

SECTION V. SABBATICAL LEAVE APPLICATION

Benjamin Jahn

1/7/23

Name (Open Print Preview to have your name populate throughout the form)

Date

CCC

Fall 2023

College

Sabbatical leave period requested

English

9

Teaching field(s)

Years of service in CCCC

Have you had previous Sabbaticals? If "yes" give time period(s) and activity (activities).

No

Indicate type of Sabbatical program (see United Faculty Agreement, Section 12.5.6) If program can be categorized by more than one type, check where applicable.

- Institutional study (complete Form A)
- Travel (complete Form B)
- Professional Study and/or Creative Study (complete Form C)

GENERAL SUMMARY OF SABBATICAL PROGRAM

(GIVE A 100-WORD MAXIMUM STATEMENT)

I would like to take the Fall 2023 semester to complete a book of poetry. This book will benefit students, faculty, and staff in the 4CD district by contributing to a community of poets, writers, and readers concerned with contemporary issues at the intersection of politics and the arts. I will present the finished manuscript at a reading in the library; I will run a FLEX workshop on the process of writing and submitting poetry for publication; and I will make the poems available to my colleagues for use in the classroom. My sabbatical project relates directly to my professional assignment. I am the creative writing instructor at CCC, and I teach the reading and analysis of poetry in many of my composition courses. My writing practice is what drew me to teaching as a profession, and I hope this project will invigorate my pedagogy and inspire my students and colleagues.

VALUE TO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

(The Sabbatical Leave Committee will utilize this information as the basis for scoring Rubrics 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Describe how the proposed sabbatical will benefit the educational program. In particular:

1. *How will it benefit students, programs, or staff/colleagues?*

My sabbatical project will benefit students, colleagues, and the English program by contributing to CCC's literary community. My students and colleagues know me primarily as a fiction writer. When I first started at CCC, as an adjunct, The Advocate ran a story about a fiction contest I won (NPR's Three Minute Fiction), and I had students tell me that their teachers (my colleagues) were using that short story in their classes. Now that I have pivoted in my writing practice to the genre of poetry, I want to contribute to more syllabi! Having professors who publish work adds great value to our program by creating excitement about the reach and purpose of literature. I've never believed the adage "those who can't do teach" (mostly because all of my best teachers were also doers!*), but I think people who are called to do both become better at both by doing both. I know that's true for me.

As part of my project, I will create a FLEX workshop for district colleagues; this workshop will focus on the craft of poetry, how to maintain a creative practice, and how (and where) to submit work for publication. I know of several poets at CCC (counselors, librarians, English teachers), and I will be honored to lead a workshop that encourages their creative work.

*I remember my first-ever class as a freshman in college was taught by the great novelist and poet Clarence Major. He had published more books of serious literature than I had read in my life, and there he was on a Monday morning in the middle of the term encouraging me to be a writer.

2. *How will it enhance and/or improve your background and professional competence?*

Completing a book of poems and submitting the poems for publication will enhance my background and professional competence by increasing my knowledge of contemporary poetry, and by improving my technical competence as a writer. My sabbatical project will make me able to add value to my students and to my colleagues. I will be better equipped to introduce them to the poetry scene, to recommend writers and resources that will enrich their lives, and to respond to their creative work with a deeper knowledge base. To teach well, one must always be learning. And I learn best by doing.

Teaching from within a discipline, as a working writer, gives my courses a special energy. The formal innovations I will explore in the individual poems align with my pedagogical philosophy of testing given forms and breaking conventions of standard English to find ways to express the complexities of an individual mind. I encourage my students to do this, and I feel most confident as a teacher when I walk the talk.

3. *How will it relate to your ongoing professional assignment?*

I teach several units on poetry—how to write it, and how to think about it—in my Creative Writing (English 293H) and Critical Thinking through Literature (English 2B) courses, so my sabbatical project will certainly relate to my professional assignment.

Right now, I am the only creative writing teacher on campus, and I would like to change that. One of my main professional goals in the next few years is to grow the creative writing program within the English department. I moved the class online several years ago and saw an increase in enrollment, but without on-campus readings and events during the pandemic years, it has been difficult to create energy and community. I have a poetry chapbook slated for publication later this year (a chapbook is a small collection of 10-15 poems; poets often publish these before publishing full-length collections). I will share the chapbook as soon as it comes out, and hopefully this will generate interest in my sabbatical project and in the creative writing program--and in English course offerings generally.

4. *How are the breadth and depth of the project appropriate for the sabbatical leave rather than the regular teaching year?*

A project of this scope—40 poems in four months—will require intense focus. Over the past two summers, working sporadically (pausing for family obligations), I have written 15 poems, so I have a good sense of how the project timeline will unfold (please see Form C in this application for a detailed breakdown of the project timeline).

