under $5000 a year, while out of state students pay about $700 more. Over 280 million dollars in financial aid are allocated to the entire student body (which also includes graduate students).

President Garrison is proud to offer a well-known, top-level preparation program for higher education administrators, and the school is a training ground for new professionals as evidenced by the large master’s and doctoral programs in higher education and student affairs. Moreover, his institution provides tuition remission for all employees to take classes to obtain a college degree.

Although not specifically stated in the policy, the bargaining agreement at the institution allows a professional development leave policy. For staff, there are at least two leave policies, one for staff under the bargaining unit and one for student affairs staff. (Only student affairs staff are allowed to benefit from the student affairs leave and are not allowed to apply for the other leave policy.) The sabbatical policy for the division of student affairs states that the leave is to “enhance an employee’s value to the University through opportunities for professional renewal, planned travel, independent study, formal education, research, writing, or other experiences of professional value, not as a reward for service.” The administrator of the sabbatical program for student affairs staff noted specific details about how the program functioned and preference given to employees completing a degree. Taylor, the administrator said:

Preference is given to someone who is completing of their formal education at any level. And, at least during the time that I’ve been here we've had a number of staff members who have applied and have sought to complete their doctoral degree. … they were at the end stages of writing a dissertation … in situations like that you definitely want to be able to give them that time … one of the benefits of being at [institution name] is that the university pays part of the education … [staff] work really hard, and I think we’re really student focused on
our campus. So in order to produce a quality product, or whatever, I think it's really essential that the employee have the time off. Finishing a PhD is a legitimate reason to take a semester off and the product is probably that you get another staff member with the doctorate.

The focus on allowing employees time to complete a degree seemed to be paramount at this institution. In fact, the sabbaticant, Donnie, was able to complete his doctoral dissertation using the sabbatical program. Although he did not submit his sabbatical proposal for this study, the main goal of the sabbatical was to complete his prospectus and official dissertation proposal (with approval from the committee) so he would be able to collect the data once he returned to work.

Furthermore, because his dissertation research concentrated on students’ understanding of a college policy, he was able to incorporate his dissertation research into his work after his return. Additionally, he noted five other sabbaticants from his office used the sabbatical to complete their doctoral dissertations. Only one of the five sabbaticants was still at the institution (and had recently moved into the director role at the institution). The idea of leaving the institution was also echoed by Donnie’s co-workers. Donnie recalled them saying, “For some of the folks they saw it as ‘oh, he’s getting a sabbatical as soon as he gets back he is going to move on – immediately.’”

Taylor also noted that the sabbatical can be used to mentor a person out of a job. He noted time away can be good to help the staff complete their dissertations so they can move on to their next roles. He said he uses one-on-one meetings to talk about the career goals of the sabbaticant. He asks, “‘where you wanted be in the next 5 to 10 years?’ and ‘what you need to do in order to get there?”’ Importantly he noted, “I don't want to lose a valuable employee, but I think there comes a time when ... they've done everything that they can do in that position, and it's time for them to move on or move up ...” It appears that with a focus on degree completion, the institution may be willingly or unwillingly encouraging employee turnover. Additionally, the researcher was not able to identify how the benefit of a doctorate degree was communicated to the university community. For example, for faculty, the number of faculty with a terminal degree is an important
statistic. However the number of staff with a terminal degree was not published at this institution. With a focus on degree completion and noting a higher turnover after degree completion, it may behoove the institution to diversify the reasons that it allows sabbaticals to balance out the amount of personnel that graduate and then directly leave the institution. In all the cases reviewed in this study, this was the only case with a primary focus on degree completion, and the only institution with high turnover after the sabbatical experience.

The institution does however benefit from the specific research studies on their students. Taylor said “I think it's a benefit to us as an institution to gain added information on added knowledge so that we can progress as it relates to the services that we provide students overall.” Donnie reported that he used his dissertation to help guide a university-wide committee tasked with establishing a policy for illegal gaming:

I thought if I’m going to spend some time crafting policy, we are going to need to find out why students – how we can best tackle this problem … and it was an interest of mine to begin with, why don’t I see if I can incorporate this into my research study in terms of how aware are students…to measure their level of awareness … In fact that's one of the ways I was able to push out my data very quickly because I was able to feed back some of that information to that committee that was drafting the university-wide policy.

The themes involved in Keillor State University included using the sabbatical primarily to assist employees in degree completion. Although the benefit of this focus was on helping employees finish their degrees, there is reason to believe that allowing staff only to complete their degrees may hinder the development and increase the turnover in the office. Furthermore, once employees have their degrees, there appear to be few opportunities for them to continue their life-long learning through a leave opportunity. As with the other individual case studies, the benefits articulated in all five categories far outweighed the stated policy benefits.

University of Dupont

The University of Dupont is a large institution in the largest city in the state. University of Dupont is a multi-campus public research university that strives to serve the
diverse students and the people of the southern part of the state. The institution is committed to teaching, research, and collaboration with local and global communities. The institution is extremely diverse; 61% of student are Hispanic qualifying it as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, while 15% are white, non-Hispanic and 13% are black. In-state tuition is about $5000 per academic year. Several award programs allow for merit-based financial aid awards based on high-school performance. Federal financial aid is eligible to US citizens or eligible non-citizens.

The Professional Development Leave Policy, as it is called, is available to increase an employee’s value to the institution through professional expertise. Specifically the policy notes that the opportunities should include a number of different options including professional renewal, educational travel, study, field observations, research, writing, professional development, or a higher education degree.

Recently the University of Dupont has been conducting a number of university-wide assessments for institutional accreditation and improvement. As part of the overall plan, the university’s accreditation team recommended important steps toward increasing globalization at the college. Based on the institution’s status as serving primarily Hispanic students, the enrichment plan called for a streamlined globalization effort.

At the student affairs level, it appeared that no one was in charge of or able to direct this new project that would work to infuse globalization into the department. Betty saw this need used it as the basis of her sabbatical proposal. Therefore, she proposed the following question to frame her proposal, “From global learning to global citizenship: What type of leadership training, development and education best prepares college students to apply what they are learning to create change in the world?” She noted the following tangible outcomes to answer this question:

- Develop a model to guide the infusion of global learning for global citizenship into the programs
- Reorganize the curriculum (class) to include a global emphasis
• Develop new aspects of the living/learning community to include global learning and global citizenship

• Develop global citizenship resources for the division

Upon return, Betty noted that she not only designed the global leadership curriculum as the proposal indicated, but she prepared training courses for the professional staff to learn about the new dimensions of global leadership. Meeting her goals was a success in meeting the objectives of the sabbatical.

The sabbaticant and the administrator at the institution both noted that the experience was a reward for work well done and for her outstanding efforts. In fact, the single largest part of Betty’s sabbatical proposal was entitled “Justification” and named ten large-scale professional awards that she had already received. Likewise, in her interview, Betty commented that she had “earned” her sabbatical; this same language was used by Steve, the sabbatical administrator, when he noted that she deserved the experience. It was clear from the document review and the interviews that an important reason for the experience was the reward. Using sabbaticals as a reward was not stated as a purpose but it was not prohibited.

Publicity was strongly emphasized at this institution, noting that presenting information on the sabbatical project was helpful to the institution. Betty, the sabbaticant, emphasized the various presentations at both state and national conferences. She noted her work “was all on the work that I had done during my sabbatical, so I think indirectly that also brings some visibility to our institution and to our division.”

Beyond the benefit of using the sabbatical as a reward for work accomplished, trust between the sabbaticant and the administrator was an important contributor. Steve cited dedication over a period of time allowed him to trust Betty. He related that she was an effective contributor and often worked overtime to get the work done. Furthermore he reported that she had garnered the respect of her colleagues and had a good reputation at
Betty also noted that her strong work ethic and dedication helped secure the trust of her supervisor.

The University of Dupont’s sabbatical purpose is to provide renewal, travel, study, field observations, research, writing professional development, or a degree. It appears that the institution seems to be fulfilling this policy purpose through interaction with the sabbaticant and the administrator. Although this policy does not specifically ban using the sabbatical as a reward for previous service, it also does not mention using the sabbatical as a reward. For Betty, her project and implementation of the globalization leadership curriculum was a project that directly benefited both her work and the institution. But the proposal, with a strong focus on awards received as justification, in addition to the interview with the sabbatical administrator (and with Betty to some extent), suggests that the sabbatical was for outstanding service rather than for professional development. Using this “award” rationale for the 26-year employee in practice means that the sabbatical experience is not being used fully for the purpose stated in the policy. This could have deeper ramifications for other staff who may have been at the institution for a lesser period of time but may still greatly benefit from the experience. Although professional development and improved programs and services were a part of the interviews, the communication of the sabbatical policy in the response was unclear. Similar to the outcomes of the other individual interviews, sabbatical benefits in all five main categories were prevalent beyond the policy purposes.

Workplace and Workforce Factors That Contribute to Sabbatical Benefits

Understanding how organizational creativity filters through sabbaticals for individuals and organizations is also important for fully understanding how sabbatical benefits are derived. Using Amabile’s (1988) theory of organizational creativity, the author noted that the intersection of motivation, techniques, and resources provided the best environment for organizational creativity. As discussed in previous chapters,
organizational creativity is a way of understanding how workplace and workforce factors contribute to the innovation of new products or processes that benefit the organization. Defined in this way, organizational creativity contributes to understanding sabbaticals by exploring the workforce and workplace contributions that influence sabbaticals. In this study, organizational creativity helped to explain how both individuals and organizations foster motivation, techniques, and resources for sabbaticals. An explanation for each of the three thematic areas is explored in this section. Illustrations of how the themes apply to individuals and organizations is shown in Table 6.1. This graphic places organizational workplace (environmental) factors in the left column and the individual workforce (people) factor in the right column. Each of the columns is organized according to the resources, techniques, and motivational factors revealed by the data. A further analysis of each of these areas follows according to the three components of organizational creativity.

**Contribution of Resources**

Resources were another major contributing factor. Resources for this study are the essential elements for obtaining a sabbatical. Participants in this study reported both workplace and workforce resources as helpful to their sabbatical experiences. These included tangible resources, work ethic, longevity, goal-setting, vision, initiative, and personal characteristics as contributors. The concepts articulated by these categories are simplified and illustrated in Table 6.1.

**Tangible resources.** The acknowledgement of available resources helps explain how specific contributions added to the overall sabbatical environment. These resources were highlighted by both sabbaticants and administrators alike. Lisa noted that the financial compensation and added funding for her flight to Vietnam was a significant resource. She said, “The college is paying my salary while I'm here, which is a tremendous resource, and also the student life department bought my plane ticket. So those were big obstacles out of my way for getting here.”
Table 6.1. Understanding Sabbatical Workplace and Workforce Factors for Sabbaticals

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<tr>
<th>Organizational Workplace Factors</th>
<th>Individual Workplace Factors</th>
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<td><strong>Resources (What are the essential elements for doing the work?)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Techniques (What skills are necessary for doing the work?)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Flexible Sabbatical Policies</td>
<td>• Knowledge of Job, Department and Institution</td>
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<td>• Funding or Creative Options for Staffing Solutions</td>
<td>• Expertise in a Particular Field</td>
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<td>• Materials like Office Space, Libraries, Grant Support</td>
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<td>• Collaborative and Collegial Climate</td>
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<td>• Supportive Structure and Atmosphere (including supervisor support)</td>
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<td>• Trust (employee trust and supervisor trust)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Nurturing Ideas and Innovation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Strategic Planning for the Department</td>
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<td><strong>Motivation (Why does the work get done?)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Supervisor’s Interest to Make Sabbaticals Happen</td>
<td>• Love of Learning (intellectually curious)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Flexibility in How it Gets Done</td>
<td>• Develop and Meet Institutional Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Risk-Oriented Vision</td>
<td>• Extrinsic Motivation (publications, rewards, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ability to see a Project Through Completion</td>
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Emilio noted that the peer support he received was helpful in crafting his sabbatical application since he was trying to model his application after a faculty sabbatical. He said the institutional assistance was very beneficial. He noted:

Developing grant applications…was hugely helpful, because I do think that being able to get additional funding made significant difference. My application was successful … because I had people help me package it appropriately. So those were pieces that helped, the institutional support and resources within the institution for framing proposals.
Finally, Taylor, an administrator, and Donnie, a sabbaticant, both at different public institutions, noted that institutional facilities were helpful in their sabbatical experiences. Taylor noted that sabbaticants used the library and similar spaces on campus while others used resources like the databases or other information sources. Donnie, a sabbaticant from that institution also noted that the library was an important place for him. “It was difficult to be away from the office, but I spent a lot of time in the library or one of the other labs. So for me professionally, it was a good benefit…” Additionally, Emilio noted that the institution offered an office space in a different building during his sabbatical, but he opted to work from home when he was not conducting research while he was traveling.

Work ethic. Without question the administrators agreed that a good work ethic was a specific resource that sabbaticants brought to their applications. Mentioned multiple times by the administrators, each of them evaluated sabbaticants with a solid work history. Christine, from the private institution, said the sabbaticant is “a good example of somebody who has done a really good work,” while, Steve at a public institution, noted that he looked for a “good work ethic and a strong record of professionalism.” Calling his sabbaticant the “crown jewel” of the department, Steve also said, “She's the type of person with a lot of integrity. I knew she would do what she said she was supposed to do.” Taylor from a public institution noted that he looks for someone who is “dedicated” He added, “You want someone who will go out of their way to make sure that make sure they do a job and that it's a job well done. That benefits everyone across the board.” He also commented that when choosing the applicants, the committee examines “the history that an employee has, and the kind of productivity and growth and development that they've shown over the years.” To take it a step further, Taylor said the committee also looks at the employee’s evaluations to understand the “quality of work that they've done and usually through that you can tell … if the employee is someone
who takes the initiative, is always looking for opportunities for growth and
development.”

Although the administrators strongly cited some version of the work ethic in their
responses, only Betty, a public institution sabbaticant, noted her own talent in this area.
She noted her “work ethic, you know I can work independently, and I can work alone.”
Benefits in this area were not specifically reported by other sabbaticants, although the
meaning was noted in other responses.

**Longevity.** The longevity of the employee was also identified by various
participants as an important factor in selecting sabbaticants and allowing sabbaticals.
Perhaps the best example is the combined response of both Steve and Betty
(administrator and sabbaticant, respectively) regarding the sabbaticant’s employment
years. Betty said, “I’ve been here for 27 years,” and her administrator also noted her
long-term commitment to the institution and how that played into his decision to allow
the sabbatical. Steve, the administrator, said he asks himself the question, “How long
have they been here. Is it time...have they really put in?” He said if he was comparing
two people, “if I have a brand-new director that’s only worked for me for 1 or 2 years
versus somebody who's been here 15 to 20 years, I take that into consideration.” He
thinks that the employee should “earn” the opportunity.

Likewise, Donnie noted his institutional commitment also played a role in his
sabbatical. Donnie received three degrees from his institution. “I felt a lot more loyalty to
the institution and felt like I was given this opportunity, I need to make sure that I get
back to the institution with my time.”

This idea of earning the opportunity was also reported by Lily, a sabbaticant at a
private institution. She said that upon arrival at the small liberal arts college, a well-
respected leader at the institution gave her an important piece of advice. “Don’t pay any
attention to their names until they been here at least eight years.” Lily noted, “So
longevity is a real benefit. And maybe, maybe that's taken into account because primarily the people who would approve this would be people who would have some longevity.” Conversely, Taylor a sabbatical administrator, at a public institution said, “Just because someone has been here for a long time doesn't necessarily mean that they will receive an approval for sabbatical leave.” Although the researcher was not given the entire list of sabbaticants from that institution, the researcher interviewed a sabbaticant who had been at the institution for 15 years.

**Goal setting.** Several participants noted that the ability to set goals and articulate those goals was an important factor in getting their application approved. Christine, an administrator at a public institution said:

I think that in order to write a good proposal, you have to be able to articulate that you want to do this because of some pretty good reasons and this is how it'll kind of benefit you and this is how it benefits the college and so you have to be able to articulate that. And I think the people who have applied, have all had that kind of pretty good sense of what they wanted to do. Or they've worked with me to be able to articulate that because I work with just about everybody that does this [and] … help them … think through the process about what they want to do.

Similarly, sabbaticant Betty noted that being goal driven was important for creating a productive sabbatical experience. She said, “If you don't have that kind of personality where you’re self driven, you might have a lot of distractions.” She continued, “It takes having a personal drive to just stay focused, keep working on it and not go the beach everyday or something like that.” Donnie described himself as a “planner” and noted, “I laid out some real clear objectives of what I wanted to achieve. ... I needed to make sure that I achieved objectives that fall term.” Lisa was driven before her experience by realizing that preparing for her sabbatical through language training was essential.

**Vision and knowledge.** Beyond goal-setting skills, the participants seemed to have a vision for the kind of project they wanted to accomplish. This meant understanding the issues fully and bringing a problem or idea that presented a larger goal or vision. This
was emphasized by Christine, an administrator at a private institution, who noted that having a vision is important to writing a convincing proposal.

Like the Director of Counseling … she'd certainly qualify under the intense job, but she also saw this need, this kind of hole, in the whole area of international student work and was really interested in it and so that's what led her to say ‘I'd like to do this,’ so her own department probably didn't benefit as much as the college did as a whole did.

When asked about the connection between the job title of the employees and their ability to see a greater vision, Christine said that she had not made the connection between director-level participants being able to “see” the problems that might be affecting the college. She said that most were director-level employees. “I think that has probably allowed them to look at their department as a whole and kind of see where there might be something beneficial.”

Vision is also relevant for the administrators or supervisors of sabbaticants. These individuals not only helped mentor the sabbaticants but in some cases even created the sabbatical policy or suggested the leave to the employee. Additionally, it also means finding creative staffing solutions or funding opportunities. These staff displayed a vision for how the organization could function without these valuable employees but also how the knowledge gained could be applied upon return.

Initiative. The ability to take the initiative was another factor mentioned by both administrators and sabbaticants and public and private institutions. Taylor said he looks for employees who take the initiative when he reviews applications. “You can tell if the employee is someone who takes the initiative, is always looking for opportunities for growth and development…” On the sabbaticant end, Betty showed her initiative by hunting down a leave policy that would work for her. She said, “I just started hunting around and found online, and as I mentioned, I was the first one to receive it.”

Sabbaticant Kim from a public institution said that initiative is also something that she sees as a necessary part of development and does not understand employees who do not take the initiative to participate in professional development activities:
I know a lot of people that have no desire to do anything different than their day
to-day, so I think for people that want to have a leave, that they should be able to
take a leave of absence ... And I think that those who don't ever question that, let
them just be, I don't understand those people, so it's hard for me. I don't get that!

