

Sabbatical Request

Kara Lybarger-Monson

English Professor, Moorpark College

Sabbatical Proposal for Prospective Leave

- English Department Faculty Member: Fall 2005 - Present
- Proposed leave: Spring 2027 (one semester)
- Previous Sabbatical: 1

Topic: Study 21st-century LatinX, Native American, African American, and Asian American poets, and Los Angeles regional poets, to broaden and diversify the English 1B and English 14 curriculum. Research will include recent U.S. Poet Laureates: Arthur Sze, Ada Limon, Joy Harjo, and Tracy K. Smith along with Luis Rodriguez and Ocean Vuong. I will create lessons plans, lectures, several themed Canvas Modules, and videos, and post material to Canvas Commons, as well as provide workshops to faculty for Best Practices and campus-wide through Multicultural Day. It will be an opportunity for revised content materials for English 14: Poetry, which I teach each fall.

The goal is to provide faculty with a compendium of content related to contemporary poets who are not often anthologized or available for research in the library's databases. This also promotes inclusivity and sensitivity for multicultural poets and instills a sense of belonging in our diverse student body. VCCCD professors will have ready access to material by contemporary and regional Los Angeles poets to supplement the curriculum; it will have a long-lasting impact on how students see the true compendium of poetry within our society. This project supports Designing to Achieve: Applying Universal Design to Support IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Anti-racism, and Accessibility.

Proposed Objectives:

- Create multiple themed modules with lessons, discussions, assignments, and videos and post to Canvas Commons. Colleagues will be able to integrate it into their English 1B: Literature: Critical Thinking and Composition courses for studying contemporary American and Los Angeles regional poetry. Provide links to recent material and ensure appropriate copyright where necessary.
- Build content materials for English 14: Poetry.
- Create lesson plans that include contemporary and regional Los Angeles poets to supplement the curriculum
- Meet and interview regional poets in Los Angeles and the surrounding community to provide first-hand accounts for primary source content.
- Visit the Los Angeles Public Library to learn about the Los Angeles Poet Laureate and the Los Angeles Poet Society.

- Research Latinx, LGBTQIA+, African-American, Asian American, Native American poets.
- Read and incorporate UCLA's Poetry in Los Angeles LibGuide.
- Read articles and books from the tentative bibliography and create a broader bibliography for colleagues.
- Attend conferences, local panels with poets, and poetry readings to formulate content. Attend events at Cal State LA and other universities.
- Visit the Beyond Baroque, a Venice-based literary arts center, and attend poetry readings and workshops, as well as visit the following well-known regional establishments, such as Da Poetry Lounge, Re/Arte Centro Literario, and Sims Library of Poetry.
- Create a presentation and accompanying materials for the English department's Best Practices Workshop and Multicultural Day.

I. Post-Sabbatical Activity and Dissemination of Research

- A. Post modules with lessons, discussions, assignments, and videos and to Canvas Commons for English 1B and English 14: Poetry. The goal is to provide faculty with the best practices in teaching contemporary, and particularly regional, poets that are not often anthologized to promote inclusivity and sensitivity for multicultural poets and to instill a sense of belonging in our diverse student body.
- B. Announce the Canvas Commons modules in English and division meetings along with an email sent out with department meeting notes to show where instructors may find it. I will emphasize the importance of making people aware of this resource for immediate inclusion in curriculum about contemporary 21st American and specifically regional poetry to broaden and diversify the curriculum.
- C. Provide a report for campus-wide distribution for the sabbatical website and the English department's website.
- D. Provide a presentation on Multicultural Day & in a best practices workshop.
- E. Teach an updated English 14: Poetry and fresh material in English 1B.

