To: William Farmer, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost

From: David Fabish, Professor of English

Date: January 8, 2007

Subject: Request for sabbatical leave for the 2007-2008 school year

I. Request for sabbatical leave

I am applying for a one-year sabbatical leave for the 2007-2008 academic year at 100% compensation. In that year I will have been employed at Cerritos College full time for thirteen years, and this is my first request for sabbatical leave.

II. Purpose of leave

The purpose of my leave is to explore the development of a course in Islamic literature, with emphasis on the Qur’an, covering the period from approximately 600 C.E. to 1300 C.E. I will be examining the literature, background sources and teaching methodologies that could be employed in a course loosely modeled upon the English Department courses in The Bible as Literature. Activities during the leave will include self-directed study, formal study, and travel.

SELF-DIRECTED STUDY

The Qur’an: Study will include surveying the dozen or so translations of the Qur’an, with close readings of two, to gain a mastery of its literary features.

Exegesis: I will study interpretive works of the Qur’an, and while those works will include traditional Islamic sources, most approach the Qur’an using Western academic methodologies.

Islamic Literature: I will gather and study primary and secondary sources on Islamic literature outside of the Qur’an, including pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, Islamic poets such as Hafiz and Rumi and narrative works such as *The Arabian Nights*.

Historic and Cultural Background: My research will include the life of Muhammad, Arabic and Islamic history, Islamic philosophy and Islamic jurisprudence. I will also read broadly on contemporary thought on the Qur’an, especially in relationship to September 11th, the tenet of Jihad, warfare, terrorism and the conflict between modernism and traditional Islam.

FORMAL STUDY

Formal study will consist of the completion of a course in Arabic. While this will leave me far from even rudimental fluency in Arabic, it will provide me with insights into the grammatical, linguistic and syntactic nature of Arabic so that I can better understand the poetry of the Qur’an and the inherent inadequacies of translation.
TRAVEL

Approximately four weeks of the sabbatical period will be spent in the Middle East visiting sites of historic and cultural significance to Islam in Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and Israel. If possible, the travel would include Iran.

NEEDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SERVICE AREA

Exploring the design, preparation and presentation of a course in Islamic Literature serves the Cerritos College Community College District and its surrounding communities in three specific ways.

First, such a course would enhance the English Department’s literature offerings, in this instance recognizing the far-reaching impact of the Qur’an and other Islamic literature, aesthetically, theologically and politically. The English Department currently offers courses in the Bible as Literature, Native American Literature, Mexican Literature, African-American Literature, Chicana/o Literature, Asian American Literature and Women’s Literature. Offering a course in Islamic Literature is consistent with the English Department’s commitment to literature of the highest quality that is taught in ways to assist students in mastering critical thinking skills, that enhances their appreciation of literary artistic forms, that helps enrich students’ grasp of their communities and interconnecting communities, and that recognizes the contributions of a significant population of multicultural California.

Second, the course will serve students of Islamic and non-Islamic background. For students of Islamic background, the class would afford the Qur’an and other classic Islamic works the same status and respect routinely afforded texts of similar stature, such as Dante’s Divine Comedy, Milton’s Paradise Lost, Shakespeare’s Hamlet, Plato’s Dialogues, Goethe’s Faust, the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. Islamic and non-Islamic students alike would be served by a close study of the Qur’an and other classic Islamic literature using Western academic analysis and exegetical techniques.

Third, the course would help establish relationships between the regional Muslim communities and the population at large. This is necessary now as it has never been before for two reasons. One reason is the influx of immigrants of Muslim background into the region. The other is the tension that exists between the United States and Muslim countries, especially in the context of September 11th, the war on terror, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the long term clash of values between traditional Muslims of various backgrounds and the values of the United States as embodied in liberal democracy and capitalism.

III. Specific Objectives

A. Prepare myself to teach such a course that will first be offered in the fall semester of 2008. Such preparation includes reading and studying the Qur’an, both in primary and secondary sources; studying other Islamic literary works from pre-Islamic poetry to the mystical poetry of Rumi to the tales of The Arabian Nights; acquiring a fundamental knowledge of Islamic philosophy,
jurisprudence, and history; becoming knowledgeable about issues facing contemporary Islam, such as the nature of Jihad and warfare; visiting sites of historic and cultural significance to the development of Islam; acquiring an elementary grasp of Arabic; and corresponding with professors of Islamic Studies who teach in Western institutions.

B. Prepare a bibliography and guide for other English Department faculty to teach the Islamic literature course.

C. Gather resources useful to teaching a course in Islamic literature, such as course syllabi from other institutions; maps, diagrams, timelines, and images that might be included in course materials or displayed via a PowerPoint presentation or similar technology.