*Personal characteristics.* Personal characteristics were also noted as an important
contributor to the workforce resources. Although the participants did not clearly articulate
personal characteristics that assisted with the sabbatical experience when asked directly,
many of them described general personality traits throughout their interviews. Lily said
that she had “climbed 50 of our highest mountains” and “had a lot of adrenaline when I
woke up in the morning” and Betty, another sabbaticant, noted that she was the first one
to receive the sabbatical leave at her institution but the process took lots of “hunting
around” to find a leave opportunity that fit her needs. In both of these cases, the personal
characteristics of determination, goal setting, and perseverance were prominent features
of these sabbaticants. Perhaps Steve, an administrator, provided the best summary of the
contribution of personal characteristics to the sabbatical process: “The only thing I take
into consideration, of course, is who the individual is,” indicating that who the person is
can be a factor that contributes to obtaining leave opportunities.

The contribution of resources is a critical component to providing the tangible
resources and expert knowledge in addition to initiative, vision and knowledge, goal
setting, personal characteristics, work ethic and longevity. Resources are provided by
both the workforce and the workplace.

*Contribution of Techniques*

The contribution of techniques is an important factor for organizational creativity.
Techniques are the ways in which organizational creativity happens. These are often the
processes or the way things happen that support the leave and include support (including
general, institutional, mentor, supervisor, and colleague support), trust, and balance.

*Providing support.* There is no organizational technique more important than
providing support, and particularly providing supervisor support. More than any other
factor, the idea of support was mentioned by every participant including all administrators and sabbaticants. Support is added under a technique because of the thinking involved in supporting this leave. Supervisors must be able to conceptually think about how a sabbatical could be beneficial to all stakeholders and they must provide the mentoring needed for the leave to be successful. Lisa noted that support from her direct supervisor, colleagues and division leader was essential. She explained,

I have to say that (VP for Student Affairs' name) is a very important resource, and she's actually retiring this May and so I was lucky that I applied when I did, because I didn't know she was retiring at that time, but she's so supportive of her staff and understands the value of this kind of thing … when I think of the staff have had sabbaticals at (institution), at least three of them came out of the student life department and you know, that's her department – she just really, really stands up for her staff and sees the value … in what they need to do to flourish there. And then my coworkers, the director – executive director of the (name of department and supervisor) was tremendously supportive and my direct supervisor, (name), I mean they are the ones bearing the brunt of me being gone and so I'm just very grateful to them.

Support from administrator perspectives focused on finding ways that the administrator, staff or institution could be helpful in the sabbatical experience. This spans from talking with the direct supervisor of the sabbaticant to advocating for the start of sabbatical policy at the institution. All of these issues and more were provided as tangible examples of the support given to sabbaticants and the institution. Steve said that offering a sabbatical was an important gesture of support by the institution. He commented:

I think it's nice to be supported. I once worked at a University where I wasn’t even allowed to go to NASPA (national conference), I had to take vacation and pay for it myself. The institution didn't even support travel. So here's an institution that’s saying, you can have time off with pay to better yourself and to me that's what we’re all about.

Supervisor support. Supervisor support was probably the single most important contributing factor to the sabbatical experience. Each participant described the ease with which they were able to obtain the leave and navigate the process. Organizational climate allowed supervisors the flexibility to offer these leaves. However, the person serving in the supervisory role made a difference in procuring a sabbatical.
Furthermore, the supervisor and departmental heads (if needed) in that area must also equip themselves to view the department in a different light. Supervisors must employ creative thinking to find viable sabbatical options for positions or departments that might be difficult to run during a leave.

It is most important for employees in positions that might be difficult to replace to receive a leave, such as counselors, department or division heads, vice presidents, presidents, or residence life professionals. These people are in high-level, high-stress positions where a leave might benefit both the institution and the individual. In some cases, those individuals might need the break to get outside of the workplace to understand how their role fits into the bigger picture; in some cases, the break will to help them to retool or prepare for another position in the department or elsewhere. Stress, burnout, and rejuvenation were mentioned by many participants (who were in these high-stress roles) which underscores a need for a leave in these critical positions.

Supervisor support may also be linked to the kind of work or experiences of the sabbaticant. For example, Lily’s sabbatical experience was traveling with Semester at Sea and gaining international perspectives while also serving as the Dean of Students. She noted that her supervisor, after leaving the institution, went on to an international experience. She said, “She went on to the (East Coast institution) as director of Studies in China. She was studying herself Chinese, and Chinese calligraphy” This may show that the supervisor valued international experiences that may have played a role in the acceptance of Lily’s sabbatical proposal. Donnie also noted a similar connection with his supervisor. “She was very supportive because she herself had been a recipient many years ago. So she continued to be supportive of those individuals in her department.” He reported that the supervisor had allowed five sabbaticals in the last 15 years showing that her support moved far beyond one or two sabbaticants.

Similarly, sabbatical experiences may also be related to how the supervisor views a certain department or activity. Steve commented that directors in certain areas might be
at a disadvantage because of their specific department. He asserted, “In some cases unfortunately some individuals might get penalized because of the nature of their position.” He further explained,

To be honest with you, in some areas it would be impossible like for instance our Women's Center. It is a two-person shop with the coordinator, which is entry-level and a director, and so we probably couldn't run that center for a full year. We could run it for 3 to 6 months, but we couldn't run it for full year without a director.

Likewise, Christine tried to understand why other departments did not have a history of sabbaticals:

I think it's hard to make a case that as a development officer… I think they'd have a hard time making a case for that. In admissions work … it would be hard to say, “well I’m going to go away for a semester and … then I’ll come up with a new way to admit students or recruit students,” and so it may be just the nature of the job … In the finance area most people come in and they already have what they need for their job, if they already have a CPA they don't need to go get it. So I think the areas where the leaders have come from are more conducive to an educational leave that would benefit the person or the college.

Kim also recognized that supervisor support and ability to see the value of an employee was deciding factor:

I think it depends on what area you work in at the University and who is your supervisor….As in any institution, it’s political. Are you…expendable…are you so necessary to the to the running of the department's that we can’t offer you this opportunity, you know, legally they can't do that, because the union contract states that if you're eligible then, more or less your supervisor has to give the approval but there are ways that people will twist things to say ‘no that it doesn't meet the requirements.’ So there are politics that are involved, and you know financially for University to lose someone for however, three months, six months and then have someone who has to fill in for those to job duties, it is complicated, but it can be done.

Additionally, a convergence of support from various individuals allows for a successful experience. Donnie noted that his supervisor, dissertation chair, and family helped him meet his sabbatical goals.

I had very supportive supervisor, I wouldn’t have been able to do it without her support and encouragement and really, but she also held me accountable she was like: ‘how is it coming?’ We would touch base frequently and she asked me how the writing was coming and the study was coming. Also, I had a very strong Chair, and when I outlined goals…I'm a planner, so I would shoot out dates and say: by November 15 this will be done and so I had targeted benchmark dates that
I was working towards achieving those, so very much I approached it as I was like I was working on a project at the office so I had targeted dates I wanted to accomplish things ... I had a very supportive spouse. I mean obviously I couldn't pursue this degree working full time and without having a supportive home, and so I think those are the three – for me, those are three folks that helped me get through this process.

Supervisor support was an important area of support. It appears that support from the supervisor is essential not only for allowing the leave, but also in communicating the logistics of the leave to other decision makers. Christine, a sabbatical administrator, said, “Her supervisor… reports to me, she was very supportive of it and said we will make this work.” Supervisor support in addition to supporting valuable employees is crucial in promoting sabbaticals. Christine also noted that a belief in the sabbatical experience is essential, alluding to the understanding that supervisors who do not believe in the experience will not make it happen for their employees. “All of the leaves have been from Student Life or from the Campus College Ministries. So I don't know what that says, but I believe in it, so maybe that's part of it.” It also appears that direct supervisors act on their beliefs about sabbaticals. Donnie noted that his supervisor is the one that convinced him to take the sabbatical. He remembered,

To be very honest with you, I thought I wouldn’t need to take one, but, working full-time. I have two children, my wife was working full-time ... my boss is the one who actually brought it to my attention and she said, “you know, have you thought about this” and I said, “well, I have, but I was really cognizant of…the work environment.” Most of the other folks who'd been successful were typically awarded the sabbatical for the spring semester. Because of the nature of what my responsibilities were in the spring semester and/or summer would not be a good time for me to be away from the office for an extended period of time ... I didn't realize that … I could apply for fall term. … I was very fortunate that the environment and (former institution name) was very supportive in pushing people to seek those opportunities. Had my supervisor not sat down with me and said have you looked at this I probably would not have gone on it.

Donnie continued that after having the sabbatical, he would continue to support it. Currently he is not at the institution that allowed his sabbatical, but he said, “I think it was a valuable experience, I think if I had staff here who are interested and we offered such a program I would be extremely supportive of that.” However, He did not indicate that he would try to start a policy at his current institution.
Colleague support. Support from colleagues was another major area of support. Both administrators and sabbaticants needed support from their direct colleagues. Christine, an administrator, noted that the support was evident from colleagues of the sabbaticant.

I think a person really can’t be gone for a whole semester without their immediate work colleagues supporting it because there’s just too much that other people have to pick up and I think they’re willing to do it because they know perhaps at some point that they’ll have an opportunity to do this as well so we have people who pretty regularly kind of pick up pieces for other people, maternity leaves or family leave, or whatever, so this is just kind of a little bit different form of that.

Emilio said colleague support was also essential and noted factors involved in bringing in replacement staff while he was away. “...one warm body doesn't replace a warm body and it requires an awful lot of adjustments and also some realistic expectations about what it means that the office itself has to be on sabbatical to some extent.”

Mentoring support. Another area of support was the support of others beyond the supervisor. Several administrators and sabbaticants reported colleague support was instrumental. Emilio said that his institution was helpful in providing support to obtain an income supplement grant while he was gone (since he was receiving half salary). “My application was successful … because I had people help me, package it appropriately so those were pieces that helped: the institutional support and resources within the institution for framing proposals.”

Emilio also noted that since he received the grant, he has been called upon to mentor others looking for similar funding. Although this is not a benefit of the organization or the sabbaticant, the academic community was a support system to which he was contributing.

Trust. Although many of the benefits found in this study were already established in the literature regarding sabbaticals, a few new benefit factors were revealed in the data. Trust was identified as a major theme among participants and administrators.
The administrators themselves commented on the trust that they had in their employees. Steve said, “Also she's the type of person with a lot of integrity. I knew she would do what she said she was supposed to do.” Trust was also highlighted by other administrators in statements indicating that the sabbaticants themselves knew what the strategic needs or personal/professional needs of the staff were and how these deficiencies could be remedied. Administrators also expressed trust in the supervisors of sabbaticants (if they were not the supervisor) that the sabbatical was a worthwhile experience and daily office operations would not be negatively affected.

Lily commented that trust was a very important factor in her work at a small liberal arts college. But she noted that an employee’s trust in the institution is also vital. Due to recent layoffs, Lily said that the employees were perhaps less trusting and more paranoid about taking a leave due to the recent economic downturn, new leadership, and the expendability of some staff. She said, “They might think they are perceived as unrealistic or selfish or demanding too many personal resources or resources of other people's time or cost, or that they might be sneakily looking to get away, to go to another place to prepare themselves for promotion elsewhere.” Perhaps this is where the reinstatement component of the sabbatical policy could be most important.

Not only was trust cited as an important qualification by sabbaticants, but also the sabbaticants themselves needed trust to maintain a healthy balance with the ongoing work of the institution. Director-level participants entrusted considerable responsibility to staff members to fulfill their roles while away. In one scenario, Betty, a sabbaticant, said that she handed projects over to her staff and then took them back when she returned to campus. She said, “I had to feel comfortable in knowing that I could give these important things to other people who were directly connected to me and know that everybody was going to just keep on working.”

As a benefit, the trust of staff members was part of the unexpected benefits that might be experienced from a sabbatical. Although not verbalized as a benefit, the
sabbaticants did trust their staff with other projects. Lily even said that after delegating one task to the individual, the staff member continued the responsibility even after she returned.

*Balance.* Balance was another technique used by sabbaticants to allow for a productive sabbatical. Various sabbaticants talked about the importance of establishing good boundaries for the experience. Emilio said “good boundaries” from both himself and his colleagues helped his sabbatical be successful. Likewise, Donnie noted that setting boundaries was helpful in dealing with anxious co-workers:

> And I’ll be honest with you there were some staff who were like “wow, what’s gonna happen when I'm not in there that term” and they would e-mail me occasionally and I had – I had made it very clear that I would not be responding to work-related e-mails and my boss was very clear that when you're gone, you're gone....

However, Donnie reported that learning the skill of balance “also helped me realize that it's okay to stay away from work and balance that out a little bit better.” Kim also had some boundaries while she was sailing around the globe with Semester at Sea. She said, “There was no agreement to have e-mail contact or phone contact. It was a clean, I'm gone, I'm not available. When I left in ‘93 the ship didn't have Internet. The communication was not what it is today.” She did, however, note that the ship is more equipped with technology now and because of that she would probably stay connected with work via email if she took another leave. Emilio noted that not accepting the balance in our lives is becoming a problem.

> We’re either going all gung ho or totally couch potatoes. I think (sabbaticals) … challenge you to figure out a way to … to integrate sabbaticals and just healthy patterns in… to your regular patterns of life. So that were not just living for the next sabbatical or for retirement.

The contribution of techniques was essential. Individuals noted a supportive workplace was crucial to the sabbatical success. Furthermore, nurturing ideas, promoting and sustaining trust and balance provide a positive workforce and workplace environment.
Contribution of Motivation

The motivation of sabbaticants is an important contributing factor. Motivation can be either extrinsic (motivated by outside factors of money or reward) or intrinsic (motivated internally by will or curiosity.) Literature on organizational creativity states innovative ideas are not enough to change people or organizations. Motivation to complete the research, start the project, or move through the process is essential for organizational creativity. This study found many intrinsic reasons why employees receive sabbaticals.

For sabbaticants, motivation did not stop at simply proposing the sabbatical idea. All six of the sabbaticants arranged their own job coverage through replacement staff or cross training of other staff, and several sabbaticants arranged for financial coverage or compensation for other staff. In one case, the sabbaticant actually spearheaded the sabbatical policy itself with the assistance of a committee. These are all examples of the motivation needed for staff obtain a sabbatical.

The interviews revealed that simply stopping at proposing a sabbatical for staff is not enough. Sabbaticals for administrators must be well-executed by the sabbaticants themselves, organizing not only the details for the sabbatical but also how the organization will manage the daily work, supervision, and financing. Sabbaticals for higher education administrators in this study were for very motivated individuals. Organizational creativity research also says that employees with more autonomy will be more motivated. Of the sabbaticants interviewed, dedication was also deemed as a necessary contributor.

Participants in this study were motivated to apply for a sabbatical for various reasons. Among them was the need for change, difference, and time away due to stress or burnout. Lisa said, “I was at a point having worked at (institution) for 16 years with international students where I really needed some fresh energy … I might have been a little burnt out.” Emilio reported the same sentiment: “Certainly some weariness…I
needed a break … Physically, I needed some refocusing and again the opportunity to really think and learn about something that I'm passionate about.”

The motivation also came from sabbaticants who realized the need for knowledge or skills. Lisa related her need to understand more issues facing international students, so she decided the best way to learn that was becoming an international student herself. She said,

I felt like for all this time I had been advising international students who arrive at (institution) how to adjust to a new culture, you know how to reach out to people, how to not fall into a trap of depression – various strategies for coping with culture shock and transitions etc. But I've never really done this myself. … I say it's my goal is to be miserable and homesick so that I can see how to deal with that. And I have to say that I've had some moments like that.

Along with a desire for improvement and knowledge, also important were the relationships that helped foster the motivation. Kim accredited her sabbatical to another staff member who took a similar sabbatical. She said she would not have looked into it but a professor shared her sabbatical experience on Semester at Sea with her. “We had a relationship, so I was able to talk with her in more depth about what her experiences were, and I just couldn't imagine ever not doing that.”

Although initial ideas do not have to be the main purpose behind the sabbatical, having a relationship with someone who had the experience can be helpful in reducing barriers for motivation. Additionally Donnie and Lily both received a nudge from others to apply for the sabbatical, but it was sabbaticants themselves who had to follow through with the motivation to arrange the details.

Sabbatical administrators Steve and Christine also reported that the internal drive to finish a degree was something that motivated their staff. Steve said his employees “truly want to better themselves, get a doctorate or to do research to better their area,” whereas Christine comments that there are two kinds of benefits: “So there are intrinsic benefits for – in the first part, probably the primary part, and then there’s the actual project or the completion of a degree visible and extrinsic.” On the other side, Steve, an
administrator speculated that some may view the sabbatical opportunity as a way for a “paid vacation,” but he had not seen this at his institution.

*Awards.* Staff excellence awards allow for the best staff members to participate in the international trips abroad to help learn more about how the “business” of the college and how their exemplary work contributes to the larger picture.

Programs like the staff excellence award are crucial because they allow for high-achieving outstanding staff members to gain a further understanding of the institution, connect staff members who make a difference to the students in a concentrated learning program, and double up on presenting an award for staff that also serves the institution. Looking for more win-win scenarios is a way to provide leave opportunities to staff while also rewarding them for a job well and covering staffing burdens for study abroad trips.

*Summary*

The participants in this study had the resources they needed to complete the experience. Not surprisingly, sabbaticants were mostly intrinsically motivated regarding the experience and reported the pursuit of knowledge, learning, and understanding was paramount. Organizations in this study were able to bend, flex and provide the necessary flexibility to facilitate the sabbaticals. For resources, sabbaticants showed a high level of knowledge in their respective fields (aware of both what they knew and what they did not know) and organizations provided the financial and staff allocations (even when arranged by the sabbaticant directly) to complete the experience. And finally, individuals displayed technical creativity through innovative thinking and problem solving, and organizations that provided institutional support for the experience were important.

Organizational creativity provided a framework for understanding the sabbaticants and the organizations who participated in this study. Organizational creativity was used identify all possible benefits without specificity while also looking to identify products and processes of sabbaticals. Through these filters, a broad and holistic picture of sabbatical benefits is presented. Furthermore, specific factors of organizational
creativity, which include resources, techniques and motivation were also examined to show the workplace and workforce environmental factors that allowed the benefits to manifest. Although this study did not conduct an extensive survey of personal characteristics, it is evident that sabbaticants and organizations were highly successful in representing the three components of resources, techniques, and motivation in the sabbaticants and the organizations.

