

Professional Leave Report Cover Sheet

Name: Dr. Song Lee

Department: Counselor Education and Rehabilitation

College: Kremen School of Education and Human Development

Leave taken: ☒ Sabbatical      ☐ Difference in Pay      ☐ Professional Leave without Pay

Time Period: ☐ Fall  
                  ☒ Spring 2022  
                  ☐ Academic Year  
                  ☐ Other

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# SABBATICAL PROPOSAL

Dr. Song E. Lee

## SECTION I: THE PROPOSAL

### SUMMARY

***Sabbatical leave activity.*** I, Dr. Song Lee, is requesting a sabbatical leave for Spring 2022 to engage in creative activities to start a counseling program at a local Hmong church, targeting the Hmong community with mental health needs and offering bilingual/bicultural counseling services. Per APM360, sabbatical leaves could be used for research or creative activities. I am a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with over 20 years of experiences in mental/behavioral health illnesses, treatments, and research with the Hmong and other diverse populations. I've provided counseling in English and in Hmong. I also have experiences in program development, leading teams, and providing supervision with interns.

***Sabbatical is needed.*** Since my last sabbatical in 2015, I have not had the time to engage in creative activities or research. After my last sabbatical leave in Spring 2015, I returned as Department Chair in Fall 2015. Once I ended my Department Chair term, I worked with the School Counseling faculty on the school program's accreditation reports and transitioning the program into new accreditation standards, which requires modifying several courses. The work for accreditation and standard transitioning were time consuming, resulting in the program coordinator and I spending our whole Summer 2020 reorganizing the program, modifying course contents and materials, creating a transition plan, creating training for supervisors, and completing multiple portions of the program review for accreditation. This sabbatical leave will allow me time to engage in creative activities that will benefit the community and Fresno State in assisting Hmong Americans with mental health needs.

Although the lack of time in research and creative activities is my primary reason for requesting a sabbatical leave, I am also in need of a leave to rejuvenate my energy in my roles as a professor, colleague, contributor, and mentor as well. Please see below for details on my sabbatical leave plan to start a counseling program at a local church (non-profit) to provide counseling to Hmong youths and their families.

### OBJECTIVES

I plan to work with a local non-profit organization, Freedom Community Church, to create a mental/behavioral health counseling program to serve Hmong youths and families with mental/behavioral health needs (social-emotional, relational, and behavioral concerns). The program will provide bilingual and bicultural counseling services to Hmong speaking clients. Counseling services will be available to Hmong clients of the local Hmong churches and the Hmong communities at large (whether they are Christians or not). Additionally, the program will also focus on increasing awareness of mental/behavioral health illnesses and treatments

within the Hmong community through outreach, flyers, and websites. Eventually, with the growth of the program and clients/patients, we would like to welcome master level mental health interns and research/training opportunities (with appropriate consents and trainings in place).

**Background on how this creative activity came about.** Freedom Community Church's Pastor Tou Her had consulted with me about the numerous mental health and family conflicts he had encountered as a pastor for the last 9 years while working with Hmong youths and families. He reported that there were suicidal ideations and suicides among the youth members. Pastor Her and his council members wanted to work with me to create a counseling program to serve Hmong youths and families, providing bilingual and bicultural counseling services. Freedom Community Church and I had plan to start the counseling program for several years, but I hadn't had the time to start the process with them. Instead, I started a psychoeducation group for Hmong youths, focusing on self-development, emotional regulation, and improving relationships with the self and others. The parents of the youth members reported that they see improvements in their children's behaviors and emotional reactions. Therefore, we know that the counseling program is needed and will be beneficial among its members and the Hmong community. (See letter attached from Pastor Tou Her confirming collaboration).