IV. Preparation

A. I am in the process of developing a literature course in Islamic literature, with emphasis on the Qur’an, covering the period from approximately 600 C.E. to 1300 C.E. The course will be loosely modeled upon English Department courses in the Bible as Literature, which I have frequently taught.

B. In preparation for this leave, I have assembled, and continue to assemble a library of my research materials and sources, including various translations of the Qur’an; interpretive works of the Qur’an; biographies of Muhammad, histories of Arabic and Islamic culture, especially in the period between 600 C.E. and 1300 C.E.; collections and works of Islamic literature; works on the philosophy and jurisprudence of Islam; and works concerning contemporary issues in Islam.

C. I have assembled a list of websites concerning the area of my sabbatical project:

- INTERNET ISLAMIC HISTORY SOURCEBOOK
  http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/islam/islamsbook.html
- JOURNAL OF ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES
  http://www.uib.no/jais/
- INTERNET MEDIEVAL SOURCEBOOK: ISLAM
  http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook1d.html#Muslim%20Persia
- ACADEMIC ISLAMIC STUDIES AND MIDDLE EAST, CENTRAL ASIAN, AND OTHER AREA STUDIES SITES
  http://www.uga.edu/islam/MESCenters.html
- WABASH CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THEOLOGY AND RELIGION
  http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/Internet/islam_syllabi.htm
- POLYLOG: THE QUR’ANIC CONCEPT OF JUSTICE
  http://them.polylog.org/3/fan-en.htm
- UCLA: NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
  http://www.nelc.ucla.edu/
• UCLA: CENTER FOR NEAR EASTERN STUDIES
  http://www.international.ucla.edu/cnes/
• USC-MSA Compendium of Muslim Texts
  http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran/maududi/index.html
• CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY MIDDLE EASTERN AND ISLAMIC STUDIES COLLECTION
  http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/arablit.htm
• IBN KHALDUN ON THE WEB
  http://www.isidore-of-seville.com/ibnkhalidun/
• WIKIPEDIA: ISLAM
• ISLAMIC LITERATURE
  http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/islamlit.htm
• AL JAZEERA CHANNEL
  http://english.aljazeera.net
• THE TRANSLATION OF THE QUR'AN: A SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY
  http://www.quranicstudies.com/article37.html
• ISLAMWEB: ISLAMIC STUDIES INTERNET CURRICULAR RESOURCES
  http://www.unc.edu/depts/islamweb/webguides.html
• MIDDLE EAST STUDIES ASSOCIATION
  http://mesa.wns.ccit.arizona.edu/
• ISLAMIC AWARENESS: ON THE SOURCES OF THE QUR'ANIC DHUL-QARNAYN
  http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Sources/BBhorned.html
• ARABIC LANGUAGE & LITERATURE: A RESEARCH GUIDE
• ISLAM 101
  http://www.islam101.com/index.htm
• REFERENCE.COM: QUR'AN
  http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/Qur'an
• BARBARA R. VON SCHLEGELL: ESSENTIAL RESOURCES FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES
  http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~bvon/pages/essentia.html
• THE 27 ARTICLES OF T.E. LAWRENCE
  http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1917/27arts.html
• CIA: WORLD FACTBOOK
• U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS
D. I am assessing translations of the Qur’an and anthologies of Islamic literature to determine the best choices for a potential course in Islamic literature. As of this writing, I have selected the Haleem translation of the Qur’an and the Longman Anthology of World Literature, Volume B, as the most suitable texts for such a course.

E. I am developing a list of professors of Islam literature to correspond with regarding approaches to the teaching of the Qur’an as literature.

F. I am planning a travel itinerary of Middle Eastern sites of historical and cultural significance to Islam.

V. Planned Itinerary, 2007-2008

A. August 13 – 31

Begin study of the Qur’an with the Muhammad Abdel Haleem translation and Understanding the Qur’an, also by Haleem.

Begin collecting syllabi of courses in Islamic literature from American colleges and universities and corresponding with instructors of such courses about pedagogical challenges and strategies.

B. September

1. Begin a semester of introductory Arabic. This may be at UCLA, CSU Long Beach or CSU Fullerton. These courses award four transfer-level units. Acquiring university credits, however, is not an objective of this proposal.

2. Study of the Qur’an continues with the Haleem translation and the Abdullah Yusuf Ali translation. Study Approaching the Qur’an, Michael Sells, and Discovering the Qur’an, Neal Robinson.

C. October

Study of the Qur’an continues with emphasis on translations by A. J. Arberry and Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi. Study the following commentaries: Textual Sources for the Study of Islam, Rippin and Knappert; The Qur’an and its Exegesis, Helmut Gatje; and The Origin of the Koran: Classic Essays, Ibn Warraq.