Based on the data regarding the influence of organizational creativity on individuals and organizations, the benefits of sabbaticals can be further analyzed. The examination of motivation, techniques, and resources by both populations shows how the benefits of sabbaticals are vetted or filtered through the people that take sabbaticals and the organizations that provide them. The products and processes of individuals and organizations should continue to be viewed in relation to these factors when investigating sabbaticals.

Individual and Organizational Benefit Analysis

After the benefits were identified, they were then grouped according to who benefited: the organization or the individual. Each of the cases revealed benefits that were combined into overarching benefit themes for both the sabbaticants and the institutions. Using the theoretical framework (Amabile, 1988), benefits were presented in two themes: product or outcome benefits and process benefits. Benefits identified as a product and benefits described as a process were divided into categories. In cases where benefits were described as both a product and a process, they were included in both groups. The same was true for benefits to the individual and the organization because not all of the outcomes of the sabbatical can be identified as tangible outcomes. Some benefits of the sabbatical are byproducts or a product of the process of the sabbatical. For example, increasing research publications during a sabbatical is a relevant tangible product; publications can be documented and counted. However, byproducts of the increase in research publications can contribute to an increase in institutional reputation, institutional
loyalty, and so on. Although these byproducts are more difficult to quantify, they are important sabbatical benefits and were categorized accordingly as mentioned by participants. Information regarding individual and organizational process and product benefits are illustrated in Table 6.2. In this table, the intersection of the individual and the organization with the product or the process shows how the benefits are allocated in each section. A further explanation of this figure is available in this section.

Benefits of individuals and organizations are the next area to be examined. The following areas detail both individual and organizational benefits accordingly. Several sabbatical policies indicated that the sabbaticals should be a benefit to the institution and employee but did not specifically detail particular benefits. Conversely the benefits articulated by sabbatical proposals detailed the most tangible benefits available.

According to the written or articulated proposals, Emilio would create publications, Betty and Lisa would design curricula, and Frank (although he did not submit a formal proposal for this study) would complete part of his dissertation. On the other side, Lily, Kim, and Lisa’s focus was a cultural immersion or exchange opportunity, a more process-oriented benefit. While the purposes of sabbaticals in both the interviews and proposals denoted a focus on tangible product-oriented benefits, process or indirect benefits were even more prominent. Process-based benefits were reported more than twice the number of times product-oriented benefits were noted.

The most prominent product-base benefits were formal degree attainment, projects, presentations, and conferences. Product benefits for the organization and the individual were mentioned similarly. It also means these benefits are mutually beneficial to the institution. For example, if an employee is able to publish something from the time away, the employee will get noted as the author of the obligation while the institution can boast about the number of publications or the notoriety of the staff working at the institution. The same is true with degree completion. Although the employee ultimately benefits from completing a degree, the institution can boast about the number of staff
Table 6.2. Sabbatical Benefits Organized by Individual or Organizational Process and Products

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with terminal degrees. Grants offer professionals a chance to pursue research or projects of interests, and the institution either saves money or receives publicity for the project or the employee who secured the money. Not all of these “assumptions” were noted by participants directly but could be addressed in further research or studies.

The most prominent process-based benefits were time away, travel, culture, and worldview. The evidence from the interviews and the documents denoted substantial process-based benefits. Process-oriented benefits were noted more for the individual benefit than for the organizational benefit, but further research should be completed to make generalizations and determine if the findings can be applied to all institutions with sabbatical policies. This means that when preparing, executing, and evaluating sabbatical policies and benefits, employees should not only count the numbers of presentations and grants, but also find ways to measure the intangible or process-oriented benefits that are strongly associated with the leave.

**Individual Benefits**

Overall, individual benefits of sabbatical opportunities were well articulated by the participants. Generally speaking, the more time elapsed for reflection the more long term or lasting benefits were mentioned. For example, Lily took her sabbatical more than fifteen years ago. Not only was she able to articulate sabbatical benefits for herself, but she was able to take a long-range view of how the sabbatical propelled her through her career until retirement. She linked her sabbatical to decisions for retirement, lifelong learning and involvement in community organizations like Rotary. Likewise, Donnie discussed how he has continued sabbatical rhythms in his daily work. Adding time for reading and professional development projects are two tangible benefit carry-overs he continues to employ. Conversely, Lisa who was in her sabbatical at the time of the interview was still processing the benefits of her sabbatical. She had trouble articulating the long-term effects of the leave beyond her work environment. For example, she talked about a cultural experience, but was still processing the experience during the interview.
Unsurprisingly, she had trouble linking the experience to long-range or lasting benefits personally. Although more research is necessary, the amount of time elapsed after a sabbatical may provide the best platform for articulating long-term benefits to the individual and organization.

Most profound was the lack of distinction between benefits to the sabbaticants’ professional and personal lives. Most participants had a difficult time differentiating between the personal and the professional benefits. This might be due to the fact that higher education administrators often derive their sense of identity or daily schedule from their work. For those participating in residential life programs, separation between personal and professional benefits was difficult because so much of their personal time was spent in the professional arena. When participants spoke of time with family, partner, or other significant friends, personal outcomes were more clearly delineated.

It should also be noted that overall sabbaticant reflections within the last 5 years were often more vivid in explanation and description. Those sabbaticants who took the sabbatical more than 5 years previously offered a pseudo-long-term perspective on the experience beyond their immediate post-sabbatical placement. Both perspectives were valuable in this study. The average number of years before a sabbatical was taken in this study was 15.3 years. Participants ranged from a minimum of 8 to 9 years at the institution (2 participants) to 11 to 15 years (2 participants) to 23 to 25 years at the institution (2 participants).

All individual benefits but one (separation) was seen as an individual benefit. The confirms assumptions that sabbaticals benefit individuals and also offers new information that individual sabbatical benefits are holistic offering contributions to professional, personal, psychological, capacity building and institutional support dimensions of an individuals life. These benefits were often not the first benefits mentioned but when concentrated offer the largest contribution of benefits.
**Organizational Benefits**

Overall benefits articulated by the sabbaticants developed throughout the interviews. When first asked, the sabbaticants articulated the benefits to the institution based on tangible sabbatical products. In most cases, the institutional benefit first cited was the sabbatical project, paper, or publication as indicated in the sabbaticants’ proposals. For example, if the sabbaticants said they were going to research a wellness program, the first institutional benefit articulated by the sabbaticants was the wellness program. It was not until after further questioning that other institutional benefits, such as cross training of employees, institutional loyalty, or gaining peer respect, were mentioned.

Furthermore, many professionals had trouble differentiating between their own professional benefits and their institution’s benefits. Many sabbaticants saw themselves and their personal lives as a direct benefit to the institution through the sabbatical experience. This “streamlining” of the experience underscores the “win-win” nature of the sabbatical for both the professional and the institution.

Contrary to the populist perspective about sabbaticals, this study found organizational benefits of sabbaticals were widespread. Noted in 25 benefit categories (of 37 total categories) organizational benefits were seen mostly in institutional support, capacity building, and professionalism, with the majority of these benefits listed as process-oriented benefits.

**Communication of Sabbaticals and Sabbatical Experiences**

Communication was addressed in this study with the following research question, “How do administrators and sabbaticants in colleges and universities conceptualize and communicate individual and organizational benefits of staff sabbaticals? One purpose of this study was to understand how the sabbatical experience and the sabbatical outcomes were communicated.
Before exploring how the benefits are communicated, an understanding of organizational creativity is important. As a reminder, organizational creativity was used as a theoretical framework to understand sabbatical benefits broadly. Organizational creativity was used to understand not only the tangible beneficial products of sabbaticals like increased knowledge or skills but also to understand how the process of sabbaticals also contributes to benefits like the cross-training of employees or extended time to concentrate of planning, relaxing or spending time with family. Because organizational creativity does not offer further organization beyond “products” and “processes,” Iravania’s (2011) study on sabbatical benefit categories was used to organize the sabbatical benefits. Iravania’s empirical work on organizing the types of benefits of sabbaticals into thematic categories was essential to understanding the types of benefits and how benefit types were different according to different data sources. The following information is organized into the organizational areas of Professionalism, Capacity Building, Institutional Support, Psychological, and Personal Benefits. A further analysis of these benefits is explored in Table 5.1.

First, learning about the availability of sabbaticals is essential. While some policies seemed to be widely publicized, many of them were not. Policies at Prairie Home College were the most widely published with Keillor State University also offering one mention of the policy. University of Dupont did not publish policy and even the sabbaticant had a hard time finding the policy. Individually, Christine, an administrator, reported that the sabbatical experience was available in the staff handbook, and Taylor said that he sends a yearly email to the division of student affairs on the policy as a call for applications.

Word of mouth was one of the most commonly used methods of communicating a sabbatical policy. Christine commented that “people in my area note it because they’ve seen it from their colleagues and so it kind of goes without saying that it's feasible.” Lisa related that she knew a few people at the institution who had taken a sabbatical, whereas
Taylor noted that word of mouth communication was a typical method of communication at his institution. “Many times things, things are communicated word of mouth. In our division we have over 500 employees.” Word of mouth was also used to find sabbatical resources. Emilio noted that colleagues knew about his sabbatical and used him as a sabbatical resource. He noted that other colleagues not only sought him out for information regarding the sabbatical but also wanted to know more about how he secured funding and grants to help off-set his salary decrease since he was gone for a full year and received half pay.

Formal staff meetings were the way Taylor, an administrator, promoted the sabbaticals at his institution. He said he used regular meetings with department directors to talk about the sabbatical opportunity. He said he encourages employees to think about “employees that initially don't show up on your radar would benefit from a sabbatical leave.” He noted that often supervisors think about “shining star” employees, but encourages them to think about “other employees that need that opportunity … [to] propel them to place where they will join the ranks of those who are really one of our top employees.” Training sessions were described by Betty, a sabbaticant from a large public institution. She said a training program is “available for faculty and staff who want to develop global learning either in their courses or their activities … a lot of the resources that I compiled are now part of that training program.”

More passively, Steve reported that for employees completing their dissertations, the dissertation defense and publication are public. He said, “Of course the dissertation defense is open to the community, so in our second staff member's area, she certainly had an open defense for her dissertation that anyone was welcome to attend and those are announced publicly.”

Outside of the institution, several participants described formal presentations based on their sabbatical experience. Taylor, a sabbatical administrator, said the report was utilized, but also said,
We’re at a stage within our division where we are really trying to promote what we do, not only on a campus level, but at a regional and a national level … I think it starts here on campus in regards to how can we utilize the information. Also how can we share this information nationally, because I think we benefit as it relates to our overall national reputation.

Betty also underscored her presentations at a national and state conference. She said “my most tangible outcomes” was being about to report on the “work I had done during the sabbatical.” In spite of the ways participants reported that sabbatical experiences were advertised, it also appears that sabbaticals were often not well-publicized. Steve, a sabbatical administrator said, “Mainly, we don't advertise it as student affairs division.”

Sharing the sabbatical experience is also an important part of the sabbatical experience, as is the communication of the policy and the outcomes. Lisa wrote in her proposal that she hoped to share “experiences through chapel and other educational forums,” while Lily said she did one presentation on her experience although it was not very polished or published. Emilio’s role as a pastor also boosted his platform for presentations. He noted he is asked to do more presentations than time permits. As a result of his occupation as a campus pastor and also on the topic of immigration (a hot topic in the news) he chooses presentations that result in “deeper conversation about the topic.” Emilio also notes his expertise was increased after his sabbatical experience.

Specifically at the institution, Emilio presented in a special on-campus forum and classroom presentations. He also noted that his sabbatical report was published in a campus publication. Additionally, Emilio helped produce a movie which is now in production.

It appears that several sabbaticants did not share their experience or were not fully utilized. Kim said after sailing with Semester at Sea no one asked her to do any presentations after she returned either about her experience. She said, “in terms of expanding on what happened to me … I sort of just went back into my day to day.” In response she conducted educational programs in the residence halls to help students learn
more about the program. Betty, a sabbaticant, noted that the lack of communication might send a distinct message.

I have never seen it communicated to say the truth. But maybe … I just wasn't paying attention because I wasn’t looking. Even for this morning, I went to the HR (Human Resources) website to try to find the ones to be able to share that information, and I couldn't find them so they aren’t there. So I did eventually find them, but it's not being advertised too much and maybe that's because they wanted to be rather selective. I don't know

Additionally, Kim reported that there was no educational programming requirement. She said, “It has to have an educational focus to it, however, when you come back you don't have to submit any type of information on it to prove that you are engaging in any educational activity.” And after the interview, Steve, a sabbatical administrator, commented on the sabbatical policy and communication about it. “It's a good program. Maybe you pointed out … it should be advertised even more - more people become aware of it and take advantage of it because they think it's again good for the institution and good for the employee.”

Organizational and Individual Benefit

Alignment of Sabbaticals

After evaluating all of the sabbatical policies of the sabbatical-serving institutions participating in this study and comparing the established purpose of the sabbaticals with the benefits and purposes communicated and articulated by sabbaticants and administrators, the data were examined and compared. This section of the chapter addresses the research question, How do these individual and organizational benefits align with the sabbatical policy? In essence, this section compares the first two main research questions and strives to understand if the institution is meeting its established purposes through the benefits articulated by sabbaticants and administrators.

Sabbatical Comparison by Benefits

One of the most interesting findings was the variation in the distribution of benefits according to different sources. Organizational creativity (Amabile, 1989, 1999)
was used in this study to understand the various product- and process-oriented benefits associated with sabbaticals. Iravania’s (2011) empirical study of sabbatical benefits provided categorical themes for sabbatical benefits, which helped identify how process and product benefits could be organized. Iravania’s themes of *professionalism, capacity building, institutional support, psychological* and *personal* benefits were used to classify the benefits. Each benefit was identified from the transcription of interviews and coded according to themes that emerged. The data presented in this section are a result of counting the number of codes that emerged from the data. Although there are other ways to describe the distribution of benefits (e.g., identifying benefits that were mentioned first), presenting the frequency of benefits shows the similarities and differences in how benefits are communicated by various documents and constituents. From these themes, important dictions can be gathered. For example, sabbatical policies are written with the objective to achieve mostly professional benefits, but the proposals and the interviews with sabbaticants revealed benefits in all five categorical areas, and the administrator benefits are a varied group with a focus toward professional benefits as well. Finally, the proposal benefits highlight specific work-related projects and outcomes that focus on professional benefits but even more prevalent are the number of capacity-building components. Understanding how the distribution of benefits is allocated can help understand the similarities and differences between sabbatical policies and experiences. The following figures provide graphic representations of the differences among these written or perceived benefits. Figures 6.1 through 6.4 offer illustrations of the distribution of benefits according to Iravania (2011). The benefit categories were derived from sabbatical policies, sabbatical proposals, and qualitative interviews with sabbaticants and administrators. The data reveal distinct differences in the distribution of the benefits. The following information below highlights the themes of benefits according to the type of data.
Sabbatical policies. Throughout the content analysis of 20 sabbatical policies, sabbatical policies focused primarily on the professional benefits associated with sabbaticals. These data were taken from the content analysis of sabbatical policies. Of the 20 institutions, 10 institutions offered a joint faculty and staff sabbatical policy. A focus on professional benefits could be a result of crafting staff policies after that of faculty policies. Regardless, the benefits are outstandingly focused on professional benefits with little regard for other benefits. Figure 6.1 illustrates that professional benefits occupy the majority of the pie chart while the other benefits fill very little of the chart.

![Sabbatical Benefits Articulated by Sabbatical Policies](image)

Figure 6.1. Sabbatical benefits articulated by sabbatical policies

Sabbatical proposals. Sabbatical proposals concentrated on capacity building within the institutions. The researcher conducted a content analysis of proposed benefits in three successful sabbatical applications. Proposals for staff sabbaticals highlighted numerous benefits for the institution through capacity building of colleagues and employees, collaborative projects, and exchanges. The focus of these proposals was that
learning and experiences gained by the sabbatical should benefit the institution and its students. Institutional support was similar, with professional and psychological benefits mentioned less often and personal benefits absent. Although this study did not compare faculty and staff sabbaticals, this finding regarding personal benefits could be different for faculty, who often spend sabbaticals furthering their own research and professionalism which affects their teaching. More research is needed to support this conjecture. The study also found a distinct difference in communication of benefits by staff, indicating that personnel did not cite their own learning as the most important benefit. Rather, the institutional benefits were the main focus of the sabbatical proposals, with professional gains as a lesser focus. Figure 6.2 illustrates this finding. Capacity building and institutional support fill the majority of the space, with professional and psychological gains mentioned less frequently. Personal benefits were not articulated in the sabbatical proposals.

![Sabbatical Benefits Articulated in Sabbatical Proposals](image)

Figure 6.2. Sabbatical benefits articulated in sabbatical proposals
Sabbatical administrators. Sabbatical administrators were the supervisors or the administrators of the sabbatical programs. In most cases, these were the professionals who promoted or approved the sabbatical leave for sabbaticants. Overall, the benefits were cited as mostly professional with the rest, except for personal, somewhat evenly distributed. Professional benefits were cited most frequently perhaps because these administrators were most concerned with the daily jobs of staff. In most cases, sabbatical administrators were the supervisors or approving supervisors who observed the direct benefits of the sabbatical as manifested in the daily work of sabbaticants. Institutional support cited loyalty and retention as important benefits of the sabbatical, and personal benefits were cited least. Figure 6.3 illustrates the distribution of benefits by administrators. Institutional benefits, capacity building, and psychological benefits filled similar sections of the chart, and personal benefits received the smallest piece because they were articulated by administrators in only a few instances.

![Sabbatical Benefits Articulated by Administrators](image)

Figure 6.3. Sabbatical benefits articulated by administrators
Sabbaticants. Unlike the other three sources, sabbaticants did not show a clear delineation of frequency among the top three categories of benefits. For sabbaticants, benefits were somewhat evenly distributed. During the interviews, sabbaticants cited professional, capacity building, and institutional support as important benefits of their experience. In some cases, when the sabbaticant was also a supervisor of other staff in the workplace, contributions of capacity building skills were observed among the colleagues they left in charge. For example, Donnie was a sabbaticant, but because he had an upper-level management position, he also supervised the colleagues covering his work duties. After returning from his leave, he was able to identify the outcomes of the sabbatical for his co-workers because he saw how their learning applied to their daily work. This was also described by Lily, Betty, and Kim, who were in similar positions. Institutional support was described by sabbaticants in terms of loyalty, retention, and rewards for employees. Culture and travel were cited as psychological benefits. Personal benefits were cited least often but included health, rest, and family time. Figure 6.4 illustrates the benefits articulated by sabbaticants. Professional benefits, capacity building, and institutional support were cited with similar frequency. Psychological benefits were cited less often, and personal benefits of health, relaxation, and family time were cited by this group least often. It is interesting to note that if personal and psychological benefits are combined (because they often share some of the same beneficial outcomes), the frequency is similar to professional, capacity building, and institutional support.