II. Background and Rationale

College textbooks contain mostly poets from the Western Canon with narrow offerings for multicultural poets and almost nothing for contemporary poets. A great example is that Kennedy and Gioia's *Introduction to Literature* only includes poetry by Joy Harjo in the audio version; she is the first Native American poet to receive the National Poet Laureate award. Mays' *The Norton Introduction to Literature* includes an audio recording as well of her commentary on "The Woman Hanging from the Thirteenth-Floor Window." She is not included on the print pages that students are reading in class and incorporating into their essays. This leaves faculty with either developing their curriculum or leaving contemporary poets from diverse backgrounds out of the curriculum. I teach English 14: Poetry and English 1B: Literature: Critical Thinking

and Composition on ground and online, including a Zero Textbook Cost option for English 1B, and it is difficult to become well-versed in 21st-century poets overnight. As for Los Angeles regional poets, most professors do not have the time to complete research and lesson plans. Due to copyright, online textbooks only have poets such as John Keats, William Shakespeare, and the like. Other than anthologies and online textbooks, professors may choose textbooks by a particular group of poets, such as the *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature*, but it is not reasonable to pull from these various anthologies for one curriculum. As a side note, I taught English 15B: Survey of English Literature II for fifteen years and have an extensive knowledge of poetry. Building curriculum for contemporary 21st American and specifically regional poetry will broaden and diversify the curriculum. In truth, while doing research for this proposal, articles about contemporary 21st American and specifically regional poetry may not be found very readily in the databases because these poets are not written about. Most of my research will be with primary sources, the poets themselves. Research will also take place in regional venues, such as Beyond Baroque with additional research gleaned from literary magazines and journals, Zines, and websites.

Creating modules within Canvas Commons, allows faculty to have ready-made material to integrate contemporary American and regional poets into their curriculum, which has a direct impact on our diverse student body and contributes to a sense of belonging for those poets they do not often see represented from their respective cultures. This also promotes retention for students of diverse backgrounds. Students are repeatedly drawn to American poets who speak to their respective concerns. Access to contemporary and regional Los Angeles poets to supplement the curriculum will have a vast impact on how students see the true compendium of poetry within our society.

I attended the American Literature Association's Symposium on American Poetry in November of 2024 with the support of my Dean, Monica Garcia. They have another conference on the east coast each May that I will attend.

For English 14: Poetry, it is difficult to find an inexpensive textbook, so I chose Dover Thrift's *100 Best-Loved Poems* and supplement it with more contemporary poets, such as Ocean Vuong, Patricia Smith, Joy Harjo, Natasha Trethewey, and others.

I am incredibly lucky to have Crystal Salas, President Julius Sokenu, CLU President John Nunes visit my English 14 classroom this semester.

III. Communication with Colleagues at ACCESS and "Value of the proposed leave on instruction or service to students"

- A. The "value of the proposed leave on instruction or service to students" would be the direct impact that the Canvas Commons material has on my colleagues and how they utilize the resources in their respective classrooms. In addition, my students will be directly impacted by the findings in English 14: Poetry and English 1B (online and on ground).

IV. Results and Benefits to Moorpark College and "Value of the proposed leave to the college"

- A. With regard to the value of the proposed leave to the college, the goal is to provide current and future faculty with the best practices in teaching contemporary American and regional poets. Our colleagues at Ventura and Oxnard will have access to the material.
- B. For the campus-wide community, the results would be having access to a report along with a presentation on the topic during Multicultural Day.
- C. The benefit to the college departments will include access to the Canvas Common modules. I will provide the English department with a Best Practices Workshop concerning my sabbatical.
- D. All materials will be provided in Canvas Commons.

V. Consistent with the VCCCD Mission and “Value of the proposed leave to the district”

- A. My sabbatical is consistent with the district’s vision and mission statements.
- B. The district’s vision statement asserts, “Keeping in mind that students come first, we will model best practice in instructional and service delivery, student access, community involvement, and accountability.” The focus on best practices for teaching contemporary American and regional poets is a “student first” issue.
- C. Furthermore, per the district’s mission statement, I will be actively providing the campus community with “access to comprehensive quality educational opportunities that support student learning and student success,” such as the Modules in Canvas Commons.
- D. I plan to visit the following well-known regional establishments, such as Beyond Baroque, Da Poetry Lounge, Re/Arte Centro Literario, and Sims Library of Poetry, and the Los Angeles Public Library.