## **BACKGROUND/RATIONAL FOR CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

**Research Background.** Dr. Song Lee published an article, *Mental Health of Hmong Americans: A Metasynthesis of Academic Journal Article Findings* (see Lee, 2014). Dr. Lee discovered from the various empirical research that Hmong mental health is a concern and high rates of depression and anxiety were discovered among patient and non-patient subjects of the studies. In general, mental health illness is a concern, with 1 in 5 adults and 1 in 6 children ages 6-17 will develop a mental health disorder. The incidence rate of mental health for Asians is the lowest at 15% when compared to other groups (20% for White; 16% for Black, 17% for Hispanics; 27% for multirace; and 37% for LGB groups). However, based on numerous studies and estimates of the US National Institutes of Mental Health, Lee and Chang (2012) estimated the incidence rate for Hmong (Southeast Asian) to be 36%, much higher than other ethnic groups. Although many people do live normal lives with mental health illness, suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for those ages 10-34 and the 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for the general population in the US. Mental health treatments have been successful in many cases, however, only about half of those with mental health illnesses seek treatment. Asians have the lowest percentage in seeking mental health treatment.

**Rational for Bilingual/Bicultural Behavioral/Mental Health Counseling Program.** Although penetration rates of mental health services were low for the Hmong, those who seek counseling reportedly found the services to be beneficial (Lee, 2014). Dr. Lee and those who serve the Hmong community discovered that even when services are free in the community, Hmong clients do not seek services. A part of the challenge is that counseling and mental health are new or foreign to the Hmong and bilingual and bicultural services are often not provided or are limited. Therefore, this new program hopes to offer mental/behavioral health services that will

include the following: 1) Educating the Hmong community on mental health illnesses and treatments, and 2) Providing mental/behavioral health services in the Hmong or English language (bilingual) while considering the culture and religion of the clients (bicultural).

The Hmong community focus mainly on physical and spiritual health and often do not believe mental/behavioral health is a separate entity but a part of their spiritual or physical health. Therefore, in addition to bilingual/bicultural counseling services, this counseling program will incorporate all aspects of the person's spiritual health and mental health in psychotherapy as allowed by ethical standards of the counseling profession.

## **CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

***Description of Counseling Program.*** The counseling program will serve Hmong clients needing assistance with the following: behavioral/social/emotional health, relational concerns (family and couples), life stressors, adjustments, etc. The uniqueness of this counseling program is two-fold, focusing on bilingual/bicultural and religious aspects of the Hmong clients. The impact of Christianity has not been studied much or spoken much about when referring to the Hmong community, even though Hmong Christians make up about half of the Hmong population in the US (Minnesota Historical Society, 2020). Other counseling programs focusing on the Hmong mainly focus on traditional religious practices of the Hmong, such as ancestral worshiping and shaman interventions. Note that even though the counseling program will be located at Freedom Community Church, the counseling services will be available to all Hmong clients, whether they are Christians or not. Dr. Lee is well-versed in the traditional Hmong beliefs and Christianity through her own personal upbringings and experiences in both religious practices and via professional research. This will be the church's mission to serve all those in need with mental/behavioral health services. Religion will not be forced upon clients and sessions will abide by ethical standards of the counseling profession. Note that the branding and uniqueness of the counseling program will be fine-tuned once the team gets together and after more research/consultation on Dr. Lee's part---accordingly to the timeline on page 4 of this proposal.

***Preliminary Arrangements/Contacts.*** Dr. Lee has been providing pro-bono consultation and counseling related services to Freedom Community Church for over 2 years. The church is willing to provide space and staff to help support the counseling program that Dr. Lee will assist in its development. The following are contacts already established:

### 1) Freedom Community Church Contacts and Staff who will assist Dr. Lee:

- Pastor Tou Her (Senior Pastor of Freedom Community Church) who has connection with other Hmong Christian Churches and the Wells Counseling Center;
- Shelly Cha (member of Freedom Community Church who has background in business and accounting and will assist with the legal/business aspects of the program);
- Kelly Yang (member of Freedom Community with background in school psychology will be a part of the counseling planning team);
- Kao Thao (member of Freedom Community with background in Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling will be a part of the counseling planning team).

