Proposed Amendment to Sabbatical Leave Guidelines of 4/11/2012

18. Committee members will read each of the applications carefully and score them consistently. These shall be their preliminary scores.

Add a bullet 18.5 (that is, one more bullet after 18 and before 19) that says something like this:

18.5 The committee members shall give their preliminary scores to the Chair of the Committee and the Chair shall initiate a discussion of all proposals. During this discussion the committee members who had assigned the lowest and the highest scores for a given proposal shall explain their reasons for that. During this discussion, for each applicant/proposal, the committee shall decide which three (or more) specific questions shall be asked that applicant during his/her interview. After the interview of each applicant the committee shall discuss shortly the applicant's proposal in relation to his/her answers of the committee questions during the interview. Each member of the committee can change their scores during all discussions and after the interviews of the applicants and shall explain the committee his/her reasons for doing that. At the end of all interviews the committee members shall give their final scores to the Chair of the Committee.

The major problem that I see (not only for this committee) is that "non-experts evaluate experts". Including experts in the Sabbatical Leave Committee from most of the major areas/disciplines was a step toward fixing this problem. But the suggested procedure does not use this fact as an advantage. And I do not think that the future sabbatical committees will read your document in the way that you said. This document sounds so comprehensive that every committee will decide to stick strictly to what it is written in it and will not be willing to change, or extend the procedure explained in your document even a little bit. Therefore, if this document is approved as it is, I do not believe that there will be any discussions at all and/or consultations between the committee members and the experts in the committee.

One minor detail (which is not so minor, I think). Now the committee asks the same three questions every applicant and they are afraid to ask specific questions on the spot (during the interview). One of my suggestions was that during these discussions the committee could decide what specific questions to ask every applicant (instead of asking the same three generic questions, everybody, which in many cases sounds ridiculous because some of the applicants answer clearly some or all of those questions and when the committee asks those questions again the applicant is like "did you read my proposal?"