During the course of a normal semester, I teach three composition classes and one section of creative writing; I read, evaluate, and respond to over 1,800 pages of student writing; I also sit on two committees, DIC and Planning, so when I'm not teaching or grading I'm on eLumen looking at programs and classes, and I have little time to draft and revise my own creative work with sustained energy or structured regularity.

Name

PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION

(The Sabbatical Leave Committee will utilize this information as the basis for scoring Rubrics 5 and 6). Note that Rubric 6 regarding the "Proposed Evidence of Completion" is weighted twice that of all other rubrics.

Identify specific objectives and describe in detail the evidence that will accompany your report, which indicates that you have met each objective. The product of your approved sabbatical leave program will be subject to review by the Sabbatical Leave Committee at the time of making your final report. Examples follow:

Institutional study

Objective: 9 units of graduate level history courses as indicated on Form A will be taken at ... University.

Evidence: (Here you would describe the transcripts, class notes, exams, class projects, etc., you would submit as evidence of completing these units.)

Travel

Objective: Travel to archeological zones in Central America.

Evidence: (Here you would describe exactly what you plan to submit to document your sabbatical leave travel. You should specify the kinds of things you will present, like journals, artifacts, and slides, and you should give the committee an idea of the extent of the evidence by specifying the minimum number of slides, pages in a journal, number of museums, etc. If you so state, you must provide tangible evidence in your final sabbatical leave report that you have, in fact, written the minimum number of pages you proposed, visited the minimum number of archaeological zones you proposed, etc.)

Professional study and/or creative study

Objective: Compose a musical score or write a textbook.

Evidence: (Here you would clearly indicate the scope of the project, including the minimum number of pages you plan to write, approximate length, an outline of the contents, description of the complexity, etc.)

The Committee will rely on the information you provide in the evidence section to determine if you have met the contractual obligation of the leave.

Objective: write a minimum of 40 poems, and collect them in a manuscript for publication.

Evidence:

1.

The poems in the book will all be written in a dense, complex form—blocks of text roughly the size and shape of a postcard, 150-200 words each, left- and right-justified margins, all lower-case, with forward slashes (/) as the only form of punctuation. They will incorporate a blend of personal narrative and observations with socio-political critique. Composing the majority of the poems in a concentrated period of time will be important to achieving a unity of effect across the poems in the collection. Please see the attached example of two of the poems I have published recently, in FENCE magazine, to get an idea of the style/form.

Note: I have set the number at 40 because a typical minimum for a full-length collection is 45, and I have written 15 such poems. 40 poems gives me some room to be selective when I finalize the manuscript for submission.

2.

FLEX (Fall 2024)—I will run a workshop for my colleagues that will include a craft talk on poetry, a discussion of how to maintain a personal writing practice, and a breakdown of the submission process.

3.

Reading in the CCC Library (Fall 2024)—I will read selected poems from the manuscript and host an open mic for students, faculty, and staff.

4.

Poems shared with English colleagues in book and/or PDF format. I will also create an audio recording of the poems to accompany the book—to enhance the reading experience and to increase accessibility.

5.

I will present evidence (receipts) of submission of the book to a minimum of 10 literary presses.

Note: The Fall 2024 presentation date allows for the lag in the submission process. Most literary presses operate on a yearly cycle, and very few have year-round open submission windows, so I will need the spring and

winter after my sabbatical to continue submitting the book. I can and will keep the committee updated on my progress, and I will share a draft of the manuscript at the end of Fall 2023.

Name

INSTITUTIONAL STUDY Form A		
<i>Name of Institution</i>	<i>Place of Institution</i>	
<i>Period of Attendance</i>	<p>UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Semester units to be attempted*</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Quarter Units to be attempted</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">*(Minimum 12 semester units)</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">*(Minimum 18 quarter units)</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">*Neither continuing education units (CEUs) nor courses taken from unaccredited institutions will be considered as Institutional Study. Please see Professional Study Form C.</p>	<p>GRADUATE LEVEL</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Semester units to be attempted*</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Quarter units to be attempted</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">*(Minimum 9 semester units)</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">*(Minimum 13.5 quarter units)</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">*Neither continuing education units (CEUs) nor courses taken from unaccredited institutions will be considered as Institutional Study. Please see Professional Study Form C.</p>
<p>Accepted for Admission:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p><i>If "Yes," attach evidence of admission.</i></p> <p><i>If "Other," explain:</i></p>		
<p>List courses and unit value from the institution's catalogue. In case your choice of courses is not available, please indicate substitutions. (The Sabbatical Leave Committee will utilize this information as the basis for scoring Rubric 7. Be sure that the scope of your studies is clearly defined.)</p> <p><i>* A full load is considered to be 12 semester units of undergraduate work or 18 undergraduate quarter units, or 9 semester units of graduate work or 13.5 quarter units at an accredited college/university.</i></p>		

Name

**TRAVEL
Form B**

Plan: Itinerary *(The Sabbatical Leave Committee will utilize this information as the basis for scoring Rubric 7. Be sure that the purpose, duration, and schedule of your travel are clearly delineated.)*

Place	Duration of Visit	Purpose

**PROFESSIONAL STUDY AND/OR CREATIVE STUDY
Form C**

(The Sabbatical Leave Committee will utilize this information as the basis for scoring Rubric 7. Units completed at any unaccredited and/or international institutions will not be considered. Be sure the kind and scope of your study methods, resources, and activities are clearly delineated. Include an estimate of the time that will be spent engaged in various activities.)