2) Other Community Contacts Dr. Lee has connection and will consult with:

- Dr. Ghia Xiong, Program Director for The Living Well Counseling program.
- Dr. Chris Lucey, Director of the Fresno Family Counseling Center.
- Dr. Lee is also a member of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. As a member she has unlimited free legal consultations and information on starting a counseling program:  
<https://www.camft.org/Membership/Legal-Team>

**Preliminary Research.** Per Dr. Lee's research on the Hmong stated above, the bilingual and bicultural counseling program is needed. In addition to her work with Freedom Community Church, Dr. Lee has also provided bilingual and bicultural counseling when she worked with Stone Soup, Fresno and has provided psychoeducation on mental health issues via a radio show for Hmong elders in 2006-2007. Per google search and articles published by CAMFT, in starting a counseling program, the following are needed:

- a) Business plan: Define specialty of the program and how to sustain the program; marketing; resources/staff available and resources needed, etc.
- b) Ethical and legal considerations (obtaining permits and licenses, liability insurance, worker's compensation if hiring, certificate of occupancy relating to counseling programs, documentations/record keeping, etc).

Dr. Lee will continue to get training in starting a mental health program within a non-profit organization, supervision, using spirituality in counseling, and other counseling interventions/practices so she could better guide the team members involved and create a program that is unique and effective.

## **TIMELINE TO MEET OBJECTIVES OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

### ***Preliminary Activities (Before and During January-February 2022):***

- 1) Meet with Freedom Community Church Team to establish Purpose/Goal, Action Plans, and Working Teams.
- 2) Research literary sources on process of starting a counseling program/counseling program.
- 3) Consult with other established/similar counseling programs such as the Wells Counseling Counseling program, based at a local church, and the Living Well Counseling Center at the Fresno Center (serving refugees). Consultations will include meetings with key individuals listed in established contact list and others to formulate the following:
  - a) Gain ideas on how and why to start a program/counseling program and
  - b) gain ideas on how not to duplicate services and establish a unique program in serving the Hmong communities.

4) Consult with national counseling associations, such as CAMFT Legal Teams and Training Workshops on how to start counseling programs or counseling centers.

5) Take free trainings offered by national counseling associations on setting private practices, supervision, and bicultural/bilingual counseling techniques (ex. using religion in counseling). Note that trainings will take place throughout sabbatical in Spring 2022.

***Business Plan (February-March 2022):***

Once the Freedom Community Church team and I have a clear idea on the process and actions from our preliminary findings/research, we will hone and map out the specifics of the counseling program (Business Plan), although not limited to the following to be completed:

- Will this be a Counseling center (specializing in numerous services – larger scale) or a Program (smaller scale, specializing in only certain issues).
- What are the startup and ongoing costs?
- Who is your target market?
- How much can you charge customers/clients?
- What will the name of program/counseling program be called?
- Funding, space, and resources available.
- Marketing
- Create a team to work with Dr. Lee to focus on counseling aspect of the program.

*This part will be done throughout sabbatical (Feb-May 2022).*

- Develop forms and processes.
- System of Record keeping and Documentation. Resource:  
<https://www.camft.org/Resources/Legal-Articles/Chronological-Article-List/starting-a-private-practice-part-two>

***Define Brand and Naming of the counseling program (March 2022):***

1. Meet with Freedom Community Church team to fine-tune what the program stands for, specialty services, and what we would like the program to be perceived by the Hmong community, Christian Hmong community, and community at large to start brainstorming outreach and marketing approaches.

2. Naming of Program/Counseling program – Create suitable program name. Will search for donations for naming rights of the program if needed as start up fund or ongoing support.

***Obtain Permits and Licenses needed to run program (April 2022-May2022):***

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/apply-licenses-permits#section-header-2>

1. Certificate of Occupancy applicable to Counseling Counseling programs/centers.
2. Ensure liability insurance covers counseling services or purchase new liability insurance.
3. Workers Compensation Insurance if needed

***When/While Permits and Licensed required are obtained April 2020-Summer 2020:***

1. Create Marketing/Promotion Ideas/looking into extra funds
2. Create office space, waiting room, documentation files/rooms
3. Establish the mental health counseling team (who will be providing the services) and possible schedules for meeting clients.
4. Look for training opportunities for the team to ensure we meet our objectives and specialty.

