

Professional Leave Report Cover Sheet

Name: Hillary Jones

Department: Communication

College: Arts & Humanities

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

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

Your report will be sent to your Dean for your PAF and to the Library Archives.



To: Honora Chapman, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities

CC: Xuanning Fu, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Diane Volpp, Interim Director of Faculty Personnel

From: Hillary A. Jones, Ph.D., Associate Professor in Department of Communication

RE: Formal Report for Fall 2022 Sabbatical

The approved sabbatical proposal (appended to the same email as this report) promised to yield a book prospectus. **Mission accomplished.** I analyzed close to 200 hours of material, assembled press profiles and reviewed book lists from over 30 presses, produced over 20,000 words towards the body of the book, built and annotated a proposal template, and composed and polished the cover letter.

This sabbatical accrued benefits both to the faculty member and to the university. Those initially anticipated are detailed in the approved proposal (attached). Pleasantly, I was surprised by several additional benefits.

First, I deepened my command of areas of subject matter in posthumanist theory and speculative imaginaries, as planned, but this additionally helped **shift my areas of scholarly expertise** further into media studies (televisual and new media) and into a completely new area in monstrosity theory. I look forward to integrating these into future research and teaching.

The book project has evolved as I launched the research and refined the scope of inquiry. For example, the title has been updated, the book's organizational structure has shifted, and its scope has narrowed to facilitate a greater depth of inquiry. The current working title is *Posthuman Possibility Made Monstrous: Clones and Robots Running Amok on the Small Screen*. Areas I initially had considered including in the book (e.g., virtual afterlives) now will find their way into future journal articles instead.

Altogether, **enhancing my research expertise** through the reading and research conducted during the sabbatical thus should inform **additional research activity** and help to **improve curriculum** by enhancing existing courses and broadening what I can offer in courses, advising, and research down the line with these new areas.

Second, assembling the university press profiles required close review of the lists of university presses who publish in relevant areas. Many of these correspond to courses I teach, so I updated my lists for several courses with cutting-edge books recently published, including building a list of reading options for my graduate seminar in applied communication (media and genre, spring 2023). Beyond the press profiles needed for the book project, I now have identified key series at presses that publish work relevant to courses I teach, future research projects I have in mind, and areas that relate to my colleagues' and students' areas of interest and expertise. The presses I have identified with the best "fit" potential for this book are Duke University Press, University of Illinois Press, Syracuse University Press, and Wayne State University Press. Finally, the press survey yielded another unexpected boon: I discovered intriguing series that do not suit this project but could be productive to pursue in the future. Thus, this part of the sabbatical also will **improve curriculum** by enhancing courses and will help with **additional research activities**.

Third, the book proposal was informed by Portwood-Stacer's book about how to produce a compelling proposal for university presses; I began by constructing an annotated template including my notes on her recommendations for each segment of the document. This template will facilitate future book proposals, and the current proposal has abundant side-bar comments reminding me of the purposes and goals for each section as I revise and update it going forward.

Finally, the sabbatical has placed me in a good position to continue to advance my research based on the successful completion of these initial steps. For example, I already have extensive notes to inform the composition of two subsequent chapters, and I have assembled a folder of pertinent articles (and more books to read!). I have concluded the sabbatical by laying a trail of breadcrumbs (e.g., "add X source here" placeholders) and planning work that has set me up for a productive writing season next summer.

Thank you for supporting the launch of the research for my next book project. The sabbatical was a success!