2006-2007

Sabbatical Leave Report

Submitted by

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PREFACE

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

From: Georgia L. Well, Associate Professor of Theatre

Date: November 28, 2005

Subject: Request for Sabbatical Leave for the 2006-2007 Academic Year

I. Length of Sabbatical Leave Requested

A. I am applying for a one year sabbatical leave for the 2006-2007 academic year at 100% compensation. I have been a full time faculty member in the Theatre Arts Department since the fall of 1983.

B. This is my second request for a sabbatical leave. My first sabbatical leave was granted for the 1994-1995 academic year.

II. Purpose of Leave

A. The purpose of my sabbatical leave is to continue formal studies in the areas of Theatre and Dance by taking classes at Cal State University, Fullerton, attending two summer sessions of the UCI Dance and Movement Workshop and attending professional workshops in the entertainment industry.

B. Training in acting, camera acting, voice and movement at CSUF allows me to exercise my acting muscles again while I reexamine my teaching methods as I observe the methodologies and techniques employed by other instructors and their effectiveness on students.

C. Attending the Dance and Movement Workshop for dance educators allows me the opportunity to train in the areas of: hip-hop - a current jazz dance style, theatre dance, tap, Feldenkrais, jazz dance as well as many other dance styles. The workshop ends with a mini-performance in which all participate. Performing not as a teacher, but as an artist, re-informs my teaching. I will also be able to consult collegially with secondary dance educators, other community college dance educators and university dance educators which will provide a bridge of understanding between our institutions and encourage curricula articulation.
D. This leave will allow me to train in martial arts classes so that I may incorporate what has become a standard form of combat into TH 115 Stage Movement and Combat.

E. Attending professional acting workshops affords me real-world experience in this competitive field which I will be able to share with my students.

III. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of my sabbatical leave will include:

A. Completing formal coursework in acting, acting for the camera, dance, martial arts, voice and movement at CSUF, and UCI.

B. Incorporating martial arts elements into Stage Movement and Combat course

C. Developing a new course “Musical Theatre Dance”.

D. Incorporating new voice techniques into my acting and performance classes

E. Incorporating hip-hop dance elements into TH 140/141 Jazz Dance classes.

F. Performing theatre scenes and dance pieces.

G. Experiencing the professional acting world from an actor’s viewpoint.

IV. Preparation

In preparation for this leave I have:

A. Researched the theatre and dance offerings at CSUF, CSULB and UCI.

B. Contacted the Chair of the Theatre and Dance Department, Susan Hallman at CSUF. We have discussed my proposed plan of study.

C. Attended the 2005 summer Dance and Movement Workshop at UCI and established professional connections for the future.
D. Discussed developing a new course in “Musical Theatre Dance” with Janet Sanderson, Cerritos Dance Department chair.

E. Subscribed to “Backstage West” an industry magazine which features workshop information.

F. Searched for professional workshops in Suzuki’s “Viewpoints”, and “Linkletter” vocal training

G. Researched the professional acting courses/workshops offered by South Coast Repertory Theatre.

H. Joined the California Dance Educators Association.

V. Planned Itinerary

A. During the summer of 2006 I will enroll in the following class at UCI:

1. DANCE X325  Dance and Movement Workshop (3 units)
   The workshop curricula changes every session but is consistent in its offerings of technique classes in ballet, tap, jazz, modern, folk dance, musical theatre dance and hip-hop. A guest artist is featured each workshop with classes offered in their repertory and technique. Master classes from various dance educators and their disciplines as well as share sessions and special events round out this intensive workshop.

B. During the fall semester of 2006 I will enroll in the following classes at CSUF:

1. THTR 341A Voice/Movement for the Stage III (2 units)

2. THTR 582A Camera Techniques for the Actor and Director (3 units)

3. THTR 443 Audition and Rehearsal Processes – an upper division intensive acting class (3 units)

4. KNES 153 Wushu – Chinese performing martial arts (1 unit)

C. During the fall semester I will also take approximately 1 - 4.5 hours of studio dance classes at the Jimmy Defore Dance Studio in Costa Mesa in the following dance styles: hip-hop, jazz, and tap.

