

## **APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL FALL 2024**

### **SYDNEY SIMS**

#### **Purposes and Outcomes**

In the last several years, and especially since Covid, students are arriving with more, and more profound, mental health issues. Experiences of trauma create difficulties in managing school, work, and life in general. Spectrum disorders and learning disabilities can create intellectual, emotional, and social problems that hinder students' progress toward their goals. Even without extraordinary trauma, unacknowledged patterns of thought and behavior can impede students' academic success and emotional well-being. Zen-centered training and practice will give me better tools to recognize these patterns and facilitate positive change and growth.

Mindfulness practices have been proven to enhance student success. The college already teaches mindfulness both directly, through the Student Health Center, and indirectly, in the Growth Mindset training received by tutors in The Learning Center. This sabbatical will continue in the same direction. This training will allow me to respond more flexibly and compassionately to students' academic, psychological, and emotional needs. It will improve my teaching skills by allowing me to focus more purposefully on students' needs, and bring greater clarity and awareness to the classroom. This training and practice will support both my teaching and my service to students and colleagues, and thereby make me a greater asset and credit to the College and to the District as a whole.

#### **Sabbatical Concept and Content**

I am applying for a one-semester sabbatical in fall 2024 to undertake training in Zen Pastoral Education. I will be studying, researching, and practicing pastoral care, Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy, Zen teaching methods, and Buddhist philosophy with Roshi Paul Genki Kahn and associated teachers. Roshi Kahn has practiced and taught Zen for 53 years. He is co-founder and Spiritual Director of the Zen Garland Order, which has member centers in the US, Europe, and South Africa (<https://zengarland.org/>). Roshi Kahn is also a psychotherapist in private practice and a licensed Clinical Social Worker, and has led freestanding and hospital-based mental health programs and clinics for thirty years (see his resume below). He uses Focusing, a practice of attentive awareness to physical and emotional sensation, in his clinical practice and teaching of clinicians.

The sabbatical training will consist of intensive reading, personal weekly meetings via Zoom, training in Focusing with an assigned teacher/partner, supervised client care, and several weeklong stays at Roshi Kahn's center, Ancient Oaks, in Savannah, Georgia. During the training I will seek opportunities to serve as chaplain-in-training at a local hospital or university.

I will also complete a two-week internship in traumatic grief counseling and earn a Certification in Compassionate Bereavement Care through a four-day intensive training course given by Dr. Joanne Cacciatore. Dr. Cacciatore, a professor at Northern Arizona State University, teaches, researches, and publishes widely in the field of traumatic grief. She is the founder of the MISS Foundation and the Selah Carefarm. The training and certification are offered by the Center for Loss and Trauma in Sedona, Arizona, in partnership with the MISS Foundation and the Elisabeth Kubler-Ross Family Trust. Philosophy and course details are at <https://www.missfoundation.org/compassionate-bereavement-care-certification/>

**Reading**

I will read the following books on mindfulness, trauma-inspired education, and pastoral work, along with other related readings:

- Dr. Joanne Cacciatore, *Bearing the Unbearable*
- Cheryl A Giles, *The Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices in Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*
- David A. Treleaven, *Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness: Practices for Safe and Transformative Healing*
- Alex Shevrin Venet, *Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education*

**Service and Professional Development**

On my return, I will offer Professional Development activities to colleagues on supporting students with mental health concerns and habitual patterns through a Zen-inspired awareness and openness. I will be able to convey the basics of Focusing for both teaching and personal growth. If invited, I will offer interfaith chaplaincy services to Moorpark students through the Student Health Center.

**Other Relevant Information**

In the last 10 years (since 2013), English instructors at Moorpark have taken 8 sabbaticals. Given that English is one of the two largest departments on campus, with 16 full-time faculty, this is not a disproportionate number.

In my 30+ years as a full-time faculty member at Moorpark (since 1989) I have taken two one-year sabbaticals:

- 1996-97: reading widely in modern American novels and poetry, and teaching ESL to Thai Buddhist nuns and middle-school children in Bangkok and Supanburi, Thailand
- 2008-09: researching Holistic Education: Educating the Mind, Body, and Spirit.

In 2020-21 I was awarded a one-year sabbatical to earn an ESL teaching certificate and teach English in Thailand but was thwarted by Covid and had to decline the award.

