

Professional Leave Report Cover Sheet

Name: Todd Lone

Department: Ag Business

College: Jordan College of Ag Sciences & Technology

Leave taken: Sabbatical Difference in Pay Professional Leave without Pay

Time Period: Fall 2022

- Spring
- Academic Year
- Other

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Report on Sabbatical Leave – Fall 2022
Todd A. Lone – Associate Professor, Agricultural Business
Topic: Service-Learning Potential

I have successfully utilized the sabbatical leave period to investigate short-term study-abroad opportunities. Specifically, I investigated agriculturally focused two-week service-learning opportunities, both internationally and domestically. In addition to my research project, I was able to attend the inaugural Career-Integrated Global Learning Conference in Milan, Italy. At that event, I was able to network with study-abroad vendors from across the world and learn of the changing nature of study abroad from the United States and International perspectives.

I. Accomplishments

The accomplishments of my sabbatical were numerous and extended beyond my original proposal. The results summaries of my sabbatical activities provided below include: A) developing a service-learning course in the Azores, B) investigating service-learning opportunities internationally, C) exploring possibilities of study-away in U.S. territories and with Native American tribes, and D) attending an international conference focused on study-abroad opportunities in Europe.

- A. Objective 1 – Develop and operationalize an Azores service-learning course for summer 2023 or 2024.

Background – Fresno State has a long history of community service because its students are civic-minded and are proud of the impact of their service. The Azores course is another opportunity for Fresno State students to help local communities in other parts of the world. It is especially appealing to the many students at Fresno State who are of Portuguese and Azorean heritage. The benefits of this high-impact course are numerous; 1) students learn about another culture to expand their understanding, perspective, and appreciation of our diverse world, 2) students develop skills related to civic engagement and leadership, 3) students improve communication and coping skills, and 4) students enhance their problem-solving skills.

Results – This objective was the highest priority of my sabbatical and it has been achieved. The summer 2023 offering was delayed due to the inability to procure a vendor on such short notice but student feedback at the fall 2023 study-abroad fair indicated substantial interest in participating in this program. All components of the course are in place for a summer 2024 offering and the process has begun. The course proposal, syllabus, tentative itinerary, faculty/personnel involved, and cooperating Azorean agencies are complete. The intent to offer the course for summer 2024 was submitted and approved by Rishad Gandhi, Coordinator, Study Abroad Office, Division of Continuing & Global Education (CGE).

Course Specifics – Course dates (May 24 – June 8, 2024)

Course: INTD 188S – 3 units (fulfills university requirement M/I)

Course options:

1. Pico Island – work alongside community members on vineyards designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and
2. Terceira Island – mentor junior/senior high students in English language skills:

Campus team involved:

1. Todd Lone (Dept. of Agricultural Business) – Lead instructor, Pico Island
2. Alison Mandaville (Dept. of English) – Lead instructor, Terceira Island
3. Chris Fiorentino & Mellissa Jessen-Hiser – Jan & Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning
4. Diniz Borges – Instructor & Azores Liaison
5. Rishad Gandhi – Study Abroad Coordinator

B. Objective 2 – Investigate additional agriculturally focused service-learning, study-abroad courses to expand Fresno State’s offerings. Identify agencies specializing in this area and build relationships with them.

Background – Fresno State’s offerings of agriculturally-focused service-learning, study-abroad courses is in its infancy. While Jordan College student feedback at CGE study-abroad fairs indicates they are eager to engage in agricultural projects with communities around the world, the university’s diverse student population seeks opportunities in other disciplines as well. Identifying additional opportunities for international civic engagement will allow more Fresno State students to take advantage of these experiences and realize the academic, personal, and professional benefits.

Results – Numerous international short-term service-learning opportunities provided by potential new vendors for Fresno State were identified through extensive online research (see appendix for examples). My attendance at the inaugural Career Integrated Global Learning Conference (CIGL) in Milan, Italy in October 2022 resulted in valuable connections with major U.S. and international study-abroad vendors such as AIFS Abroad, Global Career Center, EF College study, etc. Many of these vendors work with universities to explore and create custom faculty-led service-learning programs as well as international or virtual internships, and semester study abroad. Before establishing a relationship with a potential new vendor, Fresno State’s division of Continuing and Global Education thoroughly vets them to assure that students receive a safe, enriching, and fulfilling experience. All potential offerings are also vetted with respect to U.S. State Department and the California State University travel advisories and/or restrictions. Discussions with current Fresno State study-abroad vendors identified additional potential service-learning opportunities in Africa, South America, and Asia. Two of the primary criteria for consideration of any service-learning opportunity are affordability and varied community engagement options with the host country’s citizens. These potential service-learning programs are being discussed collectively with Agricultural Business Department faculty, CGE leadership, and the Jan and Bud Richter Center to identify the most feasible options moving forward.

C. Objective 3 – Explore possibilities of developing domestic agriculturally focused service-learning courses that expose students to other cultures and practices, starting with Native American tribes.

Background – The benefits to students participating in short-term service-learning courses were provided in objective 1 above. However, achieving these benefits is not always feasible for all Fresno State students due to economic challenges or those who have DACA or undocumented status. Specifically, DACA students must obtain Advanced Parole to reenter the U.S. after traveling to another country and undocumented students would not be allowed reentry. Thus, exploration of service-learning alternatives with Native American tribes or agencies in U.S. territories was initiated to identify a cost-effective way for all students to participate in these courses without jeopardizing reentry status for DACA or undocumented students.