VI. Prospective Attendance at Conferences

- A. Attend the American Literature Association Conference
- B. Attend Academy of American Poets’ Programs
- C. Attend workshops and events at the following regional venues: Beyond Baroque, Da Poetry Lounge, Re/Arte Centro Literario, Sims Library of Poetry, and the Los Angeles Public Library.
- D. Modern Language Association Conference

VII. Proposed Timeline and Activities

- **January:** Read articles and books from the bibliography.
- **February:** Attend Beyond Baroque, Da Poetry Lounge, Re/Arte Centro Literario, Sims Library of Poetry, and the Los Angeles Public Library.
- **March:** Meet and interview regional poets in Los Angeles and the surrounding community to provide first-hand accounts for primary source content. Visit the Los Angeles Public Library to learn about the Los Angeles Poet Laureate and the Los

Angeles Poet Society. Research Latinx, LGBTQIA+, African-American, Asian American, and Native American poets.

- Attend conferences, local panels with poets, and poetry readings. Attend events at Cal State Los Angeles, Cal State Northridge, UCLA, and other universities.
- **April:** Create modules with lessons, discussions, assignments, and videos and post to Canvas Commons. Provide links to recent material and ensure appropriate copyright where necessary. Create modules with lessons, discussions, assignments, and videos and post to Canvas Commons.
- **May:** Create a best practice lesson plan for the English department's Best Practices Workshop, create a presentation for Multicultural Day, and write the sabbatical report.

VIII. Department Information & Support:

Dean Monica Garcia stated the following in an email dated October 8th, 2024, when I first proposed a sabbatical: "I think this is a fantastic idea. What a way to contribute to your colleagues and most important, serve our diverse students. I'm sure the committee would agree with me that this is a worthy consideration for sabbatical." I am thankful to have her approval and support. (See Addendum.)

My previous sabbatical was in the Fall of 2017: Effective Teaching Strategies for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Even though my colleagues have recently gone on sabbatical, we are one of the largest departments on campus, and most students choose English 1B: Literature: Critical Thinking and Composition to fulfill their critical thinking requirement.

Tentative Bibliography

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<https://www.beyondbaroque.org/>.

Da Poetry Lounge. Da Poetry Lounge, 2025. <https://www.dapoetrylounge.com/da-vision>.

Gorman, Amanda. *Call Us What We Carry.* Penguin, 2021.

Harjo, Joy. *An American Sunrise: Poetry.* Norton, 2019.

---. *Poet Warrior: A Memoir.* Norton, 2021.

Kenyon Review. Kenyon Review, 2025. <https://aprweb.org/>.

Limon, Ada. *Bright Dead Things*. Milkweed Editions, 2015.

Poetry Foundation. Poetry Foundation, 2025. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>.

Poets & Writers, Poets & Writers Magazine, 2025. <https://www.pw.org/>.

Rattle, Rattle, 2024. <https://www.rattle.com/>.

Re/Arte Centro Literario. Re/Arte Centro Literario, 2025. <https://reartela.com/>.

Rodriguez, Luis. *The Concrete River: Poems* Open Road Media, 2012.

Smith, Tracy. K. *Wade in the Water: Poems*. Graywolf Press, 2019.

Sze, Arthur. *Into the Hush: Poetry*. Copper Canyon Press, 2025.

Thompson, Lynne. *Blue on a Blue Palette*. BOA, 2024.

Vuong, Ocean. *Time is a Mother*. Penguin, 2022.

Addendum

Forthcoming letters of recommendation:

Dean Monica Garcia

Kyle Loughman

Thank you for your consideration.

Kara Lybarger-Monson