I estimate that I will spend approximately 40 hours a week for each week of the semester in order to accomplish this work.
D. During the spring semester of 2007 I will enroll in the following classes at CSUF:

1. THTR 341B Voice/Movement for the Stage III, a continuation course (2 units)
2. THTR 582B Camera Techniques for the Actor and Director, a continuation course (3 units)
3. KNES 151A Beginning Aikido – martial art (1 unit)
4. THTR 310 Oral Interpretation of Shakespeare (3 Units)

E. During the spring semester I will also take approximately 1 - 4.5 hours of studio dance classes at the Jimmy Defore Dance Studio in Costa Mesa in the following dance styles: hip-hop, jazz, and tap.

I estimate that I will spend approximately 40 hours a week for each week of the semester in order to accomplish this work.

F. During the summer of 2007 I will enroll in the following class at UCI:

1. DANCE X325 Dance and Movement Workshop (3 units). I will take classes in musical theatre dance technique, hip-hop, tap and jazz.

In all, I will be enrolled in 24 units during my sabbatical leave year. Two of those units (Wushu and Aikido) are lower division but are essential to my studies so that I can update material in TH 115 Stage Movement and Combat.

G. I will take a professional acting workshop from South Coast Repertory Theatre as my schedule allows, during either or both semesters.

H. I will begin writing my sabbatical leave report.

VI. Service and Practical Applications

A. Service to Cerritos College and practical applications will include:

1. Introduction of a new course outline “Musical Theatre Dance”, subject to approval of the Theatre Department and the Curriculum committee.
2. Updating and expanding materials for the Stage Movement and Combat class.

3. Updating, expanding materials, and sharing information with colleagues for the acting and performance courses.

4. Updating and expanding materials for the tap and jazz dance courses.

B. Service to the community will include:

1. Improvement of instruction will enhance the reputation and growth of the theatre program and the college.

2. Introduction of the musical theatre dance curriculum will improve the quality of musical theatre productions for the community.

3. Establishing a stronger presence for the college in the Southern California arts community through personal and professional contacts.

C. Service to the students will include:

1. A faculty member with established relationships with other local college Theatre and Dance departments.

2. A new course offering in “Musical Theatre Dance.”

3. Improved and reinvigorated instruction in theatre acting.

4. Introduction of current instruction materials in stage combat.

5. Introduction of contemporary dance styles into the jazz dance curricula.

VII. Report of Sabbatical Experience

Upon completion of this sabbatical leave, I will provide a written sabbatical report to the Vice President of Academic Affairs by the appropriate deadline to verify completion of my sabbatical objectives.
Georgia L. Well, Associate Professor of Theatre

Sabbatical Leave Report for the 2006-2007 Academic Year

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of my sabbatical leave was to continue formal studies in the areas of Theatre and Dance by taking classes at Cal State University, Fullerton; attending two summer sessions of the UCI Dance and Movement Workshop, and attending professional workshops in the entertainment industry. My original intention was to enroll in 24 units; however, once I was at CSUF other opportunities presented themselves that I thought I should take advantage of to further my education. Consequently, during the 2006-2007 academic year, I completed 33 semester units [see Appendix A].

A. I took 30 units at CSUF in the Theatre, Dance, and Kinesiology departments. My course load was: a year long graduate level course in Camera Techniques for the Actor/Director, Stage Dialects (a Voice and Movement course), Audition Techniques, Musical Theatre Dance, Wushu, Stage Combat, Playwriting, a year long Independent Study observing, coaching and learning in Musical Theatre Fundamental and a semester's
independent study with professional musical theatre choreographers learning original choreography from different musical productions.

B. The remaining 3 units were taken through UCI extended education for attending the Dance and Movement Workshop in the summer of 2006. This workshop is put on by dance teachers for dance teachers. It is an intensive program featuring a guest artist whose company performs, and culminating in an informal performance by participants of dances learned in the different classes. I also attended the summer of 2007 Dance and Movement Workshop but did not enroll for unit credit.