D. November

Study the life of Muhammad and the history of Islam, including Muhammad, Martin Lings; Muhammad, Karen Armstrong; Muhammad, Michael Cook; The Sectarian Milieu, John Wansbrough; The Arabs in History, Bernard Lewis; Islam, John Esposito; Islam, Karen Armstrong; and The Venture of Islam, Marshall G. S. Hodgson.
E. December
Visit UCLA library to collect and read articles from scholarly journals.
Reread the Haleem translation of the Qur’an with reference to the translations by Muhsin Khan and Muhammad Al-Hilali, J. Arberry, and N. J. Dawood.
Complete the course in Arabic.

F. January: Begin travel in the Middle East

January 6 – 16: **Cairo, Egypt**, former capital of the Fatimid Caliphate, contains some of the best-preserved Islamic architecture from the Medieval era because it was spared conquest by the Moguls, which most of the Middle East endured. In Cairo, I will visit the Mosque of Ibn Tulun, the Gayer-Anderson Museum, the Tomb of Shagarat ad-Durr, the Citadel (built by Saladin), the Al-Azhar Mosque, the Sayyidna el-Hussein Mosque, the Museum of Islamic Art, and other sites.

Jan 17 – 20: **Jordan** holds the ancient ruin of Petra, the capital of the Nabatean kingdom, a northern Arabian state in the period preceding the development of Islam. Other destinations will include Umayyad desert castles of Qasr Kharaneh and Qasr Azraq, and the baths of Qasr al-Hallabat and Qasr Amra.

Jan 21 – 23: In **Syria**, I will visit the Umayyad ruins in Damascus, Anjar, and Qasr-al Hayr al-Sharqi.

Jan 24 – Jan 31: Travel in **Turkey** will begin at Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. Sites in Istanbul will include the Hagia Sophia, the museum of Islamic and Turkish art at the Ibrahim Pasha Sarayi, the Kariye Mosque, the Topkai Saray (palace of the Sultans), the Suleymaniye Mosque and Sokollu Mosque, and the Mosque of Sultan Ahmet I.

Feb 1 – Feb 8: Travel in **Israel** will focus on the Jerusalem’s Arab Quarter in the Old City, which is enclosed in an Ottoman-era citadel. The Temple Mount includes the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, the oldest existing mosques. Other sites in Israel include the Rockefeller Museum, the mosque and fortress of Acre, and the Mosque of Nabi Mussa (near Jericho).

G. February 9 – 28
Self-directed study resumes, centering on Islamic philosophy the poetry of the pre-Islamic period. Study *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, Majid Fakhry; *Desert Tracings*, Michael Sells; and *An Anthology of Islamic Literature*, James Kritzeck.

H. March
Study Islamic law from the classic period: *An Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Ignaz Goldziher; *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law*, Wael Hallaq; *A History of Islamic Legal Theories*, Wael Hallaq; and *Speaking in God’s Name*, Abou El Fadl.
Study Sufi poetry, particularly the poetry of Jalal Al-Din Rumi in *The Masnavi*, translated by Jawid Mojaddedi, and the poetry of Shams al-Din Muhammad Sirazi (Hafiz), found in various anthologies including *The Longman Anthology of World Literature: The Medieval Era*, by David Damrosch, et al.

I. April


J. May

Study issues in contemporary Islam especially as related to Quranic interpretation, including *No God but God*, Reza Aslan; *The Crisis of Islam*, Bernard Lewis; *The Political Language of Islam*, Bernard Lewis; *Islam and the West*, Bernard Lewis; Wahhabism, Hamid Algan; *Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, Muhammad Arkoun; *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition*, Joseph Lumbard; and *The Legacy of Jihad*, Andrew Bostom.

VI. Service and Practical Applications

A. As a result of this sabbatical leave, I will have the background, information and critical appreciation of the Qur’an and other Islamic literary works to teach a course in Islamic literature effectively. Facilitating such a course would serve the college and the community by providing a means of studying the literature of Islam. While many universities, such as the University of California, Los Angeles, have created programs in Islamic Studies, nothing is offered at the community college level in California. The course I am designing, and for which the sabbatical leave would prepare me, would be the first such offering in the California community college system, so that Cerritos College will lead the way in this area of study. Recognizing and addressing this need will enhance the college’s distinction.

B. During the leave, I will develop materials that will support other faculty who may wish to teach this course in the future, or who may wish to develop aligned courses in other disciplines such as Philosophy, Political Science, History or Art History. Those materials would include an extensive bibliography and guidelines for preparing faculty to teach the course and for preparing the course, itself.

C. The course would be a first step in accommodating the needs of a diverse population that now includes a significant Muslim population. It would enable our students and community to better understand Islam in order to establish mutually respectful, productive relations between these communities and to better understand the global conflict between traditional Islam and
Westernism.
VII. Report of sabbatical experience

I will provide a written sabbatical report to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost before the conclusion of the fall semester, 2008, to verify that the objectives of my sabbatical leave have been met.