McLennan Community College
Application for Sabbatical Leave

Please refer to Policies and Procedures: Sabbatical Leave; F-I-d, 1 posted on MCC's web site for a complete description of eligibility requirements and selection criteria for Sabbatical Leave candidates. Each applicant must have completed a minimum of three consecutive years of full-time employment as an instructor, administrator, or other member of the professional staff prior to the current academic year (2021-2022) to be eligible for Sabbatical Leave in 2022-2023. Persons wishing to apply must complete an application package including the following:

1. This completed form.

2. A project proposal including:

   a. A statement of the applicant's educational objectives and description of how the proposal contributes to his/her professional development plan. Progress toward these objectives (i.e., coursework and/or research completed or in progress, etc.) should be discussed.

   b. A detailed description of proposed Sabbatical Leave activities and projected product of their work.

   c. A discussion of benefits expected for the applicant, the applicant's area or department, and the institution in general if this Sabbatical Leave were to be awarded.

   d. A description on how the applicant will share their experience and new insights gained during the Sabbatical Leave with the college community after their return.

3. A letter of endorsement from the applicant's immediate supervisor.

The application package must be submitted electronically to bprice@mclennan.edu by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 1, 2022.

NAME: Nicholas R. Webb

DEPT. OR OFFICE: English and Theatre

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES: Teaching composition, literature, and script-analysis courses; Management of the BPAC box office.

List degrees earned and granting institutions:

Degree	Institution	Date Earned
MFA in Dramatic Arts	The New School	May 1998
Honors BA in English	The University of Utah	June 1992

List occupational experience relevant to this application:

Position	Employer	Date Employed
Professor of English and Theatre	McLennan Community College	2004-present
Acting Instructor	Waco Children's Theater (Summer Camp)	2007, 2009, 2011, 2013
Project Editor	St. Martin's Press (College Division)	1992-96

Sabbatical Leave Acceptance Agreement

I understand that a grant recipient must return to McLennan Community College for the contract year following the Sabbatical Leave or, upon completion of the leave, return the entire amount of the grant (including salary and fringe benefits) to MCC. I agree to share my experience and learning with the MCC community within the next long semester upon my return by one of the venues listed in Policies and Procedures: Sabbatical Leave; F-I-d, 1.

Check One:

☐ I prefer to take the Sabbatical Leave during one long semester at full salary.

_____ Fall 2022 or _____ Spring 2023

☐ I prefer to take the Sabbatical Leave over two long semesters at half salary (15 load hours split between two long semesters, as shown below):

_____ Hours for Fall 2022 and _____ Hours for Spring 2023

☑ I prefer to take the Sabbatical Leave during the 2023 Summer (May – August) for 15 load hours based on the current 2021-2022 Salary Schedule: Part-Time, Overload, and Summer.

☐ I have not decided on a leave period at this time.

Nick Webb Digitally signed by Nick Webb Date: 2022.02.01 13:15:41 -06'00'

Signature

1 February 2022

Date

Nicholas Webb
Professor, English and Theatre
(254) 299-8945
nwebb@mclennan.edu

Sabbatical-Leave Proposal

Educational Objectives

My ongoing educational objectives are to develop more-effective, and more-engaging, methods of teaching both the creative and the critical uses of language. This sabbatical leave will allow me to complete a project that fosters these aims in a novel manner.

In previous years, as part of my professional development at MCC, I've engaged in three types of activities that underpin this proposal.

First: I served a three-year term on the executive-committee for the Conference of College Teachers of English. During this time, I helped evaluate and select poems, short stories, and scholarly essays for inclusion in CCTE's annual conference and for publication in CCTE's journal.

Second: I wrote a composition textbook, *Writing Is Easier Than You Think*. This book, which includes over 100 model essays written by MCC students, began with a grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to produce open-education resources (OER). Currently, my book is MCC's required textbook for Composition I and Composition II courses taught by adjunct instructors. Further, the book is also available to any adopters via the Texas OER Repository as well as through MCC's online library catalog.

Third: I've worked within MCC's theatre department on multiple projects. These include providing dramaturgical support to plays in production at MCC (*Tristan and Isolde*; *Sense and Sensibility*; and *The Pillowman*); acting in a play (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*); and authoring an original one-act play in collaboration with MCC's History department. This play, titled

Stepping Stones, was performed at the Ball Performing Arts Center by MCC student actors and musicians.

These various language- and performance-based activities have, I believe, laid a dynamic foundation for my newest ambition. I'm applying for sabbatical leave during the Summer of 2023 to complete the writing of an original, full-length play.

Activities and Final Product

My ambition is to take sabbatical leave during the Summer of 2023. During these months, I'll write an original, full-length play, an adaptation of the Greek-tragedy trilogy *The Oresteia*.

I have a 15-week plan to write the play. My writing process will mirror the process, and the schedule, that I used to write my composition textbook. I'll write on the MCC campus—my preferred writing rooms are LA 102 and 109. I anticipate writing 8-10 hours per day, five days (perhaps six) each week. One of the challenges that I'm most looking forward to is solving how to synthesize the three stories of the original trilogy into a new, cohesive, single work.