Summary

This study provides empirical evidence of the benefits of sabbaticals for higher education administrators. Results of this study revealed substantial benefits associated with sabbaticals for higher education administrators. However, this chapter noted that these benefits were not broadly communicated in the official sabbatical policies, during accounts by administrators of the programs, or in the sabbatical proposals. Beyond that, sabbatical policies were available and were analyzed by finding similarities and
differences between each of them, but none of the policies contained explanations regarding functional details that pertained specifically to staff or staff work roles. Overall, communication of the policy and the expected outcomes of the experience were limited.

Figure 6.4. Sabbatical benefits articulated by sabbaticants

**Benefits Gained Outnumber Policies’ Purposes**

The benefits of the sabbatical as articulated by both the administrators and the sabbaticants far outnumbered the benefits indicated in the sabbatical policies. Most policies articulated benefits of knowledge and skills, professional work, growth, and development, and special projects, achievements, creative work or experiences of value. However, benefits were widely distributed by proposals and interviews in all five benefit categories, which included Professionalism, Personal, Psychological, Institutional Support, and Capacity Building. New benefits in this study included becoming an expert, new job opportunities, promotion, lifelong learning, improved programs and services,
separation, appreciation, job sharing, uniqueness, challenge, and validation, which may underscore the differing work roles of the higher education administrators compared to faculty in higher education.

**Policy and Benefit Communication is Limited**

The findings of this study revealed that communication about policies and sabbatical experiences and outcomes are limited. This lack of communication means that sabbatical policies are often not communicated to staff, which could hinder their accessibility to the opportunity. Furthermore, the minimal communication after a sabbatical experience limits the benefits available to the institution, the institutional workforce, and the further lifelong learning of the sabbaticant.

**Sabbaticals are Logistically Complex**

Based on the content analysis of sabbatical policies through individual interviews with sabbaticants and administrators, the data showed sabbatical leaves are organizationally complex. From a policy perspective, institutional sabbatical policies required that administrators must arrange all aspects of the sabbatical leave including the coverage of daily duties. Moreover, the administrator must arrange for special funding regarding the leave. Arranging these details can be challenging and requires considerable planning. However, it is not only these details that make sabbaticals complex. Politically, sabbaticals are a difficult topic. Several sabbaticants indicated that acquiring a sabbatical leave was political in nature, both from an organizational perspective and within departments or divisions that included supervisors. Developing and implementing a policy regarding sabbaticals, especially at a private organization, can be difficult.

Just the *sabbatical* name is complex. The sabbatical itself is one point of contention, but the title of “sabbatical” is another issue. Several sabbaticants mentioned that the sabbatical was termed something different for administrators because sabbaticals are a benefit offered strictly to faculty. Tensions regarding the division between faculty and staff on campus were evident in the dialogue surrounding sabbatics.
Sabbaticals can be complex for the sabbaticants as well. Several sabbaticants indicated that they might not take a sabbatical if they felt they were being pushed out of a position or if they felt that their absence might eliminate their position. A trusting organization and staff were mentioned by several participants as essential before taking a sabbatical.

*Workforce and Workplace Factors Contribute*

It is difficult to conclude from this study how much a sabbaticant’s personality or individual characteristics contribute to the sabbatical’s success; however, support of supervisors and motivation by the individuals were evident. The data from this study revealed that individual motivation was omnipresent, from taking the initiative to apply for the sabbatical to designing a successful application proposal. Perhaps the same could be said for faculty; however, the administration of the sabbatical involves additional motivation to organize staff and to allocate budget resources to make it happen.
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS,
IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

Introduction

This study examined the practice of administrative sabbaticals to contribute empirical research regarding sabbatical policies and benefits for administrative staff (professional, exempt staff). Through a qualitative, purposeful, individual, and multiple-case study analysis, and a content analysis of sabbatical policies, the researcher interviewed nine people including administrators of sabbatical programs and the sabbaticants themselves to gain self-reported data on the experience and the policy. Furthermore, a document review of the sabbatical policies was conducted and respective sabbatical documents, including sabbatical proposals and a final report, were examined by the researcher. The data, once coded, were divided into several categories to examine themes by benefit, and were also examined as institutional case studies. Specifics regarding these differences are described in Chapters 4 through 6. This concluding chapter will explore themes in the analysis and provide a discussion of and implications for the data results, the limitations, the recommendations and connection to the literature, and areas for continued research.

Overview of Findings

Sabbatical policies and sabbatical opportunities for non-faculty higher education administrators (non-faculty) were examined in this study. Organizational creativity was used as the theoretical framework to understand the benefits of sabbaticals without examining a particular benefit. Additionally, organizational creativity was used to understand beneficial products and beneficial processes. This framework was important because benefits might be a tangible or an intangible benefit. Organizational creativity was also used to understand the workplace and workforce factors associated with
sabbaticals. These included resources, techniques, and motivation that provided a rich environment for sabbatical benefits.

This study provides a qualitative investigation of staff sabbaticals in higher education. First, the sabbatical policies examined were narrowly focused and structured like faculty sabbaticals but lacked important functional logistics specific to staff needs and outcomes. Second, sabbatical benefits for staff far exceeded the stated benefits in the sabbatical policy or proposal and included beneficial products and processes of the sabbatical. Third, communication of sabbaticals and sabbatical outcomes was lacking. Finally, workplace and workforce factors of resources, techniques, and motivation were contributors to the sabbatical experience as outlined in the theoretical framework of organizational creativity. Each of these findings is explored further in the following sections.

Finding #1. Sabbatical Policies are Available but Narrowly Focused

Policies are available. This study provides empirical research that sabbatical policies for higher education administrators do exist. In fact, this study found that 15 institutions over the last 10 years have either added or revised their policies. Additionally, CUPA-HR (2005, 2010) noted that sabbatical policies have grown over 5% since 2005. This study confirmed 20 institutions with formal sabbatical policies. Paired with the CUPA-HR study (in which some of the institutions overlapped, but the majority of institutions did not), this study found over 200 institutional locations in the United States that offered sabbatical policies for higher education administrators. It is also important to note that since the end of this study, another five institutions have been identified with administrative sabbatical policies. Moreover, the number of institutions does not include institutions that offer informal sabbatical leaves. The researcher found another nine institutions that offered informal sabbaticals to staff without a formal policy. However, policy availability at institutions does not necessarily mean that employees are aware of
the policy. Human resource officers at 11 institutions noted that they did not have a sabbatical policy even though it was clearly listed on the institution’s website or through a public union or bargaining contract. More research is needed to understand how the policy is understood and the population human resource officers view as eligible for the sabbatical.

*Policies lack functional details.* Most sabbatical policies for staff are structured to provide the employees with the necessary information to conduct a sabbatical. This information generally includes purpose, compensation, eligibility, rank, return requirements, and so on. In this study, these policies seemed to be versions of sabbatical policies for faculty (and in 10 cases, were joint faculty and staff policies). Although this information was helpful and allowed for a comparison between the two groups, it also omitted necessary functional information about how the programs “work” for staff who maintain year-round or 24-hour operations such as residential programs and admissions offices. Sabbaticants noted that they were unsure about how the program would work logistically and therefore they did not think it was an option for them. Others noted that they started the sabbatical program to provide more clear guidelines regarding the program. Logistical information including job coverage, department work, required skills, leadership voids, and financial concerns by administrators and sabbaticants were highlighted.

The financing of a sabbatical for staff differed depending on the experience. For some, no financing was available. In these situations, the staff member maintained or in some cases received a garnished salary or benefits during the sabbatical time period, depending on the length of the leave (in this study, only one participant was gone for an entire year). For other cases, sabbaticants were offered salary plus extra money to pay for their additional expenses. These expenses could be conference fees, travel expenses, food, project money, and so on. In other cases, money was needed to either hire a replacement or to offer a stipend for personnel accepting the new responsibilities within
the office. Sabbaticals can be financed with no money or with extra money or anywhere in between. All of these options were described in this study.

*Employees at all levels benefit.* In this study, sabbaticants were employed in positions from vice president levels to coordinator levels. They included department heads and highly collaborative departments such as the clergy staff who work in lateral positions. Although the researcher cannot generalize that this model will work at every institution, it does dispel the myth that high-level employees are not eligible because of the need to “run the department” and simultaneously disputes claims that lower level staff will not benefit because of their lower level status. Both high-level and lower level employees reported individual and organizational benefits.

*Flexible policies have merit.* With the various types of work addressed in this study, it would be difficult to adapt the policy to suit one particular employee group. Yet policies were primarily written to benefit the professional dimension of the employee’s career. Polices that offered a broader interpretation of what was permitted during the sabbatical applied more to the sabbatical opportunities identified by participants. Furthermore, several institutions noted that their policy applied to all staff while others noted that the sabbatical experience was for exempt (professional) staff only. Additionally, several participants commented that using an egalitarian argument for staff sabbaticals (faculty have them, so staff should have them) also meant applying the egalitarian ideal to all staff regardless of rank or position.

*Sabbaticals are win-win scenarios.* In several interviews, the sabbaticants expressed considerable dedication to their institutions. Losing such an employee would have negatively affected the progressive work of the department or division. Bounds (2000) noted that the cost of burnout is as much as three and a half times the person’s salary because of the cost of replacing the employee with another well-trained staff. Furbish (2009) noted that leave opportunities are win-win opportunities. Therefore this study presents several solutions that offer win-win scenarios to allow staff to develop
professionally outside of the workplace while also assisting the institution in meeting its goals. One staff member used the time to write a large piece of the institution’s re-accreditation process while another employee conducted dissertation research on the illegal downloading behavior of students on campus. Still yet, one institution rewarded outstanding staff with the opportunity to accompany January-term study abroad trips, offering insight into the actual learning that the institution provides. This study offers several low or no-financial solutions to providing win-win scenarios for employees and the institution.

*Finding #2. Sabbatical Benefits are Abundantly Distributed*

Sabbatical benefits for staff were found in the categories of *Professionalism, Personal, Institutional Support, Capacity Building*, and *Psychology* as outlined by Iravania (2011). Benefits were abundant and far surpassed the notion that sabbaticals only benefit the professional dimension of the individual. Although many benefits were the same as those described in the literature, several new benefits emerged for staff. Likewise, some benefits from Iravania’s faculty-based research approach were not evident from interviews in this study. These themes are explored below.

*Benefit distribution is varied (sabbaticals benefit more than the individual and the employee’s job).* Benefits for the respective categories were examined to identify themes and trends. Contrary to the belief that sabbaticals benefit only the professional dimension of an individual’s job, this study found that benefits were strongly distributed in all of the categories and benefited both the organization and the individual. Certainly benefits to the professional component (career development, acquisition of knowledge and skills) of an employee’s work were significant; however, staff also benefited significantly from capacity-building (teamwork, collaboration, motivation) elements. This interesting finding suggests that although the sabbaticant takes the leave experience, the institution and its employees also benefit from the experience, creating multiple benefits within the organization. These capacity-building benefits, while noted briefly by the administrators
of the programs, were mostly described by the sabbaticants themselves who often supervised and mentored the employees covering work (which allowed them to see these indirect benefits).

_Disconnect between benefits._ Benefits in this study were articulated in many different ways. Benefits were stated in the sabbatical policy, the sabbatical proposal, the administrator interview, the sabbaticant interview, participant follow-ups, and in one case, the final sabbatical report. Policies focused more on the knowledge gained during the experience (professional dimension) whereas proposals were split between the professional and personal dimensions. Benefits articulated by administrators were broad but maintained a focus on the professional dimension of the job. Sabbaticant benefits offered a holistic perspective on the benefits gained in all five categories. While the distribution of these benefits was described extensively in Chapter 5, the most important finding was how the benefits were articulated and how that connected to other important factors such as the application process, the acceptance of sabbaticants, or the funding of the opportunity. For example, if administrators only consider proposals that contribute to the professional development of the employee (for example, for degree completion), they might miss how the sabbatical could benefit other aspects of the sabbaticant’s life, the capacity building of the department, or the institutional benefits associated with the sabbatical. Acknowledging the different perspectives of benefits is helpful in understanding how people communicate regarding those benefits and, additionally, how the benefits are evaluated.

Depending on the category and the experience, participants varied in how they organized the benefits. Participants were asked specifically about the professional, personal, organizational, and unexpected benefits of the experience. Overall there was very little agreement over what participants noted in each category. For example, several participants indicated that “time away” was a significant benefit. However, “time away” was listed as a benefit in each of the four areas (personal benefits, professional benefits,
organizational benefits, and unexpected benefits) when noted by participants. Although no inferences can be made about certain benefit categories, it is clear that the participants’ experiences dictate how they view the benefits. Moreover, there was no agreement on benefits for the individual or the organization. Benefits seemed to be evenly distributed between the groups. This allocation of benefits may indicate that the experience offers perks for both the individual and the organization and challenges the notion that sabbaticals only benefit the individual.

*Product and process benefits are evident.* Organizational creativity was useful in this study because it helped to identify not only the products of sabbaticals, but also the benefits as a result of the sabbatical process. In this study, when participants were asked about the benefits of the experience, they first described tangible products before they identified intangible processes or results. For example, one participant noted that the sabbatical helped her design a curriculum for an institutional enrichment plan. She talked at length about the plan and her role in designing and planning an implementation strategy that would best fit the institution. When asked to talk further about other benefits, she discussed the stress of her office, the transition of employees, and her serious need for time away, rest, and reflection. This example illustrates how the products (curriculum design) were considered first before the “process” outcomes of a sabbatical (i.e., time away, rest, reducing burnout) were identified as benefits. Therefore, administrators might structure data collection measures to allow for both types of benefits to emerge in the assessment process or might choose different assessment methods to collect this information. This information is not in the literature but may explain why some previous studies have focused only on particular types of benefits. Greengard (2000) argued that there is almost no way to measure direct outcomes of sabbaticals, although product and process benefits (organizational creativity framework) were both abundantly available and distributed among Iravania’s (2011) five benefit categories.
Examining benefits for the individual and the organization, the only major theme was that institutional support benefits were more abundantly linked to benefits for the organization. Personal and psychological benefits were most prominently linked to individual benefits. Benefits for professionalism and capacity building were evenly distributed in both categories.

*New benefits were discovered.* The findings of sabbatical benefits for this study followed some of the main themes found in the literature. Comparing Appendix M, which shows the various literature studies, with Table 6.2, which shows the findings of this study, reveals many similar benefits for higher education administrators. Important new additions to the list of benefits for administrators include gaining skills in addition to knowledge and improving programs and services. Additionally, using sabbaticals to obtain new jobs, job sharing, promotions or separations, and gaining appreciation, validation, challenge and uniqueness, becoming an expert, and becoming a lifelong learner were all mentioned as new benefits. The next section discusses recommendations regarding the study’s findings and may prove helpful not only for institutions with sabbatical programs but also for those wishing to establish a leave.

*Finding #3. Communication of Sabbaticals and Sabbatical Outcomes is Limited*

*Sabbaticals are misunderstood.* It is no surprise that sabbaticals overall are a misunderstood opportunity. The populist perspective views sabbaticals as expensive, a paid vacation, a severance package, or an entitlement granted to certain groups of people. In fact, even some administrators in this study struggled to identify the benefits of the sabbatical for their staff, and the distribution of perceived benefits articulated by administrators and sabbaticants is different. More troubling, however, is the lack of communication in some institutions about the sabbatical opportunity and the lack of communication about sabbatical outcomes at almost all of the institutions.
Sabbaticals are difficult to discuss. This study found uneasiness and misunderstanding among both sabbaticants and administrators regarding communicating the benefits of the experience. One administrator said that he did not want to call it a “vacation,” but viewed the time off as professional rest for his staff. A sabbaticant also used the word “vacation.” In both cases, the participants expressed discomfort with the word and tried to find another phrase or word instead of calling it a “vacation.” It seems that the word has a bad connotation when discussing sabbaticals.

In five other cases, paid leave opportunities, other than the sabbatical experience, were discussed. When discussing those programs (one was a staff reward program that granted a 1-month leave for a study abroad experience with students, and the other was a 2- to 4-week institute for higher education administrators), three administrators corrected the researcher by saying that “those are not sabbaticals.” The misunderstanding of what is a sabbatical may require further investigation. Much discussion was given in the content analysis to the political nature of policy titles (calling it a sabbatical versus other leave names depending on to whom the policy applies), which may provide one reason why miscommunication was evident. Further research into understanding how people think about “sabbaticals” versus other “leaves” might be beneficial in learning how people personally classify them. This could also provide assistance when communicating to legislators and other policymakers.

Sabbatical benefits evolve over time. Benefits gained during a sabbatical do not arrive overnight. When participants had arrived home and returned to work, several sabbaticants noted that it was hard to jump back into the work routine. Others noted that they were looking forward to returning to the office work and colleagues. No matter the sentiments of sabbaticants, the interviews revealed that sabbatical benefits evolve with age. Participants who were currently taking a sabbatical or had recently returned described wonderful benefits; however, participants with sabbatical experiences further in the past were able to connect the sabbatical experience on a larger scale or to life
contributions. Being able to reflect over time and perceive not only the applications of learning but also the outcomes related to the applied knowledge was invaluable for participants such as Kim and Lisa who had taken their sabbatical more than 15 years ago. Even in the present, Kim and Lisa continued to note how the sabbatical experience contributed to both their personal and professional careers.

Sabbatical policies and outcomes are not used or communicated. Participants in this study underscored a lack of understanding regarding sabbaticals by various constituents. This information is helpful for sabbaticants to understand how their colleagues will be supported in their absence and also educates the sabbaticant’s supervisor and other approval staff on how sabbaticals can work for all employees.

Beyond the individual implementation of personal or departmental change, it appears that institutional benefits are not fully utilized. Although all of the policies indicated that a final report of the experience was mandated, only one of the six sabbaticants actually completed such a report. Several participants said they communicated with their supervisors after the experience regarding their learning outcomes, and one participant reported that the dissertation was the outcome. The only final report that was completed by a participant was edited and included in a college magazine publication.

The content analysis on the requirements for written reports stated that the average amount of time for the submission of the report was about 2 months (60 days) after the sabbatical experience. Yet sabbaticants noted that they were still processing their sabbatical experience after a year back on the job. Further research might examine if 60 days is the right amount of time for sabbaticants to fully process their sabbatical experience and incorporate the learning into their current practice.

