

Sabbatical Leave Proposal for Gary Wilson

America's Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College houses the college's collection of about 120 animals. The teaching zoo provides students in the Exotic Animal Training and Management program with hands-on experience in the care and training of these animals as well as in the conducting of wildlife education presentations. I was involved in the design and construction of this facility. We need to expand the teaching zoo to provide the EATM students with new experiences to better prepare them for careers in the animal-care industry. In order for me to take a leadership role in this endeavor, I need to increase my knowledge of current zoo enclosure design and methods of fundraising for capital improvements of zoological institutions. A sabbatical leave would allow me to this.

The EATM faculty and staff have evaluated the teaching zoo facilities and have identified improvements that need to be made. Michlyn Hines, our teaching zoo operations supervisor, and Kim Hoffmans, our dean, met with Iris Ingram and John Sinutko in September to plan out a course of action to accomplish these improvements. See the attached EATM Specific Facilities Plan for the notes from that meeting. On Friday, November 1, we are meeting with our college president to discuss options for raising the funds needed.

We have never had any member of the EATM faculty and staff with the time or expertise to pursue fundraising in a significant way. Nor have we had anyone with the time to keep up with the most current developments in zoo enclosure design. I am requesting a one-semester sabbatical leave for the Spring semester of 2015. Part of my time would be spent visiting other zoos to learn about advances in zoo design and fundraising. I will be able to see enclosures and talk to keepers and curators to learn about the advantages and disadvantages of various design elements and construction materials. I will also meet with the zoo directors and development officers to learn about fundraising activities they have tried. Zoos I would like to visit include: Los Angeles Zoo, San Diego Zoo, San Diego Zoo Safari Park, San Francisco Zoo, Oakland Zoo, The Living Desert, Phoenix Zoo, Wildlife World Zoo, Reid Park Zoo, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. I probably will not be able to visit all of this facilities so I will prioritize this list as work on our teaching zoo plan progresses.

I plan on attending the 2015 annual conference of the Animal Behavior Management Alliance in Copenhagen, Denmark. The specific dates have not yet been set for this conference but it is usually held in April. As part of the conference, I will be able to visit a couple of zoos in Denmark. The conference will be about a week in length and I plan on taking a few days before and after the conference to visit other zoos in the area. Attendance at these conferences helps me to stay current in my knowledge of animal behavior management developments. This directly impacts my teaching of the animal behavior and animal training courses.

The rest of my time will be spent here at the college working on the general EATM Facilities Specific Plan and plans for the individual enclosures that make up the plan as well as leading our efforts to begin a capital campaign to raise the money to accomplish the plan. As you can see from the proposed timeline in the attached EATM Specific Facilities Plan, my sabbatical activities would fit neatly into the timeline.

America's Teaching Zoo is different than most zoos because of the role it plays in the education of the students in the EATM program. Advances have been made in how animals are exhibited and managed in zoos today compared to when we designed the facility in the late 1980s. We need to upgrade enclosures and build new enclosures in order to effectively train our students in these new methods. The design of the new enclosures must incorporate features which will allow us to teach students safely and provide those students with the learning opportunities that will best prepare them for careers in the animal-care industry of today and the near future. The design and construction of enclosures can help or hinder animal behavior management of the animals being housed. In order to work most effectively with the architects helping us to develop our plan, I need to have a thorough and up-to-date understanding of such issues. This sabbatical leave project will allow me to develop such understanding.

The main areas that we have identified as needing to be addressed first are:

1. housing for large carnivores
2. housing and show area for sea lions
3. aviary for displaying birds

Our goal for housing for the large carnivores is to develop new enclosures on the hillside between the zoo and the baseball diamond and the driving range. This would allow us to maintain the animals in much larger enclosures than we currently have, provide the animals with forms of environmental enrichment we have not been able to provide before, and give our students new opportunities in animal behavior management.

A large percentage of students entering the EATM program have an interest in training marine mammals. For almost 30 years, the California sea lion that we kept in our facility provided many students with the experience of caring for and training a marine mammal. This animal passed away in 2009 at the ripe old age of 31. From the earliest designs of the zoo, the master plan has included facilities to house and train marine mammals and our advisory committee has encouraged us to acquire sea lions again. In order to maintain multiple sea lions, new facilities need to be designed and built but there is space within the current zoo footprint to accommodate such facilities.