***Once Licenses, Permits, and all other requirements for the program is established (Time TBA):***

1. Marketing/Grand Openings/Create-Launch Website etc. – keeping in mind of ethical and legal mandates for counselors.
2. After sabbatical, Dr. Lee will continue either as Counselor, Director, Supervisor, or Consultant for the Counseling program depending on need of the community and Church and on availability of Dr. Lee's time.
3. Create advisory board if needed.
4. Recruit clients and interns.

***Dr. Lee returned as a rejuvenated Professor ready to assist the department, school, university, and the community at large (Fall 2022).***

1. Submit Post-Sabbatical Report of Activities and Achievements within the first 10 weeks of the semester.

## **SABBATICAL IS NEEDED TO COMPLETE CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

Since the last sabbatical, Dr. Lee was tasked with the Department Chair role and CTC Accreditation work. To start a counseling program takes time and research to ensure success of the program. Dr. Lee cannot create a program during regular semesters with a full teaching load due to the amount of time needed to plan and lead the Freedom Community Church team. Therefore, a sabbatical leave will allow Dr. Lee to thoroughly research to ensure the program is successful and abides by ethical and legal standards. Although there will be obstacles beyond Dr. Lee's control, the timeline above specified plans on steps to take to create the counseling program based on Dr. Lee's preliminary research. Providing mental health services is within Dr. Lee's passion and expertise although starting a counseling program within a non-profit organization will require additional knowledge. Dr. Lee has extensive research on the mental/behavioral health of the Hmong communities. This is a step beyond her research to provide counseling services and provide programs that she sees lacking in research and in the community. Eventually, Dr. Lee would like to ensure that the program is a training ground for Fresno State counseling interns and provides opportunities for future research/consultation/training on the mental health needs of Hmong Americans and bilingual/bicultural counseling.

## **SECTION II: BENEFITS**

### **BENEFITS TO DR. LEE**

***Proposed Leave will lead to greater command of subject matter.*** As a professor, researcher, and mental health clinician, creating a counseling program that would benefit Hmong clients is putting all my research and skills into practice while gaining knowledge in creating a counseling program with a non-profit organization. Once the program goes into effect, it will help me and others to understand more about the Hmong population's mental/behavioral health needs. The Hmong is one of the largest Southeast Asian population in the Central Valley. It is about time that Dr. Lee and Fresno State be a part of creating a program targeting youths and families of our community.

***Accomplish a shift in areas of academic emphasis of the faculty member.*** The shift for me is that creating a counseling program requires more than my current knowledge. I have knowledge in mental health interventions and illnesses but not the business side of providing services. Therefore, creating this program or counseling program will push me to get educated on how to create the program within guidelines of federal and state laws and ethical standards of national counseling associations. I have contacts and resources available to assist and guide me.

***Proposed leave will improve organization of curricula.*** Definitely my involvement in creating and running the counseling program off campus will provide knowledge in how we could better



train our counseling students and could support our multicultural counseling course and our practicum courses (among other courses). I've had students sharing that they do not know much about serving the Hmong despite us having a large population of Hmong in the community. Hopefully this study will assist us in doing a better job educating our students on the populations that students will serve.

***Lead to Advanced methods of teaching.*** Insights and knowledge gained will assist in helping students understand various populations in behavioral/mental health needs. Experience with this creative activity will better hone my skills in assisting students in counseling skills and interventions. My students gained the most clarity when I could pull examples from my counseling experiences to share. Therefore, creating this counseling program and running it would provide plenty of experiences to share. Many of our students will go on to run their own private practices so this additional knowledge that I will gain from creating this counseling program off campus will allow me to share with students on how to create programs and private practices.

***Lead to creative activities in one's field.*** My previous research and sabbatical leave led me to this creative activity of creating a counseling program that will benefit Hmong clients. Creating this program and running it will help me gain insight into the business side of counseling and help me create prevention and intervention programs that are more ethnic and age specific. The work that I will do during sabbatical will provide me practical experiences as well as provide opportunities for training and research with the Hmong, which are both lacking in our current counseling literary sources. Therefore, this creative activity will lead to other creative activities such as research, mental health outreach, mental health education, grant, training and consultation opportunities.