One higher education administrator who served as a peer debriefer in this study noted the sabbatical was like a “super secret vacation” (R. Holmes-Leopold, personal communication, February 10, 2012). He noted that without the communication of the
benefits associated with the sabbatical, the leave would continue to be viewed in this light. A call for transparent communication of the sabbatical and the benefits associated with it is paramount to dispelling the associated myths and communicating the true benefits of the experience.

Finding #4. Workplace and Workforce Factors Contribute

Workplace and workforce factors of resources, techniques, and motivation were contributors to the sabbatical experience as outlined in the theoretical framework of organizational creativity. The theoretical framework offered important insights into the environmental (workplace and workforce) factors that allowed these benefits to be manifest. Although the sabbatical themselves were an important experience for sabbaticants, the environmental factors allowed for the successful acceptance and implementation of the experience. A few of the areas highlighted in this study that contributed to the sabbatical experience are offered below.

Culture of lifelong learning. The sabbatical emphasized a culture of learning among the institutions. This is not surprising considering that they are institutions of higher education; however, the importance of learning philosophy was evidenced by both sabbaticants and administrators. Several participants even referenced the mission or location of the institution and how life-long learning was woven into the fabric of the institution. The continued integration of lifelong learning will be important as these programs continue to grow and develop through different administrators and administrations. Linking this experience to the institutional mission and daily work of the institution is central to the continued success of the institution. As Betty, a sabbaticant remarked, in a “university setting that supports learning, we have to remember that everybody's got to be learning – not just students – we need to be continuing to learn to be effective, to be able to pursue some concentrated learning.”

Supervisor and colleague support is essential. The interviews strongly suggested that supervisor support was one of the most important factors in obtaining a staff
sabbatical. Sabbaticants overwhelmingly said that the support of the supervisor tipped the scale toward the option for a leave. Furthermore, in some cases, the supervisor was actually the initiator in suggesting the sabbatical for the employee. Interviews revealed not only support from supervisors, but also the support to design the policy in the first place. Two participants in this study designed (either individually or by leading the committee) the staff sabbatical policy for their employees. The administrators in this study fully supported their staff members taking the leave and reported benefits for both the individual and the organization.

One staff member in particular noted how “fortunate” she was to have the experience before the sabbatical-approving dean retired. This support underscores the assumption that regardless of the existence of a policy, the person in the position to administer the policy will make the final decisions about how or if the policy is used. When supervisors are able to think outside the box and find creative staffing and financial solutions (if needed), their staffs will be able to benefit. When supervisors have preconceived notions about sabbaticals or are unable to think about solutions differently, the sabbatical experience will be unavailable. Further research is needed to understand this component more fully.

Finally, it appears that support from colleagues and other institutional resources play a role in helping with job coverage, mentoring for grant applications, and so on. Assisting with morale, the sabbatical is a way that sabbaticants have been able to reap the benefits while also contributing to the assistance of their colleagues when their leave is needed or taken.

Importance of senior leadership. Higher education senior administrators are the ones most likely to advocate, approve, and use these professional development experiences. Aceto et al. (1987) stated over 20 years ago that Senior Student Affairs Officers “must support professional exchanges in order for them to succeed. He or she controls the remuneration, job responsibilities, and professional leave of staff who might
participate and thus the fate of the program” (p. 57). It is critical that both administrators and higher education administrators work together to find ways to implement unique professional development opportunities such as sabbaticals into the overall professional development organization plan as evidenced in this study.

Recommendations and Connection to the Literature

Comparison of Faculty and Staff Sabbatical Opportunities

Stine (1987) examined sabbatical purposes and benefits to faculty within higher education. In this study, the researcher used a similar qualitative format to examine the purposes and benefits of sabbaticals for higher education administrators. Overall, the findings from this study confirmed the general findings of the Stine (1987) study. These overall findings similarly noted that:

1. There are strong expected and unexpected benefits that occur from sabbaticals.
2. Support from administrators and supervisors is paramount in the process.
3. More research is necessary to explore how to maximize sabbatical benefits.

When examining the benefits in this study, the researcher used organizational creativity as the framework to generally identify sabbatical benefits. However, Iravania’s (2011) empirical work on organizing sabbatical benefit themes offered important conclusions about the themes between benefit categories. Although Iravania examined faculty sabbaticals, the data from this study revealed striking similarities to the benefits articulated by faculty in Iravania’s study. This further extends Iravania’s study by expanding sabbatical benefits for faculty and categorizing them for other populations. Expanding these benefits to include higher education administrators is an important contribution toward understanding how sabbaticals for non-faculty can produce similar benefits. Although many similar benefits for sabbaticals were reported in Iravania’s study and this research, there were also some differences. The allocation or frequencies of the benefits were different for the different populations. For example, the benefits to teaching were available (although limited), but benefits in job sharing, cross training, and
improved programs and services highlighted the specific collegial work of higher education administrators.

The incongruity between articulated benefits and policy benefits may be a result of crafting staff sabbatical polices in the tradition of faculty sabbaticals. It appears that while many benefits are similar, there are some distinct differences due to the nature of staff employee work.

Crafting Sabbatical Policies

The first major finding of this study noted narrowly focused sabbatical polices. These policies lacked functional details for staff and did not communicate clearly regarding the funding of the sabbatical opportunity. Understanding how institutions function with these complex details could be helpful for other departments who are not currently using the policy but might benefit from understanding, for example, how funding was acquired or the creative financing strategies necessary to run the program without funding. This study found both financing options are possible and both are used successfully.

Whether in the actual policy or another document, information about how sabbaticals for staff are financed or not financed is critical. Not only do employees need to understand how they are financed but financiers, including deans, presidents, board of trustees, and in some cases the communities of tax payers, also need this important information. Without knowing how or if money is allocated, the constituents will make assumptions about how they think it is funded. Furthermore, with the turnover of staff, important practices of creative financing or staffing may be lost if not documented. In one case, the sabbaticant noted the importance of receiving her sabbatical before the administrator retired. Showing how money has been allocated or what strategies were used to finance these leaves is an important contribution to the institutional viability and legacy of this policy.
Crafting policy is difficult because policies with too few details provide too much flexibility while overly detailed policies limit the opportunities and availability for staff. While honoring the purpose for the policy, the sabbatical policies in this study were found to be too specific in some ways and not specific enough in others. Policies appeared to be modeled after faculty sabbatical policies (and were the same policy in ten cases). When lumped together, institutions need to consider the differing work roles of staff and faculty. Many policies noted specific kinds of sabbaticals (e.g., research and writing) that may not be appropriate for non-faculty positions. Thinking more broadly about the sabbatical and the various ways many populations of employees can utilize it is best when offering one policy for multiple constituencies. In contrast, policies created specifically for staff often omitted important details about how the policy functioned. Although policies often avoid procedural logistics, the procedural information in this case serves an important purpose. First, it provides a written account of how the leave functions, which is important for employees and supervisors (as well as decision makers). Second, it formally notes how funding is allocated, which could separate the dependence of the leave on the “supportive” staff in that role. For example, in this study, one member took a leave before the vice-president retired for fear that sabbaticals would not be available after she left, even though a formal sabbatical policy was in place. Institutions might consider a procedural document to complement sabbatical policies that outline not only how funding is identified and used, but also how staff coverage can help the leave to work. For staff, these important logistical factors are important because of the nature of their work.

In their book, *The Two-Body Problem*, Wolf-Wendel et al. (2003) noted several questions to consider before adapting a dual career policy to assist with placement for scholars who are job searching with their partners. Similarly, this list could help institutions create ways in which a sabbatical opportunity might be beneficial. Adapted
for this study, this list provides recommendations for establishing a sabbatical program (p. 162). These include:

1. How well is the institution meeting its recruitment goals?
2. How does the institution’s current approach to staff development advance or inhibit attainment of recruitment and retention goals?
3. What type of person is the institution working to recruit or retain? (This may vary depending on the level of professional.)
4. What opportunities for professional development exist?
5. What is the range of assistance available for development?
6. How will the institution weigh the needs of individuals against the needs of the institution as a whole?
7. How will equality be affected at the institution?
8. What barriers and opportunities are unique to the institution and its culture in deciding whether and how to assist student affairs staff?

Conversely, there are also questions for institutions regarding current sabbatical policies. Questions also adapted from *The Two-Body Problem* included (pp. 162-163):

1. Are all employees (both faculty and staff) aware of the policy?
2. To what extent does the policy reinforce institutional values or definitions of employee development?
3. Are the policies being implemented in a way that is consistent with federal and state laws and other institutional policies?
4. Are employees worried or upset or about the effect of the policy on staff autonomy and development?
5. How important is the policy in recruiting and retaining employees?

It is important for policies to remain flexible to meet the needs of the sabbaticants within ever-changing institutions. This flexibility may include examining compensation, length of sabbatical, and other important factors, and providing caveats for employees
who have different needs. Additionally, for institutions with bargaining units (union contracts), an agreed upon interpretation of this policy could be made available to provide a more user-friendly understanding of how the policy can be applied and used with different employee groups. Currently these policies are written in legal language and can be difficult for employees to decipher.

Furthermore, keeping policies flexible meets the needs of all staff. Institutions that allow sabbaticals primarily for degree completion might also take note of the substantial benefits available beyond formal education attainment. Although degree completion is an important component of professional development, this purpose could limit the benefits available to the individual and the institution. The literature reported a considerable number of benefits available to the employee and the institution when a sabbatical experience was available. This included benefits such as travel, exchange, service, and retention, all of which may be difficult to garner when working on degree completion (unless the degree is composed of these components). Additionally, sabbaticants may be limited by their academic department or supervisor, or the availability of data collection when completing a doctoral dissertation, which may limit the benefits of a sabbatical. For example, sabbaticants may want or need to conduct a study relevant to their employment that does not fit the interests or expertise of their faculty committee. The most obvious problem, though, is communicating to long-term, intellectually curious employees who have already completed the dissertation (either with or without leave) that there are no further leave opportunities for them. In this case, these intellectually curious employees do not qualify for the leave, which makes the policy obsolete for them. Ensuring that sabbatical leaves are open to all employees who might benefit and that applications are selected in a similar manner could help institutions and employees.

Finally, the only institution reporting high turnover of staff was the institution that used the sabbatical primarily for degree completion. The way sabbatical policies are written or executed ideally would not exclude part of the population for which they were
created (written for all staff but only given to those completing a degree, for example). Garnering the maximum benefits for both the institution and the employee is an important part of policy creation. Further research on this topic is necessary to draw further conclusions about this finding.

*Streamline Sabbatical Purpose and Selection Process*

This study provided basic information regarding sabbatical policies and benefits associated with sabbaticals for administrators. However, institutions with these policies did not always follow their sabbatical policy when selecting candidates. “Giving priority” or favoring “crown jewel” employees may be helpful to institutions but it does not always honor the stated purpose of the sabbatical policy. Considering the sabbatical policy’s purpose is to “enhance an employee’s value to the University through opportunities for professional renewal, planned travel, independent study, formal education, research, writing, or other experiences of professional value, not as a reward for service,” it appears that Keillor State University might want to alter execution strategies to allow for other leave opportunities beyond degree attainment as the policy indicates. That said, it appears the sabbatical policy is nicely streamlined to support existing educational policies and further the degree achievement of employees, therefore helping not only the educational department but also the employees themselves.

*Complement Institutional Practice and Policies*

Upon examination, sabbatical policies not only outlined a leave opportunity but also might be adapted to complement the educational mission and best practices of the field. The assimilation was noted by one participant who worked on integrating a global leadership curriculum to coincide with the institution’s enrichment and accreditation findings. This streamlined approach not only provided the sabbaticant with time to fully engage in the development of the new curriculum, but also helped the institution integrate the recent evaluation feedback. In this example the institution’s accreditation goal was connected to the sabbaticant’s leave. Participants from two other institutions (one public
and one private) noted that the sabbatical policy complemented the institution’s current tuition remission or funding for educational degrees. For example, if the institution pays for education credits toward a doctorate but the employee cannot finish the degree, the institution does not reap the full benefits of the degree. The institution views the sabbatical policy as an extension of the tuition remission policy. Also notable, using the sabbatical only to obtain degrees does not adapt the policy to the current practice of continued research or development that might be necessary for both the institution and the employee.

With changing institutional goals and missions and an increase in internationalization/globalization, institutional administrators need to think about how their staff can also obtain these international experiences. One of the most interesting findings of this study was the connection with globalization by the sabbaticants. Of the six sabbaticants interviewed, all but one had an international experience during their sabbatical. For three participants, the international component was the primary reason for the sabbatical, while the remaining two had short stints abroad. The furthering of global agendas involved with colleges and universities today means that more staff need an opportunity to travel internationally. For example, in one case, the sabbaticant was working on the global leadership goals as established by the institution. She used the leave time to attend a conference on global engagement and was one of three participants involved with Semester at Sea, an international comparative education program that takes students, faculty, and staff around the world.

International agendas are changing at colleges and universities. Institutions are beginning to encourage and in some cases require study abroad experiences before graduation. Goucher College was the first college to require study abroad for its graduates in 2006, but since then, other institutions have followed, including Susquehanna College (L. Scott, personal communication, January 3, 2012). These colleges require study abroad and in most cases must offer their own courses (faculty-led
courses through that institution) to fulfill the requirements. As such, these institutions are conducting more programs abroad and require more employee resources to run these programs. At Susquehanna and Morehouse Colleges, most study abroad programs are led by both faculty and staff members to help share the burden of execution of the programs while also sharing the international experience (L. Scott, personal communication, January 3, 2012).

However, simply sending students beyond the U.S. borders is not enough for some organizations. The president at Morehouse College, a historically Black college, recently said that he never wanted to meet a Morehouse faculty member who did not have a passport, and students are encouraged to have a passport as well (H. Mills, personal communication, January 5, 2012). Other organizations such as ACPA: College Educators International, an international student affairs organization, recently encouraged its members to obtain passports (ACPA: College Educators International, 2011). These “passport initiatives,” although admirable, solve only one part of the problem. With little flexibility between U.S. borders, it is true that citizens must have a passport to leave the country. But the same employees must have an opportunity to use the passports. It is not enough to simply encourage staff to use vacation time to travel internationally. Although international travel during vacation periods work for those practitioners who already have broad travel experiences and more expendable income, it may not work for those practitioners who have not ventured outside of their home country or have limited finances. International travel can be intimidating and in some cases even dangerous. However, it can also reap tremendous benefits including obtaining deep learning and offering new experiences (Kuh et al., 2005). Just as higher education administrators challenge and support students to develop beyond their comfort zone, so might the same administrators work to internationalize their employees.

Sabbaticals, regardless of length, can be one way to administer this kind of program. Sending staff on already established university programs, allowing them to lead
programs or facilitate trip details (including but not limited to pre-departure and/or reentry programs) will not only provide an international experience to these program professionals, but will also allow practitioners to expand their knowledge base and personal expertise in scheduling the opportunity and experiences.

Institutions must honor their campus call for internationalization by allowing staff to participate. Participation in internationalization means allowing flexibility in scheduling the experiences but also in providing any need-gap financial resources to make the experience possible. With the cost of annual conferences on the rise, many professionals can use already allocated professional development monies to wholly or at least partially fund this experience. Supervisors might consider thinking creatively about how to help each of their staff, especially those staff who have direct contact with students or with creating policies that influence students, to obtain at least one international experience. Similarly, institutions might think strategically about how the global mission of the institutions is filtered through its employees and might create provisions that allow for employees (not just faculty, but all employees) to experience international travel. Sabbaticals are one example of a policy that could create a provision for further international learning and exchange.

In addition to international study abroad programs, there are a number of other international opportunities for employees. The Fulbright Commission (Institute of International Education, 2011) and Semester at Sea (Institute for Shipboard Education, 2011) provide 1- to 3-month opportunities for professionals and faculty to gain international learning experiences. Regardless of the type of opportunity, there are a number of ways in which employees can obtain international experiences. Sabbaticals are a good way to help employees develop their international experiences.

Strive for Win-Win Scenarios

One institution, for example, under the auspices of a staff excellence award, offers employees a sabbatical from their daily work to participate in a January term study-
abroad experience. This “sabbatical” experience not only rewards the employee but also fulfills several missions of the institution. These missions might complement the internationalization of the campus (which includes staff who interact with students) or provide professional development opportunities at low cost. Because providing chaperones is already part of the institution’s budget, this staff can fill that role, which provides a number of other benefits including assuring that staff accompanying students on trips are high-caliber; rewarding great staff with life-changing opportunities that can influence their work; creating a highly sought-after experience to inspire employees; fostering collaboration in and between units (avoiding the silo effect) while the employee is away from the office; and finally, providing a mission-centric opportunity for employees to continue their own life-long learning journeys. Although there are more benefits to contribute, the example in this case finds ways to optimize the benefits for the organization and the individual – even with little financial or staffing impact on the institution or department. Emilio, a sabbaticant, stated that the staff award was not only a chance for employees to take time away from the institution while rewarding their performance but also offered a pseudo-simulation exercise for staff to learn about the institution. And, because the award was applicable to all staff (both exempt and non-exempt), it offered this experience to staff who might not otherwise have had a chance to view the broader picture of the services that the college provides to students. He said, “What we do is, we educate. And if our staff doesn't fully experience the tasks that we do, we lose some of what it is that we are about.”

Trust

Trust emerged as an important component of sabbaticals. Supervisors must trust the sabbaticant and co-workers to complete their respective jobs. Deans must trust supervisors that services will continue to function properly, and sabbaticants must trust colleagues, co-workers, and supervisors that their job will not be lost. In this study, trust emerged in multiple ways.
To assist with a trusting relationship, most institutions (19 in this study) mandated return requirements for employees, which protected the employers from losing their investment in their staff. Conversely, some institutions (albeit only four in this study) provide reinstatement clauses to help employees feel more secure in taking a leave. These reinstatement clauses guarantee that the employee’s job, position, or rank will be maintained upon return to the institution, insuring a gesture of trust on behalf of the institution. Even with these assurances, employees or institutions may find cracks or loops in the seemingly iron-clad policy. Kim, a sabbaticant, noted that although the policy at her institution was available to all employees who met the criteria, some supervisors might misrepresent the importance of the employee’s job to make it difficult to take the leave. Likewise, Lisa a retired vice president and sabbaticant in this study, noted that employees at her institution might not take a sabbatical if the institution were in tight financial times because of how the process of asking for the leave might be perceived. Therefore, the relational aspects of trust are very evident in this study and should be explored further.