I'm applying to take this sabbatical in fall rather than spring so that I can continue to serve as dramaturg and dialogue coach to the Theatre Department's spring 2024 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as I have done for the last 10 years.

Roshi Paul Genki Kahn's resume:

**PAUL WYANT KAHN, LCSW, DCSW**

Living Process Counseling Services

18 East 61<sup>st</sup> Street

Savannah, GA 31405

201-616-9263

NPI #1194022293

GA License: #CSW007658

NY License: #R079976

AZ License: #17112

Registered Social Work Supervisor

**ZEN HISTORY: Roshi Paul Kuzan Genki Kahn**

Ordained a Novice Priest (Shukke Tokudo) by Taizan Maezumi Roshi at Zen Center of Los Angeles 1975

Empowered as a Full Priest (Denkai) by Roshi Dennis Genpo Merzel at Kanzeon, Salt Lake City, Utah

Empowered as a Dharma Successor (Denbo, Independent Zen Teacher) by Zen Master Bernie Glassman at Montague, Massachusetts

Inka (Zen Master Empowerment) by Zen Master Bernie Glassman at Montague, Massachusetts

**Diamond Sangha Koko-an**

Resident Practitioner under Robert Aitken Roshi, Yamada Koun Roshi

August 1970 – 1972

**Zen Center of Los Angeles**

Zen Priest under Taizan Maezumi Roshi

Director of Training

Director of Center Publications

February 1972 – 1979

**Zen Center of New York**

Director of Training under Zen Master Bernie Glassman

1979 - 1982

**Founded High Mountain Crystal Lake Zen Community**

Spiritual Director

2000 - 2005

**Zen Peacemakers Montague, MA**

President & CEO under Spiritual Director Zen Master Bernie Glassman

2007 – 2009

**The Zen Garland Order: An International Community for Zen Practice, Education, Healing & Service,**

**[www.zengarland.org](http://www.zengarland.org)**

Spiritual Director

2005 to Present

## **HISTORY: MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR & PSYCHOTHERAPIST**

### **Living Process Counseling Services**

#### **Private Psychotherapy Practice**

1994 to present, currently at 18 East 61<sup>st</sup> Street, Savannah, GA 31405

### **Zen Garland Bereavement Center for Child Death**

Director

*June 2015 to present*

### **FEDERATED EMPLOYMENT AND GUIDANCE SERVICES, FECS**

#### **Behavioral Health Project Manager: Bronx Region**

*March 2014 – November 2014 (The organization went bankrupt)*

### **COMMUNITY CARE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, Morris Plains, NJ**

**Director:** Partial Care Program for chronically mentally ill adults

*May 2004 – June 2008*

### **ST. JOSEPH'S REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER, Paterson, NJ**

**Program Director** (Directed 3 programs simultaneously)

Starlight Adult MICA Program

Esperanza Spanish Language MICA Program

Family Preservation Service

*October 1998 – July 2003*

### **BERGEN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER, Paramus, NJ**

(Held 3 positions simultaneously)

Supervisor: Department of Psychiatric Social Work

Coordinator: Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services

Program Director: MICA IOP

*January 1996 – October 1998*

### **RAMAPO RIDGE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, Wyckoff, NJ**

**Director: Department of Social Services** *October 1993 – January 1996*

### **FORDHAM TREMONT DAY PROGRAM, Bronx, NY**

**Assistant Director** *October 1991 – October 1993*

### **NATIONAL RECOVERY INSTITUTES, New York, NY**

**Assistant Program Director** *July 1990 – October 1991*

### **BRONX MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL HIV CENTER, Bronx, NY**

**Psychotherapist** *September 1988 – June 1989*

### **THE BRONX CENTER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES, Bronx, NY**

**Psychotherapist** *February 1986 – July 1989*

### **NEW YORK HOSPITAL, PAYNE WHITNEY PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC, New York, NY**

**Mental Health Worker** *January 1984 – April 1985*

**EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS**

- SIFI credentialed to supervise social work interns taken at Yeshiva University, 1996
- DCSW (NASW Diplomate in Clinical Social Work)
- LCSW (New York and Arizona Licensure)
- ACSW (Academy of Certified Social Workers)
- Cognitive Behavioral Training, St. Barnabas Hospital, Department of Psychiatry
- Certified in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy by the Institute for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy of New Jersey
- Master's of Social Work, Hunter School of Social Work, May 1990
- Bachelor of Arts, Ohio University, August 1970