

## **Sabbaticals keep professors current**

**by Natalie Johnson - Tuesday, February 26, 2008**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/547/sabbaticals-keep-professors-current/>

Sometimes teachers have to study, too.

Four College of Education and Human Services faculty members at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh will investigate aspects of special education, trilingual education, elementary reading programs and families of children with disabilities, during sabbaticals in 2008-2009.

Professors Berttram Chiang, Craig Fiedler, Michael Ford and Kathryn Henn-Reinke were among the 17 UW Oshkosh faculty members recently awarded sabbaticals for the next academic year.

“The Faculty Sabbatical Program at UW Oshkosh plays a vital role in keeping faculty members current in research and teaching trends in their academic fields,” Provost Lane Earns said. “It allows them a period of intense study, in which to focus on their research and/or curriculum development.”

Dean Fred Yeo said faculty in the College of Education and Human Services primarily use sabbaticals to engage in research that either results in new scholarship, such as articles or books, or in modifying course curriculum.

In some cases, faculty members from our college work in a K-12 school in their general content area so as to revitalize their teaching and become re-attuned to the K-12 environment, teaching and issues in school reform,” he said. “Other faculty use the time to research conditions that affect student learning or to evaluate projects in schools to determine best practices.”

For example, Chiang, special education, will gather information about practices in specific learning disabilities eligibility determination on local, national and international levels. Fiedler, special education, will conduct an extensive literature review, engage in research activities with families of children with disabilities and write a book-length manuscript.

Ford, reading education, will conduct an intensive field-based investigation of a critical aspect of elementary reading programs/small-group reading instruction. Henn-Reinke, curriculum and instruction, will study design, implementing and assessing trilingual education programs in Europe and South America.

No matter the subject, the projects undertaken during sabbaticals are major efforts that absorb significant time and resources. “These projects would be impossible to do under typical day-to-day circumstances within a college,” Yeo said.

The results of such intense study have far-reaching and long-lasting effects.

The product of faculty sabbatical efforts results in professional contributions to their discipline and increased expertise in their field that they bring to the classroom. Both the faculty and the students reap the rewards of the sabbatical program,” Earns said.

Yeo said the knowledge gained is passed on to other faculty in the college and colleagues across the nation and beyond.

“Typically, faculty members returning from a sabbatical are usually anxious to publish or present at national conferences. Some will produce an entire book; some a series of monographs. Others will attend large regional and national conferences and present their results to their peers,” he said.

For UW Oshkosh students who are studying to be teachers, Yeo said having access to the latest information in the field will impact their effectiveness in the classroom.

For example, an algebra professor goes on a sabbatical and learns new methods for teachers to teach math,” Yeo explained. “The professor returns and teaches our students who, in turn, go into the schools and show these methods to other math teachers, plus they teach their own students.”

For a complete list of the 2008-2009 sabbatical awards, go to <http://www.uwosh.edu/today/?p=370>.