*Purposeful Planning*

Previous literature does not evaluate or discuss in any length about arranging the logistics of a sabbatical. For faculty, the sabbatical experience is in many ways a self-contained experience. First, sabbaticals for faculty are paid through a revolving practice that allocates sabbaticals through the sharing of teaching. If a faculty member is on sabbatical, then their classes will not be offered that semester or will be transferred to others who have altered their teaching schedules. Departments plan for the opportunity by allocating classes and class schedules accordingly. Although faculty serve on departmental committees and other side projects, this work is typically a less prominent part of their work, but not in all cases. A major inhibitor for faculty is running extensive research laboratories where taking a sabbatical would mean closing the laboratory and laying off staff.
Similarly, staff must arrange numerous logistics before the proposal process even takes place. Staff members must first find a time of year that the sabbatical is least disruptive. Then they must find coverage for their daily duties and acquire, if needed, funding to either pay for their sabbatical activities or compensate others for their extra work, or both. When these details are arranged, then the sabbaticant can start the proposal process. This part of the study complements the core research on sabbaticals for faculty (Zahorski, 1994). Although more research is needed to understand sabbatical planning, this study noted that purposeful planning on behalf of both the sabbaticant and the administrator is crucial.

*Sabbaticals are Misunderstood*

Without communication regarding the opportunity or the learning outcomes, sabbaticals will continue to be a misunderstood and challenged benefit. This finding might serve as a call for increased research regarding sabbaticals and other benefits to report the true outcomes of the experiences. After this research is completed and disseminated, administrators can make more knowledgeable decisions about the benefits of the experience. Sima (2000) also noted that sabbatical research should not only be conducted but be communicated as well: “In order to ensure that sabbatical policies continue to be offered by postsecondary institutions, the academic community must now examine and report the relationship between the sabbatical leave and the benefits that accrue to the community and society” (p. 74)

Joseph and Kucera (2004) studied the differences between academic and business sabbaticals that underscore some of the major misconceptions regarding sabbaticals for academics and administrators. In this literature, administrators are more closely aligned with the business side of the argument rather than with the academic (i.e., faculty) side of the argument, perhaps because administrators are the ones who run the business of the institution, including but not limited to finance, maintenance, recruitment, and assessment among other responsibilities (although hopefully with an academic focus). Sabbaticals
might be discussed more fully in terms of the services and education they provide in addition to the scholarship that they bring. This means that policies might be re-written in some cases to more broadly define the sabbatical experience and the learning outcomes associated with it. Additionally, it may mean that aligning and communicating the purposes and benefits of sabbaticals for both employees (sabbaticants and co-workers) and institutions is paramount. It also means that for administrators, the intersection of scholarship and practice is central to continued outstanding work proposals and policies to continue to focus on the scholarship and practice behind the sabbatical experience.

**Sabbaticals as a Reward**

Although the literature cites that sabbaticals are not intended to be used as a reward (Boening, 1996), it was reported that they were given as a reward both in the literature (Mamiseishvili & Miller, 2010) and validated by the findings in this study. One institution rewarded a “crown jewel” employee for her dedication to work, which often resulted in many late nights and weekends in the office. Another institution (although they did not call it a sabbatical, but offered similar benefits) had a reward program that honored outstanding staff members and allowed them to chaperone short-term study abroad trips. Although the official sabbaticals in this study did not lead with the sabbatical as a reward, it appears that work ethic, personal characteristics, and dedication all played into sabbatical application decisions. Institutions should consider how their decision-making process might be unintentionally rewarding staff with sabbaticals.

**Post-Sabbatical Reports**

Final post-sabbatical written reports were found to be a typical requirement of the sabbatical policies (Zahorski, 1994). Even Sima and Denton (1995) noted the benefit of a final report so the institution can gain insights into the experience. However, Jarecky and Sandifer (1986) reported that most institutions do not use the information given in these reports. In another example, a sabbaticant not included in this study noted that his report was not utilized to its full potential after he returned from his sabbatical experience (D.
Roberts, personal communication, February, 3, 2012). This study revealed that only one of the six sabbaticants actually completed a final report. The lack of report is surprising considering the policy requires a report in most cases. However examining when the report is written and what is included in the report could be further developed.

This study found that individuals who had more time to reflect on their sabbatical experience (several years more) were more able to articulate deeper sabbatical benefits in relation to their personal and professional lives. They were able to offer a longer range perspective on the experience and how the various ways the sabbatical experience contributed to projects and procedures over the years in their careers as well as their personal involvement with family, relationships and organizations. Sabbaticants with a shorter amount of time (months) were not able to process the experience as deeply. With the differences in the kind of implementation between faculty and staff, it might appear that the 2-month completion period is too short, therefore not allowing the sabbaticant a chance to fully reflect and implement the changes to the programs, services, and daily work of the employee. Institutions might consider a report at 1 year post sabbatical to comprehend the full benefits of the experience or a series of evaluations reports or reflections on how the leave experience is evident in the current workplace. Additionally, assisting the employee in writing the final report would be beneficial. Providing prompts such as institutional and professional benefits would comprise a useful set of questions to ask and may help institutions evaluate the benefits associated with the leave. It appears that without these questions, the sabbaticant could write a simple report of the logistics of the experience (i.e., what I did on my summer vacation report) rather than a report on their transformative learning experience. Without these important reflection questions that some institutions provide, it appears that the institution is losing important assessment information regarding the leave and their investment in the employee.

Further integration not only of the individual’s sabbatical outcomes but also further thinking about organizational outcomes before leaving, while on sabbatical and
after returning, could be one way to integrate this learning. Furthermore, finding ways for the sabbaticants to present their work, share insights, and change their “old” working ways through new strategies would also be beneficial insights to share. Most of the participants noted that they were able to share their experiences at “a staff meeting” or something similar, but a sabbatical experience might warrant a larger display and implications that can be long lasting. Further development of these concepts will be another important step in communicating the sabbatical experience and helping the institution and its stakeholders understand and communicate the breadth of the benefits. Added ideas as presented by institutions include adding the sabbatical policy to recruitment materials and conducting press releases and stories in institutional publications.

Institutions might consider the required sabbatical report as an important processing tool for sabbaticants, but might review when the report will produce the best reflection of the experience and how the individual and organization gained from the experience. Additionally, institutions might consider several reports or touch points with the sabbaticants to not only review their learning, but also monitor and promote continued sharing and learning from the experience. Reports focusing on the logistics of the experience would not show benefits or learning experiences in the best way.

Institutions might also consider using prompting questions to allow sabbaticants to delve deeper into the sabbatical experience and reflect more regarding how the experience not only affected them during the sabbatical but also how the experience will continue to impact them in their personal and professional lives. One institution in this study provided several guiding questions to assist sabbaticants in this process.

Finally, the reports are not solely a book report of adventures. Sabbatical reports can be important assessment tools for institutions to learn about the benefits of sabbaticals from their staff. Additionally, they are excellent public relation tools not only to promote the sabbaticant’s learning and contribution to the institution, but also to “tell
the sabbatical story” to important stakeholders. These stakeholders include skeptical supervisors, deans, or faculty in the same institution, the board of trustees, president, or local or state governments. Institutions might consider offering several ways for sabbaticants to document their learning journey using new and innovative technologies (Twitter, blogs, presentations, etc.) that might spread the message in more useful and effective ways.

Obstacles to the Experience

The literature in this study strongly illuminated several obstacles to the sabbatical experience. The first was that human resource officers often are not aware of their own sabbatical policies or are not able to translate the word “sabbatical” into other terminology for administrators. Further research into this concept would help to explain why human resource officers are not aware of the policies in their own institutions. In addition, it appeared that although there were a number of institutional policies available to administrators, taking advantage of those opportunities was another story. This lack of participation by employees is not surprising given that Ellis (1945) also found that sabbaticals were often difficult to arrange due to a number of factors. Funding concerns were reported by participants. Providing more information on the sabbatical program including more practical information regarding the logistics of the program in the policy or procedures document would be helpful. This information needs to include how the program will be funded. This means moving beyond compensation for the sabbaticant to understanding how funding (if at all) is used for replacement staff. If no funding is available, an explanation of how job sharing, cross training, and other collaborative techniques will be used would be beneficial. This is important because sabbaticants must find a way to discuss some of these components in the sabbatical application.

Adjustment and Re-entry

O’Brien (1988) and Stine (1987) discussed re-entry and adjustment issues associated with their dissertation studies on special fellowship leave programs. Similar
concerns for re-entry and adjustment (both to the sabbatical experience and to returning to work) were also validated by this study. One participant reported that adjusting to the leave was an emotionally difficult experience, whereas another commented that after the experience, he was sad that retirement was so far away. Institutions might consider finding ways for the sabbaticants to share their new knowledge or skills which could help the sabbaticants process their experience while also benefiting the institution.

**Need for Sabbatical Policies**

This study focused on institutions with formal sabbatical policies, but other possible participants have negotiated their own sabbatical policies. Although they were not included in the formal data collection, three were involved in the pilot interviews and others shared their experiences with the researcher. Being able to formalize these negotiated experiences would be a way to open up sabbaticals to more employees. Furthermore, Battiste (1991) created a call for formal sabbatical policies in her study on professional development strategies for educators. These findings underscore the need for sabbatical policies regardless of institutional type. Likewise, this study also found that sabbatical benefits are varied and prevalent for higher education professionals regardless of institutional type.

**Faculty and Staff Tension**

The data from this study revealed an often unspoken tension between faculty and staff on campus. Participants related in almost every interview about faculty in some way in connection with the sabbatical policy. In one case, a participant remarked that even the term “sabbatical” could not be used for staff since the term was already reserved for faculty members. The divide between faculty and staff was also highlighted in the literature. Souther (1986) noted that although staff viewed sabbaticals as a valid professional development option, faculty did not see sabbaticals as a need for staff. More research is needed to understand more about the politics regarding this issue. However
Implications for Future Research

Qualitative research lends itself to a future-oriented research perspective. Although this study asked about sabbatical experiences of the participants, it had a strong focus on institutional findings. The study was predicated on the formal and informal policies associated with sabbaticals for staff. Therefore, there are a tremendous number of studies available to explore these concepts again for informal sabbatical polices or help explain another piece of the never-ending qualities research pie (Patton, 2002).

Expanding and Broadening Research Methods

This qualitative purposeful case study project provides enough material for a larger scale study to further explore this area of research. It provides a strong foundation for the development of a larger institutional level survey to more fully understand the breadth of sabbaticals at institutions in the United States. Furthermore, a mixed-methods survey of all institutions could provide more information on the institutions that offer these programs. Qualitative questions in this survey could help researchers understand more about these programs and could help to guide future research studies. By collaborating with organizations such as CUPA-HR (2005, 2010), which already collects staff sabbatical data, institutions could provide more in-depth information regarding their policies and could allow for a holistic understanding of sabbaticals for non-faculty. Other qualitative studies exploring factors such as motivation, resources, support, burnout, or any number of the specific benefits would provide more information. In addition, an extensive content analysis could provide a reference guide to institutions looking to refine or add a sabbatical policy to their institution.

Further Individual Analysis

Understanding more about the sabbaticants in this study can help further understand the benefits associated with sabbaticals. For example, how would a staff
sabbatical influence more individual factors such as individual identity, professional identity, and so on, contribute to this study? The intersection of how these individual benefits and disadvantages might help or hinder institutional work or personal motivations might also warrant further analysis. Other studies might examine how practitioners make meaning of their experience. Further analysis might also examine specific groups of sabbaticants, such as how different ethnicities of people might view this opportunity or how barriers might keep certain groups of staff members from taking this opportunity (e.g., women because of families as adapted from the dual-career study; for example, Wolf-Wendel et al., 2003). Furthermore, talking to staff that consciously choose not to take a sabbatical might help further understand some individual barriers to a staff sabbatical program for employees. Examination of staff who led trips that also contributed to their own professional development might contribute to further motivation in their jobs. Other questions might include:

1. To what extent are staff aware of sabbatical (and the variety of professional development) opportunities?
2. Do staff see sabbaticals as a realistic professional development method?
3. Question staff members at the institution on their perceptions of a sabbatical program being open to them in their job (if there is a university policy). What are the barriers that these staff might foresee (even if they are unfounded) to help the institution work on publicizing and marketing this opportunity for the staff?

*Further Organizational Analysis*

This study showed how organizations benefited from sabbatical opportunities. However, there are a number of other questions regarding organizational benefits of sabbaticals. These include how specific institutions benefit from sabbaticals and an assessment of the meaning of these experiences. For example, further studies might examine how specific sabbatical opportunities through the Fulbright Commission or the Institution for Shipboard Education are handled within cooperating institutions, or an
examination of employees who look for staff sabbatical programs when searching for jobs, or how much employees use or negotiate a sabbatical or similar request in the hiring process. Another study might examine how graduate programs can prepare practitioners for in-depth professional development as a way to retool, connect with students, and so on. Taber (1998) noted that staff employees need more professional development in teamwork and organizational issues while faculty view sabbaticals for staff as less important. Further research might explore the intersection of these issues considering the results of this study.

Research on Financial Implications (and Other Misconceptions)

More research is also needed to explore the financial components of the sabbatical experience. Logistically it seems more financially cost-effective to allow staff (especially long-term employees) to take a paid leave (Bamber, 2004). At first glance, it seems that the costs of recruitment (advertising, human resource management paperwork, paying for candidates to interview, arranging flights, hotel, group meals), relocation costs (moving, transportation), training (orientation, job training), and institutional knowledge cost more than funding a sabbatical or even a mini-sabbatical experience. Exploring the institutional factors related to cost and experience might reveal some important findings and might help move the institution forward as a result.

Financial implications could be explored by asking about changing policy language regarding how employees can use their professional development funding. If professional development funding is a shared pool, educating the decision body regarding sabbatical opportunities (regardless of how long) could also be helpful. Furthermore, adapting such policies to include staff or lengthy development opportunities would also be beneficial.
More Research on Rejected Sabbaticants is Necessary

Perhaps the most important research yet to be conducted is looking further at the sabbaticants who applied but did not receive a sabbatical experience. During this study, the researcher heard several stories of higher education administrators who were not granted a leave because of the project they wanted to complete or more importantly because their current job did not provide the kind of flexibility needed to train another colleague or to share responsibilities. This study revealed that vice presidents, directors of counseling, housing, and residence life, wellness, leadership and service in addition to international student advising and campus pastors all had taken leave, dispelling the myth that director-level or high-level positions (even positions that have 24-hour on-call responsibility in times of crisis) are too important to release for a leave. Instead, an environmental study of the governing body (supervisor, Vice President, President, or Board) and how they operate (exploring their creativity, flexibility, and so on) might provide important insights on the availability of sabbaticals for administrators. Preliminary results from this study indicate that a supportive supervisor who can “champion” this initiative is an important determining factor for staff who receive this experience.

Disadvantages of Sabbaticals

Although this study did not examine the negative outcomes of sabbaticals, participants were asked about any downsides or disadvantages of the sabbatical. Almost unanimously, sabbaticants responded that the negative outcomes were limited. Emilio said, “Can't think of one!” and Kim, said, “Absolutely not! No, No, No, No. there's nothing. No downside. There's no negative!” Christine, an administrator, noted that there were minimal drawbacks to the experience. She said, the negatives are “so minor … there are days when you say: ‘oh, I wish (sabbaticant) was here to ask that,’ or you know, something that might slip by the cracks that somebody's used to doing and nobody even knew about but they are minor.”
In contrast, Donnie said that he personally had a hard time adjusting to his new role. “So it was hard – that first week…making that transition was very hard, because I wasn't going to an office, I wasn't engaging with the staff on a personal level as well.” He continued:

It's just the difficulty of turning the switch off, from going to work every day to all of a sudden you're no longer … the switch was just like that. So I'm not sure if it's a downside – it's just having to reprogram yourself. The first couple of days were very difficult, I will say that.

As also reported by Stine (1987), the sabbaticants had trouble with their post-sabbatical reentry to their positions. Emilio commented that upon return to the institution, he was ready for retirement. He noted, “There’s more to life …than the work that we do … But that we also need to be mindful of that.” Kim, a sabbaticant, also described a difficult transition back into the workplace:

I remember having a really challenging time with coming back to the United States and seeing all the stuff that we have, seeing all the stuff that we do. It took me over a year to really come down from that experience and to really understand what I had gone through and to try to help other people understand that in which was nearly impossible because one has to have that experience in order to feel and understand that. ... in my mind I was thinking there was so much of the world out there. There's so much more for me to do and ... I started to think about ways I can do more, and I thought the most basic thing I could do while making a living is to educate others about studying the world in some capacity, and being aware of the issues that happen in the world.

Although one question was included in this study regarding the disadvantages of sabbaticals, the qualitative tradition also confirms that if there were other disadvantages of sabbaticals, they would have emerged. Further research might explore sabbaticants that did not get selected for the sabbatical or might interview co-workers of the sabbaticant to explore their benefits and perspectives.

*Institutional Politics*

Institutional politics were evident in the interviews with almost all interviewees. Participants in the study noted an undercurrent of egalitarian fairness in response to sabbaticals for staff. Both administrators and sabbaticants alike noted the importance of providing sabbatical opportunities for employees beyond the faculty rank. The reasons
given for this fairness varied but included citing the institutional mission of education and the concept of life-long learning for all employees. However, several participants noted an ingrained stereotype that sabbaticals were only for faculty. Kim noted that the term “sabbatical” was only for faculty and was not available for staff. Lisa, a sabbaticant, said when designing the staff leave, she thought that the term “professional development would grate on faculty” because faculty did not perceive her work as “professional.”

Although all mentioned politics as a part of the sabbatical experience, administrators and sabbaticants alike did not see this as a drawback of the experience. A further explanation of institutional, office, and personnel politics might provide interesting insights into the sabbatical experience and why it is and is not offered. Additionally, exploring how politics are applied to sabbaticants’ institutions without a formal sabbatical policy might provide another dimension of politics.

**Limitations**

Although this study was carefully developed to reduce qualitative research problems, there are a number of limitations. These limitations are described below.

*Limited Research Available*

The limited empirical research available on sabbaticals was astonishing. For a practice so widely used in academia (especially for faculty), there is a surprising lack of research in both the academic and the workforce sectors. When available, limited studies have examined how sabbaticals contribute to research productivity (Kramer, 2001) and improved teaching (M. T. Miller & Bai, 1997; M. T. Miller, 2002; M. T. Miller & Bai, 2003). Other research, albeit dated, has collected and categorized sabbatical policies as a simple fact-finding mission (Ellis, 1945). Conversely, workforce sabbaticals are often documented and even implemented in the general workforce sector (Axel, 1992; Kramer, 2001). However, very few studies actually examine the benefits or even drawbacks of the policy. In both areas, the literature reviews of these limited studies cite non-empirical studies on the benefits of this widely used practice. Further research and more current
studies are needed to determine the merit of a sabbatical opportunity for various populations. With sabbaticals under increased scrutiny, appropriate assessment might be available to underscore the importance of this long-lived, traditional benefit.