Once the sabbatical-script has been completed, it will then become a teaching tool, being workshopped by MCC theatre students and instructors during the 2023-24 academic year. (The workshop process is described more fully in the final section of this document.) Assuming a successful sequence of development throughout this workshop process, the sabbatical-script will be revised into a production-script. Ultimately, the play will (likely) be performed as part of MCC's 2024-25 theatre season.

Expected Benefits from Sabbatical Leave

The primary benefit that I expect to draw from this project is creative fulfillment and personal pride in completing a new play. Further, delivering up a play for public scrutiny—from both my peers and my students—means that I'm practicing what I preach as a writing instructor. As a result of allowing others to judge my writing, I'll expect to feel more authentic as one who teaches the craft. Perhaps most important of all, writing this play will allow me to showcase my training. (My MFA is in Playwriting.) In doing so, I can tangibly share with the MCC community what I believe about creative and critical processes within the arts. Finally, I'd like to think that there could be a certain level of prestige conferred upon MCC by supporting the development, and the public staging, of an original work of art authored by one of its faculty members. But, more significantly, this work will forefront MCC's commitment to providing students with meaningful opportunities to craft original, creative projects.

Sharing My Experience and Insights

The truly remarkable part of this process is how generous MCC intends to be about allowing me to actively share my sabbatical product—and to allow it to directly enrich students' experiences. After my sabbatical leave, for the subsequent 18 months, the play will receive a variety of classroom and public readings and/or stagings by MCC students and instructors. I will participate in this ongoing process, not only helping students to understand my creative and critical processes, but also fostering their analytical and interpretive skills as we develop the sabbatical-script into a production-script.

I anticipate robust support from the theatre department and, thus, I foresee at least two fall workshops and two spring workshops during 2023-24. These workshops are a structured form of sharing the play in which student actors will read the play aloud under the leadership of a faculty-member director. At each reading of the script, I'll offer my feedback to the artists about

their work—while I'll also receive feedback from them about my work. This give-and-take development process will continue, allowing me opportunities to rewrite the script and allowing the students to interpret and explore those changes that they've inspired. As such, we'll work very much as peer-collaborators engaged in an ongoing dialogue about our craft. I believe this can provide potent opportunities to elevate students' abilities—and their confidence—through a sustained process that builds toward a fully realized, final product.

The year of workshopping will then culminate (likely) with the inclusion of the play in MCC's 2024-25 theatre season. Following these fully staged public performances, we will then conduct post-production round tables. Ideally, these can immediately follow the performances and will be open to audience members as well. Such discussions allow the many stakeholders in the play's multi-year evolution to reflect on successes and to assess ongoing opportunities for improvement.

Throughout all of this, I will truly be living my values—and achieving my educational objectives. I'll be showing students how to create art in a collaborative manner while also empowering their visions and their voices. Not only does this foster my professional-development goals of becoming a more-effective teacher, but it also allows me to share my passion for creative and artistic expression. And, ultimately, it showcases my belief that any meaningful work—be it scholarly, creative, or both—must be constructed, and refined, over time and through concentrated effort.

McLennan Community College

Dear Sabbatical Leave Committee:

It is my distinct honor to recommend Profesor Nick Webb for Sabbatical Leave in the summer of 2023. Over the last fifteen years, I have had the unique privilege of working and collaborating with Professor Webb on a diverse range of theatrical projects and academic endeavors. As an artist and educator, he consistently demonstrates artistic ingenuity, a refined and robust eye for developing new curriculum, and an unwavering commitment to the highest standard of professionalism invested in his work and the MCC community.

Professor Webb's proposed Sabbatical Leave project would directly impact McLennan's Theatre Department and VPA division. His new adaptation of the classical Greek epic, *The Oresteia*, would provide McLennan Theatre students and faculty with an exciting and rare educational opportunity. In my role as stage director, I have long desired to present the works of classical Greek dramatists on the MCC stage. Professor Webb's project would allow our theatre students to be involved in the creative process of a new production from the ground up. Workshopping a new play over two years would be transformative and highly beneficial while they contribute and generate a new work based on classical Greek literature. This sort of experiential opportunity is rare at most four-year institutions and almost non-existent in two-year community college environments.

Throughout my professional association with Professor Webb, I have witnessed a remarkable intrinsic artistic acumen that has brought him success as an educator. In my opinion, this robust artistic sensibility tempered by his unwavering dedication to his professional development and growth makes him an influential artist and academic. Nick embraces new opportunities and challenges while striving for excellence in his work and encouraging it in his students.

Speaking from the heart, I believe that Professor Webb and his playwrighting project epitomizes the mission of Sabbatical Leave. His commitment to education, community, and professional excellence is without comparison on our campus. Collaborating with Professor Webb in the classroom and onstage has been incredibly rewarding for our entire department. Therefore, I give my highest recommendation for Professor Webb to be awarded Sabbatical Leave in the Summer of 2023.

Sincerely,

Kelly Parker, MFA
Professor/Coordinator
Department of Theatre
McLennan Community College
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