My writing day will begin at 8am and end around 3pm. I will devote several hours per week (5-10), after my normal writing time, to researching journals and presses to which I will submit the poems—individual poems at first, and, later, as a book-length collection. This research will be one topic I plan to discuss in my FLEX workshop. Literary journals and presses (small and large) have unique guidelines, standards, and aesthetics, and to understand where I should submit, I will do a lot of reading of and note-taking on the kinds of work they publish, and I will apply my notes when I craft cover letters and query letters to accompany my submissions. This will be valuable to my students and colleagues who want to learn about submitting their work because I will better be able to advise them about the process.

Typical week (M-F)

8-9am read through notebooks and transfer ideas and lines to the Word doc of the current poem-in-progress.

9-11am write and revise in the document, printing and editing with pencil on the hard copy (a typical poem goes through 10 printings/versions before I get the poem I want).

11am-12pm lunch break

12-2pm read the poem(s) aloud and make notes on the manuscript—for ideas about arrangement of poems in relation to one another in the collection; I will listen for themes and tonal variations and pay attention to the arc of the text as a whole.

2-3pm freewrite time! Filling up the notebooks for the next day. I like to end my writing day with an open-ended, generative practice. This is a bit like cooling down and stretching after intense exercise.

In total, that's 480 hours of writing time, and a minimum of 80 hours of submission research. The main resources for submission research will be social media, individual literary press/journal websites, and the submission management system, Submittable (this is the dominant literary submission tool in the industry; it has a vast database of magazines and presses and a publishing-opportunity search function).

Jeffrey Michels
English Department Co-Chair
Contra Costa College
Jmichels@contracosta.edu
925-330-2125 cell

4CD Sabbatical Leave Committee

February 9, 2023

Dear Sabbatical Leave Committee Members:

I am writing to express my support for the sabbatical-leave application of Professor Ben Jahn and to ask that you approve it.

Ben has been only professor teaching Creative Writing at Contra Costa College for many years, and his program is crucial to the college and the department. Ben and his creative writing students were central to last year's successful "Festival of the Arts" at CCC, for example, and Ben often brings most of the audience to open mic poetry events and readings in our library (such as the recent visit of former San Francisco Poet Laureate Kim Shuck). Ben himself is a first-rate English instructor and an award-winning writer of fiction, but he has become more engaged with writing and teaching poetry due in part to the interests of CCC students. We have been looking in recent years to expand offerings in poetry at CCC (such as adding a "Topics in Literature: Poetry" class), so the energy and experience Ben's sabbatical would yield certainly would have an immediate and positive impact on our students and college.

Ben has been a substantial all-around contributor to department work, and he can certainly be relied upon to follow through on his plan and to leverage what he learns for the good of CCC students. I endorse his sabbatical application without reservations.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Michels, Ph.D.

ben jahn

Fast Awake

fast awake began as a prank early in the summer of '20 after prisoners hunger struck for healthier conditions and the relatively free settled in to the phasic nature of a new normal // soured on sourdough / went the original post / not so bananas for banana bread / want to do some meaningful work but all the bestsellers on your unwitting complicity in white supremacy are delayed in the distribution chain / feeling guiltily nostalgic or looking to shed some quarantine lbs / try fast awake / a fast-your-way-to-wokeness workshop for white people / starting this thursday at 8:30 PM / for the next 236 days / episode by episode / eat only what the cast of six friends eats or appears about to eat on screen / this does not include food mise en scene / the bananas in the background must remain in the background // by confluence of influence and collective consciousness #fastawake became a viral trend // mute the laugh track and pass the yams / you'll discover new normal is what privileged people call feeling safe in a collapsed reality

Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture

a man wakes in a condom-covered house / shits showers shaves suits checks his hair and tie all without noting the milkier texture of light penetrating the colonial's leaded panes // the man in this metaphor cum gay rights action is a dangerous spermatozoon / his house a tumesced phallus in a washington dc suburb / red brick over post and beam / reservoir tip over shake roof over rafters and butt purlins / glansic projecting eaves / he'll come out the front door on pale flagella // rachel carley notes in her *visual dictionary of american domestic architecture* that *all framing members were joined by groove and tongue secured by drawbore pins / no glue was ever used / the holes were slightly misaligned so when the pin was driven in it made a firm joint* // the man will die of dementia one 4th of july / unable to connect sensitivity with america's need for protection