_Arising Subject Matter_

After understanding how the limited research contributed to this study, it is important to show how this arising subject matter is limited. Surveying all institutions to more fully understand the presence of staff sabbatical policies might be an important next step toward understanding how widespread staff development/sabbatical policies are in the United States. Currently CUPA-HR (College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, 2005, 2010) collects data on sabbatical programs for faculty and for both exempt (professional) and non-exempt (secretarial) staff. Using this preliminary data set, researchers could discover more information on this little-researched benefit.

Moreover, adapting the participating institutions to include the organizational policies beyond the United States would also benefit the topic. A number of institutions outside of the United States have important information regarding staff sabbaticals. Replicating this study with institutions abroad might provide a global understanding of this important staff development tool. Furthermore, staff sabbaticals seem to be more developed in countries such as England (Moltke & Schneevoigt, 1977), Australia, New Zealand, and others (M. Mickelson, February, 20, 2012, personal communication).

_Benefit Categorization is Complex_

Understanding the benefits of sabbaticals is an important contribution to the literature. However, this study strived not only to understand all benefits (including both the products and processes) but also explored how they contributed to individuals and organizations. This study took the organization of benefits a step further using research by Iravania (2011) as a way to more fully understand the differences in benefit types. Simple comparisons between benefit categories (professional benefits compared with personal benefits) was important to offer important insights on the little known topic of
sabbatical benefits for higher education administrators. It was important because sabbaticals have been used predominately in the faculty arena within higher education. However, using Iravania’s study (2011) involved problems and challenges. First, the study does not explain the benefit categories or why benefits were selected for categories. Second, the categories of professional, capacity building, and institutional support are intertwined offering little delineation between them. Likewise the categories entitled personal and psychological are also difficult to separate. Finally, while Iravania’s (2011) article is very recent, the article focuses on faculty sabbaticals. The combination of these factors make this categorization difficult, and further studies regarding administrative sabbaticals might choose other categorical measures (such as product and process benefits combined with individual and organizational benefits) as used in other parts of this study.

Additionally, workplace and workforce factors overlap with sabbatical benefits. For example, balance and trust were both listed as sabbatical benefits but were classified in this study as factors of the workplace and workforce rather than as benefits. In both cases, trust and balance are needed by administrators and sabbaticants and benefit both the individual and the organization. However, one cannot ignore that trust in the workplace is a benefit with immense rewards. Trusting colleagues, supervisors, and the sabbaticant is paramount for a good working relationship but is also difficult to categorize.

Limitations of a Purposeful Qualitative Study

Qualitative research was a time-intensive process that uncovered many interesting contributions to the study. However, because the researcher was limited by time, resources, and the scope of the study, there are other topics to which this research could contribute. The data could be used to explore other phenomena such as the demographic information of the participants, how co-workers felt about this experience, budget implications, and so on. Furthermore, adding more interviews to include co-workers or
non-exempt (secretarial) staff may be an important next step. Adding more institutions to this study will help explain how the findings relate to the policies and experiences at different institutions.

Limitation of No Institutional History

Gummesson (2000) also noted that the history of an organization is an important part of understanding how company culture and policy operate. As such, this study did not have enough time to include an in-depth historical analysis of each institution. Reading the institutional histories of each organization, in addition to other key organizational documents such as accreditation reports, alumni and development campaign information, and milestone publications, would be another way to contribute to this study. Gummesson (2000) reported that historical analysis can help understand both where the institution has been and what its future holds. In essence, he argued that it helps create strategic leadership thinking, which for this study might help guide how sabbaticals can contribute to such strategic thinking.

Personal Characteristics

Although this study was crafted to investigate the purposes and benefits of sabbaticals for higher education administrators, it was also important to understand how individual characteristics contributed to the success or self-reported benefits of the sabbatical experience. This study did not ask how personal motivation affected the success of the sabbaticant, for example. Further research, such as studies conducted by Amabile (1989, 1998), might consider introducing a personality indicator to evaluate how individual characteristics play a role in the success of a sabbaticant or in the personal, professional, or institutional benefits of a sabbatical policy. Furthermore, the study did not administer a creativity indicator to sabbaticants. Other studies may choose to evaluate these personality factors to determine if the creativity of the person allows them to receive or at least articulate more sabbatical benefits.
**Qualitative Research is Hard to Interpret for Policymakers**

Qualitative studies are often lengthy and do not capture the attention of policymakers (Merriam & Merriam, 1998). Therefore, adding a quantitative study would not only strengthen this study but also provide research in both areas for policymakers. Interpreting the findings of this study in concrete ways might help policymakers digest the results and their implications for practice.

**Summary and Conclusion**

This study was an initial investigation into the topic of staff sabbaticals in higher education. Future studies, both qualitative and quantitative, will benefit and enhance this research. However, this research fills a gap in the literature on professional development through sabbaticals for staff. Sabbatical benefits are vast and varied, moving beyond the professional dimensions for individuals to include professionalism, personal, institutional support, psychological, and capacity-building benefits for both individuals and organizations. These benefits are an outcome of the formal staff sabbatical and are combined with the workforce and workplace factors for both individuals and organizations. Additionally, the benefits are tangible products but also include intangible processes.

With tough economic times and increased oversight, institutions are examining important cost-saving measures to fill financial gaps and bring institutions to sound financial status. With a clearer view of sabbatical benefits for both higher education administrators and the institution (and hopefully more substantial studies on both faculty and staff sabbaticals), decision makers will have empirical, reputable evidence on which to base their decisions. This study found that sabbaticals for staff had benefits for both the individual and the institution while providing little to no funding for the program. In fact, using sabbatical programs were mentioned as an important morale replacement for the lack of institutional raises. In some cases, institutions used no financial allocations to fund the program.
Because of the current financial crisis, administrators are faced with tough decisions regarding the future of their institutions. Newman and colleagues (2004) detailed some important factors about the higher education transformation:

This is a demanding, exciting, and risky time for colleges and universities. Suddenly, higher education is in the grip of transforming change. Part of this change flows from the demands of political leaders for access for a greater share of the population to meet the needs of the New Economy; part from the growing concern that the skills and attitudes young people bring to their roles as workers and citizens are inadequate; part flows from the growing impact of external forces such as information technology and globalization. But the main force for change flows from a new level or competition and market-orientation among higher education institutions...It is, as a result, a time for both opportunity and risk. (Newman et al., 2004, p. 1)

Institutions with sabbatical programs might review if their sabbatical programs are available for all employees. Sabbaticants need to make sure they are thinking deeply about their sabbatical experience and communicating it in various publications and presentations both internally and externally. These presentations might not be one-time offerings, but might continue over time and remind audiences of the employee and institutional benefits of the experience. Institutions without sabbatical policies might think about how a sabbatical policy and its implementation would help achieve departmental, institutional, and employee goals. With declining budgets and institutions forced to do more with less, retaining knowledgeable employees with institutional legacy is paramount. Institutions might strongly consider these vast benefits associated with sabbaticals.

Indeed, findings from this study revealed the considerable benefits of the sabbatical experience. With shrinking endowments, a slow economy, and dwindling budgets, organizations are looking for ways to reduce costs and maintain their institutional credibility (Adams, 1994; Blumenstyk, 2009). Sabbaticals are one way to maximize institutional and individual learning and to innovate, grow, develop, recruit, and retain a loyal and productive staff. Moreover, taking time away was listed as an important retooling experience for the staff. As noted by Covey (1989) in Chapter 1,
feverishly working without breaks is not enough to win races or be effective. Covey wrote about the parable of two competing lumberjacks, one old and one young. When the older lumberjack won the cutting competition, the younger more muscular lumberjack questioned how the elder could have won the competition when he took so many breaks along the way. The wise older lumberjack commented that during those breaks, he was sharpening his saw. In his best-selling book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic*, Covey noted that taking time to “Sharpen your axe” is not only a critical component of being effective, it is “the habit that makes all the others possible” (Covey, 1989, p. 287). This study presents the immense benefits of sabbatical opportunities for higher education administrators. Institutions looking to not only recruit, but also retain, strengthen, revitalize, and invigorate employees may find that offering time to “sharpen their saw” will provide numerous individual and organizational benefits.
APPENDIX A
DEFINITIONS

The following are definitions of terms used and how they relate to this study:

**Active Sabbatical Program**:: “consist of sabbatical programs with at least one sabbaticants within the last 10 years.”

**Administrator**:: “someone who has primary responsibility for authorizing the sabbatical. The person in charge is often not a human resource officer, but rather a dean, division chair, director, or committee head who reviews the applications and grants permission for sabbaticals. Because higher education administrators come from a variety of areas within the institution (student affairs, business affairs, academic affairs, but not teaching faculty), there were multiple possibilities for the role of administrator.”

**Case Study**:: “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident….The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (Yin, 2011, p. 18).

**Higher Education**:: education beyond the K-12 level. Often this refers to a college or university.

**Paid Educational Leave**:: “leave given to an employee for educational purposes for a specified period during working hours, with adequate financial entitlements” (Levine, 1977, p. 42).

**Professional/Staff/Administrator/Non-faculty**:: (adapted) full-time, often professionally trained workers whose primary work is not teaching but supporting the mission of the university (Battiste, 1991). “Their titles include counselors, admissions
officer, financial aid officers, housing supervisor, student activities supervisor, nurse, alumni officer, coordinator, and ‘assistant to’ the president, vice presidents, deans and directors, controller and registrar” (Battiste, 1991, p.15). Often these workers have advanced degrees and are compensated as exempt staff (otherwise known as salaried staff).

**Professional Development/Staff Development**: “a planned experience/or designed to change behavior and result in professional and/or personal growth and improved organizational effectiveness” (Merkle, 1983, p. 55).

**Sabbatical**: a purposeful, paid period during a concentrated period of paid time away from daily work for professional and/or personal development (adapted from Zahorski, 1994).

**Sabbaticant**: “A sabbaticant is the recipient of a sabbatical leave” (Stine, 1987, p. 9.)

**Sabbatical Policy** (adapted): “written and customary, systematic approaches to offer sabbaticals for higher education administrators” (Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, & Rice, 2003).

**Sabbatical Process**: “is an indirect and/or intangible benefit of the experience. Sabbatical process benefits may offer increased morale, retention, recruitment, or job sharing as experienced in similar organizational creativity articles (Amabile, 1988; Shalley, Gilson, & Blum, 2000).”

**Sabbatical Product**: “is the direct and/or tangible benefits of the experience. Sabbatical products could be the acquisition of further knowledge in a specific area, an innovative perspective, or a completed project or study as witnessed by studies that examined specific benefits (Amabile, 1988, Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008; Mumford, 2000; Shalley, Gilson, & Blum, 2000).”

**Sabbatical Process**: “is an indirect and/or intangible benefit of the experience. Sabbatical process benefits may offer increased morale, retention, recruitment, or job
sharing as experienced in similar organizational creativity articles (Amabile, 1988; Shalley, Gilson, & Blum, 2000).”

**Staff/Non-faculty/Exempt Staff:** All of these words are used synonymously to describe any member of higher education administration. In most cases, they are professionally educated administrators with degrees beyond the bachelor’s level whose primary responsibilities do not include teaching. They might include student affairs practitioners, deans, directors, and other professionals working in these offices. They do not include administrators who maintain faculty rank and therefore are entitled to sabbaticals under their tenure or faculty contract.

**Student Affairs:** a major administrative subdivision (of colleges and universities) comparable to academic and business affairs. The student affairs practitioner, worker, or professional is a staff member who carries out the responsibilities of the subdivision (Miller, 1976).
APPENDIX B
REQUEST EMAIL LETTER TO SABBATICANTS

Dear Colleagues,

This letter is to request your participation in a national study of sabbatical leave for higher education administrators. Your participation will help to further our understanding of how non-faculty higher education professionals use sabbaticals, the institutional policies associated with them, and in what ways sabbaticals for staff contribute to the institution.

Sabbaticals for college and university administration (specifically non-faculty) have received little examination. To this end, your participation in this study is particularly important because our records indicate your institution offers a formal policy and you have taken a sabbatical previously. Your participation is vital to accurately portraying experiences, thoughts, and opinions on this subject. To be able to participate in this study, your employment contract should not fall under tenure or tenure-track status.

I am contacting you because it appears you have received a sabbatical, and I am interested in learning more about your sabbatical experience.

Participants in this study will participate in one-hour one-on-one interviews with the researcher to talk about their experiences with a sabbatical opportunity or their experiences administering the policy. This interview will take place over virtual chat software (like Skype) and will be scheduled at a time convenient for you. Therefore, you must have access to a computer to communicate with the researcher. A second contact (via email) is necessary to synthesize and validate the notes from the interview and provide any further insights. Institutional and individual names will be kept confidential. Participants who agree to participate in this study will have a chance to submit other documents or materials relevant to the sabbatical policy. This information might include a copy of the sabbatical proposal or final report for the sabbatical and any other pertinent information. The information used in this study will be summarized and reported anonymously. No personal data will be included.

To ensure your participation in this study, I kindly ask for a response as soon as possible.

Thank you for participating in this study and for your timely response. When the results of this study are published, they will be available to the research participants.
Many thanks,

Katherine L. Wildman  
PhD Candidate, Higher Education & Student Affairs Administration  
The University of Iowa  
katherine-wildman@uiowa.edu
November 10, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

This letter is to request your participation in a national study of sabbatical leave for higher education administrators. Your participation will help to further our understanding of how non-faculty higher education professionals use sabbaticals, the institutional policies associated with them, and in what ways sabbaticals for staff contribute to the institution.

Sabbaticals for college and university administration (specifically non-faculty) have received little examination. To this end, your participation in this study would be helpful because our records indicate your institution offers a formal policy. Your participation would help me in accurately portraying experiences, thoughts, and opinions on this subject.

I am contacting you because it appears your institution has a formal policy that endorses sabbaticals for staff at your institution. My preliminary research indicates that you are the administrator or one of several contact people of that sabbatical program.

Participants in this study will participate in a one-hour one-on-one interview with the researcher to talk about their experiences with a sabbatical opportunity or their experiences administering the policy. This interview will take place over virtual chat software (like Skype) and will be scheduled at a time convenient for you. Therefore, you must have access to a computer to communicate with the researcher. A second contact (via email) is necessary to synthesize and validate the notes from the interview and provide any further insights. Institutional and individual names will be kept confidential. Participants who agree to participate in this study will have a chance to submit other documents or materials relevant to the sabbatical policy. The information used in this study will be summarized and reported anonymously. No personal data will be included.

To ensure your participation in this study, I kindly ask for a response as soon as possible.

Thank you for participating in this study and for your timely response. When the results of this study are published, they will be available to the research participants.
Many thanks,

Katherine L. Wildman  
PhD Candidate, Higher Education & Student Affairs Administration  
The University of Iowa  
katherine-wildman@uiowa.edu
APPENDIX D

CONFIRMATION EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

November 11, 2011

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a study regarding administrative sabbaticals. I am honored that you are willing to share your time, energy, and experiences with me.

As I communicated previously, sabbaticals for college and university administration (specifically non-faculty) have received little examination. To this end, your participation in this study is particularly important because our records indicate your institution offers a formal policy and you have taken a sabbatical previously. Your participation is vital to accurately portraying experiences, thoughts, and opinions on this subject. To be able to participate in this study, your employment contract should not fall under tenure or tenure-track status.

Now that you have confirmed your participation, I am able to share more information on this study.

Interviews for this study will begin soon.

1. Please identify a time for a one-on-one interview. Interviews will take place via internet chat software (Skype) as soon as possible to discuss sabbaticals. Please contact me (katherine-wildman@uiowa.edu) with a time where we could talk for one hour via computer. I am also available to assist with technology questions as necessary.

2. Optional: Please email (katherine-wildman@uiowa.edu) any relevant documents (i.e. sabbatical policy, sabbatical application, sabbatical final report) or anything else that might be relevant to this study.

3. Follow up information regarding your interview will be sent via email for your review approximately several weeks after your first interview. Your prompt review is requested for the timeliness of this project.

4. Please contact the researcher for any questions.

Any further insights would be greatly appreciated.

Many thanks,

Katherine L. Wildman
PhD Candidate, Higher Education & Student Affairs Administration
The University of Iowa
Katherine-wildman@uiowa.edu
APPENDIX E

CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION FORM

I invite you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this research study is to understand the purposes and benefits of staff sabbaticals for higher education administrators at colleges and universities.

I am including you in this study because you received a sabbatical (or similar opportunity) from an institution with a formal staff (non-faculty) sabbatical or because you are an administrator for a staff sabbatical policy or program. Approximately 12 people will take part in this study from several different institutions.

If you agree to participate, I would like you to partake in an interview and one email follow up. Your involvement will last approximately two hours. Participants in this study will participate in a one hour one-on-one interview with the researcher about sabbaticals. When completed, the researcher will compile the interview transcript. After a few weeks, the participant will receive the interview results and additional questions via email to answer. Participants may skip any questions they do not wish to answer.

One aspect of this study involves making an audio recording of you. This information is important to transcribe the interview data from. The information will be kept in a locked file by the researcher. You will be asked to provide information over the Internet. Information provided via the internet may be used by the communications site provider for their own purposes. It is also possible that your responses could be viewed by unauthorized persons.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time you do not want to participate or choose not to answer questions, please inform the researcher verbally or in writing.

I will keep the information you provide confidential, however federal regulatory agencies and the University of Iowa Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. The researcher will destroy participant names and coding sheets after the conclusion of the study. If I write a report about this study I will do so in such a way that you cannot be identified.

There are no known risks from being in this study, and you will not benefit personally.

However I hope that others may benefit in the future from what I learn as a result of this study.
You will not have any costs for being in this research study.

You will not be paid for being in this research study.

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to be in this study, or if you stop participating at any time, you won’t be penalized or lose any benefits for which you otherwise qualify.

