

Professional Leave Report Cover Sheet

Name: Maria Briggs

Department: Music

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.

Dr. Maria Briggs: Fall 22 Sabbatical Report

Section 1. Reporting on the Success of the Leave

- (a) an analysis of the accomplishments of the leave in relation to the objectives / goals of the original proposal:

“I would like to use the leave time to tour, performing recitals and teaching masterclasses/lectures. As a professional opera singer, my primary training is that of a performer. It would mean a lot to me as an artist and a researcher to be able to take the time to focus on my performance skills and to create new, valuable industry and academic networks.”

This was accomplished as I managed to perform 6 solo concerts, publish an article, release a solo album CD, host/fund a student composition workshop and give 3 masterclasses:

- September 28 – October 1: University of Utah residency, included 5 hours of masterclasses and a solo recital. Audiences could attend live and virtually.
- October 4: Maria Briggs “[Soprano Nicole Cabell Continues to Shine On and Off Stage](#)” Classical Singer Magazine, October 4, 2022
- October 17 – October 19: Sacramento State residency: 1 masterclass and 1 solo recital
- November 4 – hosted and secured funding for composition workshop with guests Kurt Erickson, composer and Heidi Moss, soprano
- November 10 – Fresno State CD launch concert with Dr. Quiring, piano and Dr. Toren-Immerman, violin/viola
- November 13 – Opera Modesto solo recital with Ellie Choate, harp
- November 18 – CD “Winter Evening” was released worldwide on all platforms: Briggs, Maria “[Winter Evening](#)” Romantic Russian Art Song CD, Centaur Records 2022
- November 20 – Brahms Requiem concert, Shaghoian Concert Hall
- November 20 – Performance of Villa Lobos Bachianas Brasileiras no. 5, International Cello Festival, Fresno

- (b) a description of the modifications, if any, of the original proposal and the circumstances with which necessitated these modifications;

The only modifications were that some of the proposed locations have changed. However, I ended up doing a lot more than originally proposed, which was very fortunate since it was still very difficult to travel and to organize public events due to the pandemic.

- (c) the goals of the original proposal, that were not accomplished;

All set goals were accomplished. I managed to accomplished more than originally proposed.

Section 2. Benefits to you as a faculty member

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

- (a) Explain how the leave has led to a greater command of subject matter;

Spending most of the semester working on my own vocal technique, performance skills and new repertoire has given me a greater understanding of own voice and performance abilities. It has given me new confidence, greater command on the stage and created a greater recognition and following from the public and my professional colleagues.

Releasing professional publications: an article in Classical Singer Magazine "[Soprano Nicole Cabell Continues to Shine On and Off Stage](#)" Classical Singer Magazine, October 4, 2022 and the CD album: Briggs, Maria "[Winter Evening](#)" Romantic Russian Art Song CD, Centaur Records 2022 was professionally very gratifying. It was great to have the extra time to complete these publication projects. The most immediate benefit is expanding my academic portfolio, public/professional recognition, possible grant and competition opportunities.

Teaching masterclasses to students in other universities gave me a valuable perspective on my own teaching and our Fresno State student population. It also created great new academic/professional networks and created new student recruitment opportunities, see attached letter from Robert Breault.

- (b) Explain how this leave may have accomplished a shift in areas of academic emphasis of the faculty member;

I would say the most important aspect is that it reinvigorated me as an artist, a scholar and a performer. It reminded me that I still have something to give as a singer and that I have value not only as a teacher but also as an opera singer. I was also reminded that I have a lot to teach while singing concerts and recitals. I got a lot of feedback from the students who attended and reported that they learned a lot and were greatly inspired by my performances and masterclasses:



Josephine Neubecker <jneubecker20@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 5, 2022,
8:50 AM

to me

Hello Maria,

I hope you are doing well. I just wanted to reach out and thank you for your time spent with our class on the University of Utah campus. Your masterclass was very informative and it was truly inspiring to see the way you worked with everyone. I learned so much just from watching and know that I will incorporate the exercises and vocal techniques in my work to come. You are beyond talented and I thank you again for taking the time to work with us.

-Josephine Neubecker

- (c) Explain how the leave might lead to improved organization of curricula;

Visiting different schools gave me a valuable comparison of how things can be organized, what works and what doesn't. It was interested to also see how things work financially. It made me appreciate the opportunities our students have at Fresno State. I am currently organizing a trip for our students to the National Classical Singer Convention and earlier in the semester I directed our department opera production of Hansel and Gretel.

- (d) Explain how the leave has lead to a command of advanced methods of teaching;

Working with some very advanced students (including doctoral students), has given me a fresh perspective and inspiration of what our own students can achieve. I have fresh ideas about appropriate repertoire, technical exercises and international opportunities.

- (e) Explain how the leave might lead to creative activities in one's field or in a closely related field;

I have been greatly inspired to explore more repertoire, publish and record. I am also inspired to make more new connections with my industry and academic colleagues. The leave has informed my Art Song Festival and all the guests appearing to work with our students next month: 6th Fresno State Art Song Festival, April 20-22, 2023.

Section 3. Benefit to the university Briefly describe how the leave will be of benefit to the department, college/school and university;

The university has benefited from my performances, masterclasses, publications and research presentations, since the primary purpose of a university is dissemination of knowledge. I was honored to serve in that capacity while representing Fresno State around the country. At the same time I grew as an artist and researcher, bringing back the expertise to Fresno State students and colleagues.

Section 4. Original Proposal

A copy of the sabbatical / difference in pay proposal shall be attached to this report)