### **BENEFITS TO UNIVERSITY (Dept., School, and/or University).**

***Contribution to Field and Fresno State:*** We currently have some empirical studies on the Hmong, but there are not enough evidenced based practices which we could draw from in serving the Hmong community with mental/behavioral health needs. My creative activity of creating a counseling program with a community partner will contribute to the field and highlight the work of Fresno State through my work.

***This research will benefit all levels at Fresno State.*** At the Departmental level, the program development will help me gain insights and knowledge on the business side of counseling so I could better guide other faculty and students. At the school and university level, my collaboration with a community partner and establishment of a mental health program focusing on the Hmong will provide opportunities for other students and faculty to be involved at many levels---practice, research, and training. In addition to benefiting the University, this research will benefit the field of counseling, behavioral health organizations, and the Hmong community. Outreach and advocacy for Hmong behavioral/mental health is limited in part due to lack of data and research. Developing a counseling program will open opportunities to obtain grants and services that are needed to assist the Hmong population, who has a low penetration rate in mental

health services. All of the activities and plans summarized in this proposal meets Fresno State's mission to boldly educate and take actions to achieve Discovery, Diversity, and Distinction.

### **SECTION III: PREVIOUS LEAVES**

#### **Previous Leaves.**

- a) *A copy of the report* from the last sabbatical leave is attached. Thank you for reviewing and considering. Please note that I was informed of my eligibility for sabbatical within a week of it being due, so I hope this proposal was able to clarify my intentions for sabbatical.

**Attachments Include: 1) Collaboration Letter; 2) Previous Sabbatical Report**

## **POST-SABBATICAL REPORT**

**Dr. Song Lee (Sabbatical in Spring 2022)**

### **Reason for this Report-Per APM 360:**

#### **VII. POST-SABBATICAL OR POST-DIP LEAVE REPORTS**

1. Each faculty member, within ten (10) weeks of the completion of a sabbatical or DIP leave, shall submit to the appropriate dean (or equivalent) a written report of the leave's activities. The report shall be placed in the faculty member's Personnel Action File (PAF). The faculty member will also provide a copy of this report to the Provost, via the Office of Faculty Affairs, to be eventually placed in the University Archives.

2. This written report shall include: a) the accomplishments of the leave in relation to the goals of the original proposal; b) modifications, if any, to the original proposal, and the circumstances that necessitated these modifications; c) the objectives of the original proposal (if any) that were not accomplished; and d) anticipated outcomes for the near future as a consequence of the leave's activities. 3. A copy of the original sabbatical or DIP leave proposal shall be attached to this report.

#### **\*\*\*Written Report\*\*\***

#### **2a. Accomplishments in Relation to Goals of Proposal**

During Spring 2022, Dr. Lee established a Wellness Program at Freedom Community Church, focusing on providing education, resources, and support to members of local Hmong Churches and the Hmong community in Fresno, regardless of their religion. ([Click Here to View Timeline of Activities](#)) The following is a summary of accomplishments (although not limited to):

1. Dr. Lee Obtained Trainings and did some readings and research to run a Wellness Program.

a. Training on Laws and Ethics in Counseling (Training from Gerry Grossman, Feb2022)

b. 7-Hour Suicide Prevention CE (Training from Gerry Grossman, Feb2022)

c. Did reading/research to distinguish between support groups and counseling groups and provided training to Church council.

2. Dr. Lee Consulted with various individuals to ensure the program considers and maintains legal and ethical standards and is still within the Church Counsel's vision. The following are the people Dr. Lee consulted with:

a. Dr. Chris Lucey, Former Director of Fresno Family Counseling Center (Jan2022)

b. Telephone consult with lawyer from California Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (CAMFT) (Jan 2022)

c. Freedom Community Church Council and leaders (met with them about 3 times during their monthly meetings).