The best site for a new sea lion enclosure is where our aviary is currently located. There are a few possible locations for a new aviary, including on the hillside. More research is needed to explore possible designs of a new aviary to meet our needs.

I have just turned 59 years old and have been teaching full-time at Moorpark College for 28 years and taught part-time for four years prior to that. I have been granted two sabbatical leaves during that time. I plan on teaching for at least four more years but I can see myself teaching for much longer than that. Part of my desire to develop my abilities in the area of fundraising is so that I may continue to be of service to the teaching zoo even after I retire from teaching.

Successful completion of this project will be measured in the following ways:

- Production of a journal documenting the facilities I visit and the people I meet with as well as what I learn regarding enclosure design and fundraising.
- Production of minutes of facility planning meetings held with the EATM faculty and staff to share the information I have gained through my facility visits.
- Completion of the EATM Facilities Specific Plan including plans for specific enclosures.
- Production of plans, drawings, etc., including project cost estimates, to support fundraising activities.
- Production of a capital campaign plan.
- Production of an account of fundraising efforts through the end of the sabbatical leave.
- Presentation to the Sabbatical Committee of copies of all of the above materials in the Fall semester of 2015.

I hope the committee can see that this project will expand my knowledge, helping me to improve how I teach my animal behavior and animal training courses. It will provide me with the opportunity to develop new skills in the areas of communicating with architects and supporters of our college and teaching zoo. This will benefit our students in both quality of instruction and diversity of learning opportunities at the teaching zoo. It will benefit the teaching zoo in increasing sources of capital funds for on-going improvements to the facility. It will benefit Moorpark College in helping to maintain our reputation for producing highly skilled, knowledgeable, and intelligent graduates ready to work in the animal-care industry. I thank the committee for considering my proposal.



AMERICA'S TEACHING ZOO
EXOTIC ANIMAL TRAINING & MANAGEMENT

MOORPARK COLLEGE

EATM Specific Facilities Plan

Discussion notes from meeting on 9/9/13 with Iris Ingram, John Sinutko, Kim Hoffmans and Michlyn Hines.

I. Update on Progress:

- a. EATM faculty/staff have developed animal collection plan to meet the academic needs of 104 students
- b. EATM faculty/staff have identified and prioritized needed zoo facility improvements
- c. Discussions from (a) and (b) above have helped faculty/staff clarify the vision and direction for the zoo facility
- d. Faculty, staff, and Dean met with Gary Lee from "clr Design" to discuss master planning for the zoo to enhance and update the current facilities. Specific discussions regarding vision, site, zoo facilities trends and master planning occurred.

II. Discussion:

- a. Fold EATM Specific Facilities Plan in with Moorpark College Master Facilities Plan
- b. Folding EATM's plan in to the college plan may help offset some of the costs
- c. Estimated cost for a basic "overarching" EATM facility plan would be around \$50,000
- d. Estimated cost for first exhibit (i.e.) carnivores would be \$50,000 because it would also include infrastructure costs for the entire facility plan
- e. To help fund the exhibit and other costs, we discussed possibly pursuing a capital champagne to be run through the MC Foundation. Total estimated cost for the "new/updated zoo" would be around 2-3 million dollars.

III. Next Steps:

- a. Create an RFP (Request for Proposals) and RFQ (Request for Qualifications)
- b. Collect RFP/RFQ examples; John Sinutko has the college one as an example to send us. We will need to cater it to EATM specifics regarding zoo facilities needs and the qualification we would like from the architectural firm (i.e. experience with designing zoos with small animal collections)

IV. Proposed Timeline:

RFP/RFQ	Convert MC model to contain EATM specifics	January 2014
Advertise	Advertise for architectural firms to submit their proposals and qualifications	February/March 2014 (4-6 weeks)
Review Proposals/Pre-screen	Review proposals and select ~ 3 firms to present information to a selection committee	Early April 2014
Selection of firm	Select firm and negotiate contract	April/May 2014 (2 months-need BOT approval)
EATM Specific Facility Plan	Meet with architect to discuss EATM needs	July – Dec 2014
Complete “overview” Facilities Plan	Complete general EATM Facilities Specific Plan and begin working on infrastructure and Carnivore area plan specifications	Jan.-March 2015 (6-months or longer)
Solicit benefactors	Find benefactor to pledge 20-30% of cash flow (6 figures) to begin a capital campaign to raise money for renovations and to help with increased “cost of ownership.” Possibly find someone to name the theater after....etc..	Ongoing after general plan has been developed