C. Instead of having to go to Hollywood or South Coast Repertory for professional workshops, CSUF’s strong industry ties brought theatre and film professionals to campus. I was able to take workshops and attend guest lectures with Susan Egan, Kevin Costner, Marc Cherry and Ricardo Chavira.

D. This year of being a full time student afforded me many opportunities to observe the methodologies and techniques employed by other instructors and their effectiveness on students. It was also an opportunity to establish relationships with faculty members at CSUF where many Cerritos students want to transfer. Participating in the Dance and Movement Workshop allowed me to establish professional contacts among my colleagues in the CSU, UC CCC and local high schools dance departments.

And finally this year reminded me what it was like to be a student and see the teaching learning process from that point of view. All of these experiences combined were undertaken to increase my theatre and dance knowledge, improve my skills and
teaching, thus strengthening my service to Cerritos College as an instructor of Theatre and Dance.

II. Meeting Objectives

The specific objectives I set for myself and met during my sabbatical leave include:

A. Completing formal coursework in acting, acting for the camera, dance, martial arts, voice and movement at CSUF, and UCI

I completed 33 units during my year long sabbatical leave [see Appendix A].

B. Incorporating martial arts elements into TH 115, Stage Movement and Combat

I took a course in Wushu, a Chinese martial art that provided me with new movement vocabulary to use in my stage combat classes and fight choreography. Wushu is characterized by fast, powerful movements that emphasize extension, sweeping circular strikes and kicks and aerial techniques. I will include some of the blocks, punches and leg sweeps I learned in class in the hand-to-hand combat instruction of TH 115 Stage Combat and Movement.

During the spring of 2007 I took a course at CSUF in Stage Combat. Although most of what was taught was already a part of the course material I present to students, it was informative to see how another instructor presented the material. This course reminded me that safety for the performers is a lesson that needs constant reinforcement. One
student gave another student a black eye during a fight combination because they didn’t make good eye contact and they were moving too fast. I also learned a few different ways to make a “knap” (the sound presumably made by a slap or punch) and how to safely appear to slam someone’s head into a wall or table. I will introduce this new material by lecture-demonstration during the hand-to-hand combat portion of class. Students will be able to demonstrate their mastery of this material during a skill test of combat technique.

C. Developing a new course “Musical Theatre Dance”

I have written a new course for Cerritos College, TH 144 Dance for Musical Theatre [see Appendix B]. TH 144 will be offered in the fall of 2008 to prepare students for the 2009 spring musical. I will also be meeting with music department faculty to investigate including this course as well as TH 105 Musical Theatre techniques, as part of a learning community with the Music department’s voice class for the fall 2008 semester.

D. Incorporating new voice techniques into my acting and performance classes

The CSUF TH 341A Voice and Movement class in the fall of 2006 focused on stage dialects. As part of this course I had to relearn and use the International Phonetic Alphabet in order to properly do the dialects. I learned Irish, British Received Pronunciation, Standard American and Brooklyn dialects. Mastering the IPA allows me to learn other dialects on
my own using the Paul Meir textbook and compact discs that I purchased for the class. Now when acting students do scenes requiring regional dialects I can provide them with the learning materials and coaching they need for successful dialect work.

E. Incorporating hip-hop dance elements into TH 140/141 Jazz Dance classes

I took Hip-hop classes during the Dance and Movement Workshop in 2006 and 2007 from two different instructors. Altogether I learned 6 different hip hop routines. I performed these routines alongside my classmates for our peers at the end of the Dance and Movement Workshop. Some of the specific hip-hop dance moves I learned will be taught to my beginning and intermediate jazz dance students in combinations I choreograph for classroom assignments.

F. Performing theatre scenes and dance pieces

CSUF’s THTR 582A and 582B Camera Techniques for the Actor and Director was all about performing. I performed several scenes and monologues throughout the year which were video taped in single camera film style. The scenes were shot in close up, master shots, two shots and over the shoulder shots. I did scenes from Misery, Carlitos Way, and Erin Brockovich, and monologues from Requiem for a Dream and Shortcuts. We also did commercial auditions on tape. In the audition techniques class I performed three different monologues as well a scene from Carrie.
The Dance and Movement Workshop held at UCI ended each session with an informal presentation of class routines. I performed dances in hip hop, tap dance, musical theatre dance, Latin dance, dances through the ages, jazz dance, body music, floor based dance, and modern dance in front of guests and other workshop participants.