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Katherine Wildman, 812-580-9110. If you experience a research-related injury, please contact: Christopher Morphew at 319-335-5307. If you have questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact the Human Subjects Office, 105 Hardin Library for the Health Sciences, 600 Newton Rd, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242-1098, (319) 335-6564, or e-mail irb@uiowa.edu. To offer input about your experiences as a research subject or to speak to someone other than the research staff, call the Human Subjects Office at the number above.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine L. Wildman
Doctoral Candidate
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL OUTLINE

(Further information regarding each of these protocols is available in Chapters 1-3)

A. Introduction of Case Study and Purpose
   a. Case Study Questions
      i. How are staff sabbaticals structured and used at colleges and universities?
      ii. How do administrators and sabbaticants in colleges and universities conceptualize and communicate individual and organizational benefits of staff sabbaticals?
      iii. How do these individual and organizational benefits compare to the sabbatical policy?
   b. Theoretical Framework
      i. Amabile’s theory of Organizational Creativity
   c. Role of the Protocol
      i. Serves as a standard agenda for the study

B. Data Collection Procedures
   a. Case Study Design
      i. Purposeful Qualitative Case Study
      ii. Multiple case study purposeful design
   b. Sites
      i. 3 universities located in the Midwest and Southeastern United States of America.
   c. Sample Population:
      i. At least one sabbaticant who has taken a sabbatical and one administrator is needed to complete the case (in addition to the formal policy)
   d. Document Review: (for each institution/sabbaticant)
      i. Sabbatical Policy
      ii. Sabbatical Proposal (if available)
      iii. Sabbatical Final Report (if available)
      iv. Other miscellaneous documents as submitted (if available)
   e. Expected Preparation
      i. Evaluation of Sabbatical Policy
      ii. Establishment of Sabbatical online interview
      iii. Establishment of Sabbatical member check follow-up email
   d. Interview Script
      i. Facilitation of Institutional Review Board Policies
      ii. Facilitation of Interview Questions (listed on each question list)
      ii. Conclusion of Interview

Thank you for your time today. I appreciate the information you were able to share. Over the next few days I will work to gather this information together. In approximately two weeks I will send you an email recapping the conversation and asking for any feedback regarding the information. This double-checking is an important mechanism to make sure that I documented the information correctly. I will also ask you if you have any other information to share regarding the experience. Your prompt
attention to this information would be greatly appreciated. Thank you again for your time.

C. Case Study Analysis
   a. Establish themes through pattern matching
   b. Increase validity of the study by:
      i. Construct validity
         1. Use of multiple sources
         2. Establishing a chain of evidence
         3. Member checks
      ii. Internal validity
         1. Pattern Matching
         2. Variety of Outcomes
         3. Peer Debriefing
      iii. External validity
         1. Use of institutional sites to generalize to the theory
      iv. Reliability
         1. Use of this Protocol
         2. Semi-replication of a study from Stine (1987)
         3. Database of results
# APPENDIX G

## INTERVIEW LOG EXAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location (city, state):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer: Katherine L. Wildman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviewee Title:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Themes of Interview:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Collected/website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Documents (if available)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observations:</td>
<td>Verbatim Translation of the Interview:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H
REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO USE/ADAPT
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Dr. Richard Stine,

I recently read your 1987 dissertation and am interested in conducting a study of sabbaticals for higher education administrators. This study is a semi-replication study of your 1987 dissertation.

This letter is to request approval for the use and adaptation of your dissertation research questions from 1987. I am working on a national study of sabbatical leave with higher education administrators. This study will help to further our understanding of how non-faculty higher education administrators use sabbaticals and explore the institutional policies associated with them. It will identify ways that sabbaticals for staff contribute to the institution and individual.

As you know, sabbaticals for college and university administration (specifically non-faculty) have received little examination. To this end, your dissertation serves as one of the only qualitative research studies that examine the sabbatical experience. As such, it will be important for me to ask similar questions while also adapting questions to fit the staff (non-faculty) perspective.

Participants in this study will participate in one-hour one-on-one virtual interviews (via Skype) with the researcher to talk about their experiences with a sabbatical opportunity or their experiences administering the policy. A second meeting (via email) is necessary to synthesize and validate the notes from the interview. Institutional and individual names will be kept anonymous. Participants who agree to participate in this study will also be asked to submit the official institutional policy as well as any other documents or materials relevant to the sabbatical policy. The information used in this study will be summarized and reported anonymously.

Thank you for your consideration regarding the use of these research questions. I will provide the results of this study when they are published. I am moving soon to Qatar to work so my response to your email(s) may be slightly delayed due to the transition period.

Many thanks,

Katherine L. Wildman
PhD Candidate, Higher Education & Student Affairs Administration
The University of Iowa
APPENDIX I

AUTHORIZATION TO USE/ADAPT

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Dear Katie,

You are welcome to use whatever of my work that will help improve your dissertation study.

When one finishes a dissertation or thesis, the sense of urgency for it ultimately fades into the distance, and all the spent energy redirects to other projects. To have some archeologist (grad student) discover it, dig it up and find value in it is most gratifying because it had long since served its immediate purpose.

I have had two other requests since 1987 to use material, and I reminded the students that educational research is or should be intended for the benefit of all who can use it, that we stand on the shoulders of others. If I can help in any reasonable way, let me know.

Best of fortune in completing your study and in your exciting opportunity in Qatar.

Dick Stine
APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SABBATICAL ADMINISTRATORS

The following questions were adapted with permission from Stine, 1987 (Appendix I).

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me to discuss sabbaticals for staff or non-faculty.

Before we get started I wanted to let you know that this study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Iowa. As you may remember, you received the official consent document when we confirmed this interview date. (If meeting in person) I also have a copy of the document for your review if necessary.

As you know, my questions today will be regarding sabbaticals for administrators who are not faculty and do not receive a faculty or tenure/tenure-track contract. I have chosen your institution because it offers a formal sabbatical policy for non-faculty administrators.

I have a few questions to ask you regarding this group of professionals, the policy and your experience as a sabbatical administrator. The answers to these questions will help me understand staff sabbaticals at your institution.

Understanding the Sabbatical

1. Tell me about your sabbatical program on campus?
   Prompt: What are the key features or main components of it?

2. What are your thoughts on why your institution has a staff sabbatical policy?
   Prompt: Can you give me some examples of evidence you have read, heard or experienced that lead to these thoughts?

3. How is your staff sabbatical program structured? (from an organizational perspective)
   Prompt: How is it operationalized? How does it work?
   Prompt: What motivates staff to take a sabbatical?
   Prompt: What creative processes are used by sabbaticants?
   Prompt: How is the staff sabbatical policy supported (personnel, peer support, financially, etc.)

4. What are the benefits as a result of the staff sabbatical policy?
   Prompt: What are the professional benefits of a staff sabbatical?
   Prompt: What are the personal benefits of a staff sabbatical?
   Prompt: What are the organizational benefits of a staff sabbatical?
   Prompt: Could you describe some of the unexpected benefits staff sabbaticants receive during the leave?
   Prompt: Are there examples you would like to share regarding this benefit?
   Prompt: How has the sabbatical policy changed your view of your work or the institution?
   Prompt: Is there a downside or disadvantage to staff sabbaticals?

5. How do you attempt to communicate to the community regarding staff sabbaticals?
Prompt: What information do you give to prospective sabbaticants?
Prompt: What information do you give to the campus community?
6. Do you have any thoughts about any aspect of the sabbatical leave we should discuss?

Understanding the Policy (ask only if not included in the policy)
8. Who is eligible for the sabbatical.
9. How are sabbatical recipients determined at this institution (e.g., committee, dean, chancellor)?

Thank you for your time today. I appreciate the information you were able to share. Over the next few days I will work to gather this information together. In approximately two weeks I will send you an email recapping the conversation and asking for any feedback regarding the information. This double-checking is an important mechanism to make sure that documented the information correctly. I will also ask you if you have any other information to share regarding the experience. Your prompt attention to this information would be greatly appreciated. Thank you again for your time.
APPENDIX K

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SABBATICANTS

The following questions were adapted with permission from Stine, 1987.

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me to discuss sabbaticals for staff or non-faculty.

Before we get started I wanted to let you know that this study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Iowa. As you may remember, you received the official consent document when we confirmed this interview date. (If meeting in person) I also have a copy of the document for your review if necessary.

As you know, my questions today will be regarding your sabbaticals experience since you are not faculty and you are not employed under a faculty contract with tenure/tenure-track status or did not have these constraints while at the sabbatical-granting institution.

I am interviewing you because you had a sabbatical at an institution that offers a formal sabbatical policy for non-faculty administrators. I have a few questions to ask you regarding your experience and the sabbatical policy. The answers to these questions will help me understand staff sabbaticals the sabbatical-granting institution.

General Questions

1. Tell me about your sabbatical program.
2. Describe your sabbatical plan.
   
   Prompt: How did you learn to write your sabbatical application?
3. Why did you apply for your sabbatical?
   
   Prompt: What motivated you to take a sabbatical?
4. What are the benefits as a result of the staff sabbatical policy?
   
   Prompt: What are the professional benefits of a staff sabbatical?
   Prompt: What are the personal benefits of a staff sabbatical?
   Prompt: What are the organizational benefits of a staff sabbatical?
   Prompt: Did the sabbatical change your view of the institution?
   Prompt: Could you describe some of the unexpected benefits staff sabbaticants receive during the leave?
   Prompt: Are there examples you would like to share regarding this benefit?
   Prompt: How has the sabbatical changed your view of your work? Of the institution?
   Prompt: What creative processes or techniques contributed your staff sabbatical?
   Prompt: Is there a downside or disadvantage to staff sabbaticals?
5. Why does your institution have a staff sabbatical policy?
   
   Prompt: How do you know this?
   Prompt: Some consider sabbaticals as an organizational perk. How has your institution benefited from your sabbatical?
6. How is your staff sabbatical program structured?
   
   Prompt: How is it applied?
   Prompt: How are personal characteristics used to evaluate the sabbaticant?
   Prompt: How is the staff sabbatical policy supported (personnel, peer support, financially, etc.)
7. How do you attempt to communicate your staff sabbaticals experience?
Prompt: What information do you give to prospective sabbaticants?
Prompt: What information do you give to the campus community?
8. Do you have any thoughts about any aspect of the sabbatical leave we should discuss?

Demographic information (asked only if not provided on institutional documents)
9. How long were you in your position at time of sabbatical?
10. How long were you at the institution at time of sabbatical?
11. What was your title during the time of your sabbatical?
12. Are you currently at the institution that granted the sabbatical, if not, why did you leave?

Thank you for your time today. I appreciate the information you were able to share. Over the next few days I will work to gather this information together. In approximately two weeks I will send you an email recapping the conversation and asking for any feedback regarding the information. This double-checking is an important mechanism to make sure that documented the information correctly. I will also ask you if you have any other information to share regarding the experience. Your prompt attention to this information would be greatly appreciated. Thank you again for your time.
Dear Participant,

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss your staff sabbatical policy on campus. I am glad that we were able to visit and I am thankful for your time and insights regarding the program and your role.

The following two steps are the last part of the interview process.

1. I am attaching a document that recaps our discussion. The goal in sharing this information is to verify that the information shared in the interview is correctly represented by the researcher. Please make any changes necessary to correctly reflect your thoughts regarding the sabbatical experience or policy. If the document does not require changes please communicate that as well.

2. Please answer the following question: “Now that I have had time to reflect on the interview regarding the institution’s staff sabbatical/professional development leave policy and my experience, I would like to add the following remarks:”

In order to keep the study progressing, please complete the above steps with the next week.

Thank you for your continued efforts and contributions to this study. Once the study is completed, I will share the final work with the participants.

Sincerely,

Katherine L. Wildman
PhD Candidate, Higher Education & Student Affairs Administration
The University of Iowa
## APPENDIX M

### SABBATICAL BENEFITS LITERATURE

#### REVIEW SUMMARY

Table M1. Data from Figure 2.3

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<tr>
<th>Benefit Type Psychological</th>
<th>Sabbatical Benefits according to the literature by benefit</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation/Rest</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased Reflection</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce Burnout or Stress/Rejuvenate</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinvigorate/Revitalization/Renewal</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional support</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid layoffs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break from Institution</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfill mission of organization</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross train employees</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Institution Reputation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty to Organization/Commitment to work</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morale</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninterrupted time</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop interests</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td><strong>Professionalism</strong></td>
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<td>Grants</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence/autonomy</td>
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<td>Presentations</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test new career</td>
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<td>Scholarly Enrichment</td>
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Table M1. (continued)

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Increase knowledge/staying current</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research/publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Development and Skills</td>
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<td>Teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; Exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase Job Satisfaction</td>
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<td>Service</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Collaboration/Peer Networks/Build Relationships</td>
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<td>Innovation/New Ideas/Creativity</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Experiences/Flexibility/Adaptability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased productivity</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is an example of the chart that could be used to report sabbatical benefits. These categories were vetted from the literature review. This is just an example. Major categorical areas were adapted from Iravania, 2011.

Table N1. Interview Template for Sabbatical Benefits

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<tr>
<th>Interview Code:</th>
<th>Benefit Type</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact 1</td>
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<td>Contact 2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Relaxation/Rest</td>
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<td>Avoid layoffs</td>
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<td>Break from Institution</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fulfill mission of organization</td>
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<td>Cross train employees</td>
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<td>Increase in Institution Reputation</td>
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<td>Leadership</td>
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Table N1. (continued)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Self-confidence/autonomy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>Test new career</td>
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<td>Continuing Education/Pursing a Degree</td>
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<td>Travel &amp; Exchange</td>
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<td>New Experiences/Flexibility/Adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased productivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
December 14, 2011

Dear Human Resource Officer,

I am developing a research proposal for my doctoral dissertation at the University of Iowa on the benefits and purposes of sabbaticals for staff (or non-faculty). I am contacting you because you have a formal policy for staff to take a sabbatical or comparable leave opportunity.

I am requesting your permission to invite all higher administrative administrators (not faculty) who have completed a sabbatical at your institution to participate in my study. Please find the attached recruitment letter that I would like you to send out to the selected employees.

I am not requesting email addresses, phone numbers, mailing addresses or any personally identifying information of your employees. Instead, I would like you to email my participation invitation, on my behalf, to all staff (non-faculty/not under tenure or tenure-track status) who have taken a sabbatical. If the employee agrees to participate, then I will talk with them regarding their experience. Your office will not be required to help or provide information beyond this request.

The intent of this email is to have the Human Resource Office or designee send the following letter to invite employees to participate in this study. At the end of the research, I would be happy to provide the results of this study.

If you are not the person in charge of approving this type of request I would appreciate if you would forward the name and contact information of the person I should contact. In addition, I would be happy to provide any further information you may require in order to make a decision.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Katherine L. Wildman
katherine-wildman@uiowa.edu
APPENDIX P

PEER DEBRIEFING ELIGIBILITY

AND PROTOCOL

Peer debriefers were used in data analysis to verify the findings of the researcher. Peer debriefing is a process of sharing the interview data with external reviewers who have knowledge of qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002). The following protocol will help outline the responsibilities of the peer debriefing staff.

Eligibility of Peer Debriefers

Peer debriefers for this study meet the qualification of a “higher education administrator” (Appendix A) and have a command of qualitative research. They should not be a possible participant in the study, but have an understanding of the topic and the methods used.

Protocol

1. Once peer debriefers are selected and study interviews are conducted, the peer debriefers will be presented with transcripts of the study interviews to find themes from the interviews. Themes found in the interviews will answer the following question:
   a. How do administrators and sabbaticants in colleges and universities conceptualize and communicate individual and organizational benefits of staff sabbaticals?

2. The findings of the peer debriefers will be compared to the findings of the researcher.

3. The researcher will meet with the peer debriefers to discuss their findings.

4. The researcher will present the researcher’s findings in connection with the findings of the peer debriefers to find commonalities and to highlight the differences associated with them.

The protocol formats listed above will be replicated if further meetings with peer debriefers are necessary.
APPENDIX Q

PILOT QUESTIONS PROTOCOL

Piloting the questions for this study will allow the researcher to make sure that the questions asked will answer the research questions.

Eligibility of Administrators (in Pilot Study only)
Participants who will answer or pilot the questions for this study meet the qualification of a “higher education administrator” (Appendix A) and should have completed or administered a sabbatical or professional leave as defined in Appendix A. Whether or not they are at a school with a formal sabbatical policy is not relevant. They should not be a possible participant in the study, but have an understanding of the topic.

Protocol

1. Once participants are selected, the researcher will conduct the interview using the formal questions and prompts as indicated in the study.
2. Once the interview has completed, the researcher will examine the interview questions to make sure that it answers the study’s research questions:
   a. How are staff sabbaticals structured and used at colleges and universities?
   b. How do administrators and sabbaticants in colleges and universities conceptualize and communicate individual and organizational benefits of staff sabbaticals?
   c. How do these individual and organizational benefits compare to the sabbatical policy?
3. Once the review of the questions and answers is complete, the interviewer will make changes, edits, or corrections to the list of questions found in Appendices J and K.
APPENDIX R
REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN PILOTING QUESTIONS

November 11, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

This letter is to request your participation to pilot questions for a national study of sabbatical leave for higher education administrators. Your participation will help to further our understanding of how non-faculty higher education professionals use sabbaticals, the institutional policies associated with them and in what ways sabbaticals for staff contribute to the institution. I am requesting your input to pilot the questions that will be used in this study.

Sabbaticals for college and university administration (specifically non-faculty) have received little examination. To this end, your participation in this study is particularly important because you have received or administered a sabbatical. Your participation is vital to accurately portraying your experiences, thoughts, and opinions on this subject.

I am contacting you because it appears your institution has a formal policy that endorses sabbaticals for staff at your institution. My preliminary research indicates that you are the administrator or one of several contact people of that sabbatical program or have taken a sabbatical yourself.

Participants in this study will participate in one hour one-on-one interviewer with the researcher to talk about their experiences with a sabbatical opportunity or their experiences administering the policy. This interview will take place over Skype, virtual chat software and will be scheduled at a time convenient for you. Therefore, the participant must have access a computer and a camera for you to communicate with the researcher. A second contact (via email) is necessary to provide any further insights. Institutional and individual names will be kept anonymous.

In order to ensure your participation in this study, I would kindly ask for a response as soon as possible.

Thank you for participating in this study and for your timely response. Once the results of this study are published, they will be available to you.

Many thanks,

Katherine L. Wildman
PhD Candidate, Higher Education & Student Affairs Administration
The University of Iowa
APPENDIX S
THANK YOU TO HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICERS
AND ADMINISTRATORS

Dear (Participant Name),

Thank you for your response regarding higher education administrators who have taken a sabbatical from your institution. I appreciate the extra effort you contributed to this study by researching possible sabbaticants among your employees. I know that your office is very busy and I appreciate your dedication to responding to my request.

Thank you for your support and assistance,

Katherine L. Wildman
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