3. Dr. Lee created and provided 2 trainings to Church leaders and youth leaders on ethical and legal responsibilities and behaviors. Topics included: mandate reporting for members of the clergy (child abuse and elderly/dependent adult abuse); suicide prevention, harm to self or others (including domestic violence); developing trust and rapport with others.

4. Established a wellness resource room at Freedom Community Church. Furnished with furniture that Dr. Lee donated and stocked with resources for emotional wellness, which Dr. Lee researched/consulted and ordered.

5. Established mission, vision (and branding), and services for the Wellness Program. Developed a team to create and run the program and provide support groups. The following are examples of services the team will run for the Wellness Program:

a. Men's group focusing on recovering from Gout. -Tong Thao

b. Couple's group focusing on recovering from illnesses. – Kelly Yang

c. Youth Group focusing on transitioning into adulthood. – Calida and Dr. Lee

d. Young children's group focusing on emotional wellbeing and relational skills-

Dr.

Lee

e. Individual Consultation Sessions with Dr. Lee: maintaining mental health wellness, career exploration, and resources.

6. Assisted Freedom Community Church establish a protocol to deal with mandate reporting and suicide prevention. [Click Here to See Draft of Protocol](#)

7. Open House to inform the community about the services: Oct. 22, 2022

8. Mental Health Outreach Plan/Vision for future occurrences, which includes the following:

a. Free workshops on emotional well-being, suicide prevention, and ethical and legal considerations in working with congregations.

b. Annual Conference on Emotional Wellness as an outreach approach to connect graduate counseling students and local mental health resources with

the Hmong community and educating the Hmong community on emotional and behavioral wellness.

c. Newsletter or Social Media Posts on social emotional well-being tips.

d. Monthly mental health wellness challenge for the congregation at Freedom Community Church

### **Modifications, if any, and the Circumstances that Necessitated Modifications**

Originally, the idea was to create a *counseling* program at Freedom Community Church. However, after meeting and consulting with Freedom Community Church, Dr. Lucey (former director of Fresno Family Counseling Center), and an attorney from the California Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, it is more feasible and less expensive for the Church to run a Wellness program to only provide education, resources, and support instead of counseling. Since “counseling” is a term people may misconstrued as clinical mental health services, the program is not called a “counseling program” to avoid any legal repercussions and misunderstandings. It is now called the Wellness Program. It’s mission is to educate, provide resources, and provide support groups to the Hmong community to understand and cope with life stressors and improve emotional or behavioral wellness. Although it is not legally called a counseling program, it will have bilingual and bicultural support groups as a service to provide to the community to improve emotional wellness. The program will also provide individual consultation sessions to link individuals to local mental health resources. Reasons for this slight difference is due to the following:

1. Limited Funding to provide staffing to run a counseling program, which will require accounting, maintaining documentations, etc. Dr. Lee and the church will first try the Wellness Program to understand the need and usage of services. They may return to look at a Counseling Program option at a later date.
2. A Wellness Program is more feasible, less expensive, and doesn’t require licensed individuals to help run support groups. Dr. Lee will provide trainings to those who will be running support groups.
3. Running support groups will also support Fresno State Counseling students. Dr. Lucey, professor and former director of Fresno Family Counseling Center, informed that MFCC and other counseling students can still intern under Dr. Lee’s supervision at Freedom Community Church in providing support groups and individual consultations since Dr. Lee is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and the licensing board allows support groups to be part of the training.

### **C. Objectives of Original Proposal (if any) not Accomplished**

All the objectives have been met except for obtaining licenses to run a counseling program since we are not running “counseling programs,” but an emotional wellness program.

We don't need to obtain any licenses per consultation with the California Association for Marriage Therapist (CAMFT) attorney. The Church, a non-profit organization, is already set to run the Wellness Program. Per the CAMFT attorney, even if we want to run a counseling program, the Church is already an established non-profit organization that can run counseling programs even if we wanted to do so instead of a Wellness Program.

**D. Copy of Original Sabbatical Proposal Attached.**