

Professional Leave Report Cover Sheet

Name: Serena Johnson

Department: Communicative Sciences & Deaf Studies

College: Health & Human Services

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

Time Period: ☒ Fall 2023
☐ Spring
☐ Academic Year
☐ Other

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

In Fall 2023, I took sabbatical in order to restructure the ASL-English Interpreting program to apply for accreditation by the Council on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE). We had previously applied for accreditation in Fall 2015 and received feedback on what changes needed to be implemented in order to receive accreditation. The sabbatical allowed me to incorporate the feedback we received in restructuring the program.

I visited with professors on campuses with CCIE accreditation including American River College in Sacramento, discussed their programs, and received suggestions on what we might need to change.

The sabbatical leave resulted in seven new course proposals for the following courses: Ethics, Translation, Fingerspelling Lab, Interpreting in Specialized Settings, Interpreting Seminar, and Interpreting Practicum.

Serena Johnson, Ph.D., NIC

**OUTLINE FOR A
SABBATICAL / DIFFERENCE IN PAY
PROPOSAL**

(See APM 361: Policy on Faculty Leaves of Absence)

Section 1. The Proposal

Describe your proposal including the semester(s) you plan to be on paid leave by

- (a) *providing a summary statement outlining the objectives / goals of the leave*

This proposal for sabbatical leave is for the Fall 2023 semester. The sabbatical project would result in

- an exhaustive literature review of the best practices in ASL/English interpreting and
- the creation of a proposal for the Sign Language Interpreting Program to be accredited by the Counsel on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE).

- (b) *demonstrating that this is a well-conceived program illustrating, where possible, preliminary arrangements, contacts, research, etc.;*

The department previously applied for CCIE accreditation in Fall of 2015 and received extensive feedback regarding necessary programmatic changes in order to achieve accreditation. This sabbatical will be utilized to incorporate that feedback into the program. Additionally, contacts have been made with other CCIE accredited programs (e.g. Northeastern University) and faculty there involved with the accreditation process have indicated their willingness to assist our program's accreditation efforts.

Strong community college to university pathways are one aspect of the programmatic changes that will enable this proposal to be successful. I have already been in contact with faculty at Fresno City College who are in support of a more intentional pipeline and stronger connections between their AA-interpreting degree and our BA in interpreting. This connection is necessary because the National Interpreter Certification requires a BA degree. Strengthening the community college to university pipeline will help reduce costs and time to graduation for students in the interpreting program.

- (c) *providing the detailed procedures by which the objectives are to be accomplished;*

The most salient aspect of feedback from the CCIE accreditation committee was that the curriculum design of our program was not based upon current best practices in the ASL/English Interpreter education profession. This sabbatical project will

- collect data on best practices in the profession. This will include an extensive review of the literature.

- Design syllabi for additional courses necessary for compliance with CCIE accreditation standards
- (d) *and demonstrating that the proposed activity cannot be accomplished in less than the leave time, but can be completed in the time requested.*

This proposed activity cannot be accomplished in less than one semester, as there is an extensive body of literature to be reviewed and several criteria to be met.

- (e) *Detail any planned travel and explain how the travel will lead to a definite professional objective.*

At this time, travel is planned to

- American River College (California)
- Western Oregon University (Oregon)
- Northeastern University (Massachusetts)

Travel to these institutions will allow observation of the physical teaching space, equipment, materials and supplies utilized for the program. This was one area of concern for the CCIE accreditation committee the previous proposal.

Section 2. Benefits to you as a faculty member

Proposals shall demonstrate how one or more of the following objectives will be met by the proposed sabbatical or difference in pay leave and therefore benefit you as a faculty member

- (a) *Explain how the proposed leave will lead to a greater command of subject matter;*

An extensive review of the literature will require the examination of trends in the field. After reviewing the literature regarding best practices, I will have a more thorough understanding of the history and current practices in ASL/English Interpreter training. This will provide a greater command of the subject matter.

- (b) *Explain how the proposed leave will lead to improved organization of curricula;*

By reviewing the literature and creating this accreditation proposal, I will be able to ensure the curriculum is designed in a way that best fits practices in the field of ASL/English interpreter training. This will lead to better teaching and improved outcomes for students and improved organization of curricula.

- (c) *Explain how the proposed leave might lead to a command of advanced methods of teaching;*

A review of the best practices in ASL/English Interpreting will have a direct impact on teaching methods. Having a thorough knowledge of the best practices will allow me to implement them in the classroom upon my return. This will lead to a command of advanced methods of teaching sign language interpreting.

Section 3. Benefit to the university

Briefly describe how the leave will be of benefit to the department, college/school and/or university

There are numerous ways the results of this sabbatical leave will benefit the department and university. As a teaching institution, Fresno State values high quality teaching methods. By having a thorough understanding of the best practices for interpreter education, I will be able to ensure that we are incorporating these into our teaching. Ensuring the program is aligned with CCIE accreditation standards will elevate the program.

This proposal will not only have a direct impact on the department, it will also be beneficial to the university and the region around us. There are currently no CCIE accredited ASL/English interpreting programs in the state of California. This proposal has the potential to make Fresno State a leader in the ASL/English interpreting field and bring national recognition and prestige to the program.

Section 4. Previous Leaves

A copy of the report from the last sabbatical or difference in pay leave, if any, shall be attached to the proposal.

N/A