Results – Several Native American tribes collaborate on short-term service-learning opportunities and other agencies offer options in U.S. territories (see the appendix for examples). Given courses like this involve interaction with a Native American culture, Chris Fiorentino supports continued exploration of the options and indicated these courses could possibly satisfy the university Multicultural/International (M/I) requirement, pending approval of the university M/I committee. Discussions with Scott Moore, Dean of CGE, revealed he would like to offer short-term domestic study opportunities to all Fresno State students, but resource constraints prevent sponsoring such opportunities at this time. Reasons cited for not moving forward at this time include: a limited staff of five people, a small study-abroad budget compared to other CSU campuses, domestic study would require revision/development of new policies, and vetting of new domestic vendors is needed. Since these tasks require substantial personnel hours, CGE would need resource help to make this a reality.

Since starting a domestic study program is not feasible at this time, Dean Moore suggested that a way to include DACA students in international service-learning opportunities would be to partner with another CSU campus. Toward that end, discussions started with California State, Fullerton because their campus has experience taking DACA students abroad. Presently, the two campuses have agreed to move forward on a pilot program scheduled for summer 2024 or winter intersession 2025. I will be collaborating with CGE staff, Chris Fiorentino, and the study-abroad staff at Fullerton over the next year or so to bring the program to fruition. Dean Moore has provided some startup funding to help subsidize DACA students from each campus.

II. Modifications

There were no modifications to the original sabbatical proposal.

III. Objectives not accomplished.

The initial objectives have been accomplished and follow-up work is ongoing to bring more of these opportunities to fruition.

IV. Anticipated outcomes for the near future

First, all the components necessary to deliver a service-learning course in the Azores are in place and the course will be offered in the summer of 2024. Second, discussions with Fullerton are continuing to finalize the details of a service-learning course to include DACA students. Third, discussions with Fresno State administration, academic departments, and offices with a vested interest in offering these courses will continue to determine if resources can be allocated to offer short-term service-learning courses for Fresno State students in U.S. territories and/or with Native American tribes. Finally, because of attending the CIGL Conference during this sabbatical, discussions with faculty will continue to determine: 1) potential service-learning destinations and course focus, 2) how virtual and on-site internships may be incorporated in the Agricultural Business major, and 3) whether semester study-abroad opportunities are of interest to students in the department of agricultural business.

Conclusion

I am a strong believer in the importance of experiential learning for Fresno State's students. This sabbatical leave has motivated me to explore additional experiential learning opportunities such as community service projects and study-abroad programs for this university's diverse student population. It has also provided me with an expanded network of contacts in these areas to help expand Fresno State's offerings in this important high-impact area of higher education.

Appendix

Example Short-term Service-learning Courses

International agriculturally focused service-learning, study-abroad courses.

1. Dominican Republic – Environmental Citizenship in the Dominican Republic.
 - Focus: 8-day program: Central Highlands of Dominican Republic (2 days travel, 4 days SL project, 2 days cultural excursions).
 - Dates: Year-round availability.
 - Price: \$2,929 – includes airfare, accommodations, meals, full-time field director, volunteer and leadership activities, support, etc.
 - Vendor: EF Educational Tours.
<https://www.efcollegestudytours.com/programs/dominican-republic-environmental-sustainability>
2. Customized programs (Hannah Gipson 303-214-0960).
 - Focus: It is possible to set up a 12–14-day custom program in Puerto Rico with an eco-agriculture focus, but they prefer universities start with a signature program like the example above.
 - Price: Like their other offerings if a minimum of 15 students enroll for the custom program.
 - Vendor: EF Educational Tours.
3. Costa Rica – Eco-Agriculture.
 - Focus: Working with local coffee farming family to improve harvest and implement effective agricultural practices.
 - Dates: Year-round availability, Monday – Friday (4-5 hours per day).
 - Price: \$1,234 (2 weeks) or \$1,599 (3 weeks) includes homestay accommodations with Wi-Fi, three meals per day, 24/7 in-country support, orientation, airport pick-up, personalized preparation tools and guides, other program discounts (language lessons, travel, tours, etc.), certificate of international volunteer.
 - a. Vendor: International Volunteer HQ.
<https://www.volunteerhq.org/destinations/costa-rica/eco-agriculture-in-san-jose/>
4. Africa, Europe, Latin America, or The Pacific
 - Focus: Custom faculty-led programs or service-learning projects.
 - Dates: Spring, summer, and fall.
 - Price: \$2,995 (4 weeks) includes emergency services, insurance, cultural orientation, housing, meals, laundry, airport pickup, project materials, and SL portfolio.

1. Vendor: ISA Service-Learning by WorldStrides.
<https://www.studiesabroad.com/ProgramFinder#programtype=servicelearning>

Domestic agriculturally focused service-learning courses collaborating with Native American tribes.

1. Montana – Blackfeet Indian Reservation
 - Categories: Community assistance, facility repair & maintenance, children's summer camps, elder care, or proposal.
 - Dates: May through August (7 days or custom for longer).
 - Price: \$1,177 includes room and board.

- Vendor: Global Volunteers.
- 2. South Dakota – Sicangu Rosebud Sioux Reservation.
 - Category: Children's summer camps for several topics or custom proposal.
 - Dates: May through October (one-week programs or custom).
 - Price: \$1,177 includes room and board.
 - Vendor: Global Volunteers. <https://globalvolunteers.org/usa-south-dakota/#food-lodging>
- 3. Puerto Rico.
 - Category: the environment, childhood education, homelessness, hunger.
 - Dates: March through October (8-day programs or custom).
 - Price: \$985 / person includes food, lodging, in-country transportation, full-time volunteer coordinator, project materials, insurance, and educational/recreational activities.
 - Vendor: Community Collaborations International.
<https://communitycollaborations.org/puerto-rico-projects/>