My recent performing experiences in both dance and acting have made me more focused on what it takes to connect with an audience. I will spend more lecture time in my classes on the performance aspects of the arts, addressing what it takes to successfully communicate real emotion to an audience.

G. Experiencing the professional acting world from an actor’s viewpoint.

Through a classmate in my Camera Techniques class I learned about an audition for an independent short film, Dialated by Drew Kappel. The director was looking for a “mother” about my age, I auditioned and was cast. The film was shot on location at a cabin in Big Bear, California. It was a long one day shoot with two different scenes. Dialated premiered November 13 2007, at the Titan theatre at CSUF. It will hit the festival circuit beginning next year. I will draw on this recent experience as I lecture students on film scene work in my Acting for the Camera class.

As part of CSUF’s Audition Techniques class, Holly Powell of Holly Powell Studios a former casting director was a guest lecturer for half of the semester. She conducted classes dealing with the business side of show business. We also had sessions with television directors, agents
and managers. Their real world current advice to young actors is something I will share with my students when I lecture about the business of acting to my classes.

IV. Outcome of Leave

A. Service to Cerritos College and practical applications

1. Introduction of a new course outlines TH 144 Musical Theatre Dance, which was approved by the Theatre Department and the Curriculum committee [see Appendix B].

2. My foray into the martial art of Wushu has broadened my movement vocabulary. As I teach TH 115 Stage Movement and Combat in the spring of 2008, I will introduce some of the kicks, punches and sweeps into my fight choreography for the hand-to-hand combat portion of class by lecture-demonstration.

3. My year long Camera Techniques class was time well spent with professional actor, John Short. John taught his class using the technique of Michael Chekhov. Many of the things I learned in John’s class have already been incorporated into my in TH 110 Acting Fundamentals class, such as his use of “sourcing an actor”. I have already used the “When I Was a Little Boy/Girl” exercise in TH 216 Acting for the Camera class this spring.

4. During the summer Dance and Movement workshops, I took two different tap classes focusing on rhythm tap, a body music class,
as well as a class in drumming for dancers. Because all three of these classes are rhythm based, I was introduced to many new, complex rhythms and different ways of making sounds in the body that add dimension to the standard material in my tap class.

Another class I found beneficial to my teaching was yoga. I took some of the yoga positions I learned in class and incorporated them into my jazz class warm-ups.

B. Service to the community

1. My year’s study has made me a more prepared instructor to meet the needs of my students and prepare them for theatrical productions presented to the community.

2. Introduction of the “Dance for Musical Theatre” curriculum will improve the quality of musical theatre productions for the community, as our actors and dancers learn traditional theatre dance repertory.

3. Attending the Dance and Movement summer workshops at UCI allowed me to establish personal and professional contacts for Cerritos College in the Southern California arts community.

C. Service to the students

1. By attending classes at CSUF, I established stronger ties with the Theatre and Dance Department Chairs as well as many of the department faculty. Having attended classes there for a year, I
now know the kind of student that CSUF is looking for and can better help our students prepare for transfer.

2. Student’s interested in pursuing either a degree or a career in musical theatre will now have training in “Musical Theatre Dance.”

3. After a year of study in the theatre and dance departments at CSUF and UCI I have improved and/or changed many of my teaching methodologies, lectures and handouts. Being surrounded by young, intense graduate students was both invigorating and challenging. It was also inspiring – reminding me that I still love to teach.

D. Conclusion

Teaching well requires renewal: renewal of skills, knowledge and spirit. This is exactly what my sabbatical leave provided me. It is an invaluable tool for tenured faculty to be able to continue on the road of life long learning and offer that gift of learning back to the students, the institution, and the community. The courses I completed during my sabbatical have affected all that I do in the classroom as an instructor and as an artist. I very much appreciate the fact that this institution values teaching and knows that investing in improving instruction is a win-win situation for all. I am always proud to say that I teach at Cerritos College.
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