Section 3: Perspective Based on More Than One Sabbatical

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The Academic Sabbatical: A Voyage of Discovery. 

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Academics who have had more than one sabbatical represent a small portion of the academy, yet they clearly find sabbaticals beneficial as they have chosen to take more than one. In this section, the focus is on the long view of personal experiences. What are the commonalities academics see in their own taking of multiple sabbaticals? These may have commonalities with the earlier chapters and, perhaps, elements that are absent reflecting features that either are not enduring or not found among the few authors in this section. While the small sample constrains generalization, our sense is that there is likely an evolution of individual sabbatical experiences as one takes more sabbaticals and learns from prior experiences.

The section begins with Lloyd Kornelsen comparing the experience of an academic sabbatical with a study leave he had while a practicing teacher. The former involved travel, research, and academic events, while the latter emphasized personal restoration. The chapter is an interesting comparison because both approaches appear, in the academic literature, as sound approaches to the sabbatical.

The second chapter here, chapter 10, brings together a writing group from Memorial University who conducted a thematic analysis of their collection of sabbaticals. Each had only had a first sabbatical, but it is included in this section because of the collective voice of seven first sabbaticals. They observe that goals were lofty and actual achievements sometimes developed in unanticipated directions. Whether these details are a consequence of the first sabbaticals is something to consider while reading the rest of the section. They also draw out other issues such as graduate supervisions.
In chapter 11, Merridee Bujaki recounts her three sabbaticals. She notes gendered challenges, and that plans had to change to address some unexpected challenges. Given her disciplinary focus of accounting, her approach to addressing neoliberal expectations of the institution speaks volumes about work-life balance.

The section closes with Don and Shelleyann Scott writing about several sabbatical experiences, which include challenges unique to an academic couple. In their chapter, one can see a careful weighing of options and choices. It is fitting that they offer advice since they have experienced both the travel sabbatical and the “staybatical.”

Note: Among the authors in this section, Lloyd and several members of the Memorial University Writing Group have contributed to two earlier books about academic experiences during the tenure-track stage and around the time of tenure, allowing the interested reader to connect these chapters to their longitudinal history.