

**KALAMAZOO VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**Interoffice Correspondence**

26 January 2018

Vice President Dennis Bertch  
Vice President Aaron Hilliard  
Dean Billy Reynolds  
Director Mark Walters

**SABBATICAL LEAVE FINAL REPORT**

Here is the final report for my sabbatical leave during fall semester 2017. I have included the original sabbatical proposal as detailed in the guidelines for this leave.

As you will see from the report, my sabbatical activities were enlightening, constructive, satisfying and restorative. The sabbatical was a highlight in my long career at KVCC, and I will always be grateful for the opportunities I was afforded by the college to engage in this work.

If you have any questions or would like any further information, please feel free to contact me.

Best wishes to you.

Robert Haight 

**Post-Sabbatical Final Report  
Robert Haight Fall 2017**

26 January 2018

Dennis Bertch, Vice President for Academic Services  
Aaron Hilliard, Vice President of Human Resources  
Billy Reynolds, Dean of Liberal Arts  
Mark Walters, Director of Libraries, Texas Township Archives

**Original Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this sabbatical is to provide a block of time in which to translate a book of poetry by the Chilean writer Luisa Adelina Del Rosario Philippi Quintana into English, to create new writing of my own, and to work on associated activities related to the business of publishing writing.

**Activities Performed**

I performed all of the activities described in my original sabbatical proposal. In September, I served as Writer-in-Residence for the Ludington Arts Council. I worked with a community group of writers in a workshop setting and gave a public reading of my work and a public interview for high school students and community members. From September through December, I translated the poetry I had been given of the Chilean poet Luisa Adelina Del Rosario Phillippi Quintana. This work was challenging, interesting, and rewarding, and I learned much about this woman's life, values, concerns, country, intelligence and personality through her poetry. It was a wonderful experience to put these poems into English for the first time anywhere. Since my Spanish skills are rudimentary at best, I used two translation software programs, a few Spanish to English dictionaries, and in the most difficult situations consulted my spouse, who is a fluent speaker of Spanish. In addition, from September through December, I wrote and read each day, ending up with scores of journal pages and around a dozen finished new poems. I submitted new poems to a few journals and published some poems during the semester. I provided biographical material for an NPR radio program in Connecticut that read one of my poems to a selection of music. I also wrote recommendations for former students

applying to graduate school. I studied a new book by Robert Hass on form in poetry, read numerous books of poems, and read widely in other areas.

### **Objectives Accomplished**

To translate a collection of thirty-three poems by the poet Luisa Adelina Del Rosario Philppi Quintana (1896-1976) from Chilean Spanish into English.

To engage in writing new poetry. This will result in working toward the completion of a new book of poems of my own.

To attend to the business of publishing creative writing, including finding potential publishers, creating submission packets, writing correspondence, editing poetry for others. This will create a finished product available to readers.

To spend a portion of each day reading the work of significant authors. This keeps one current in the field. One cannot be a writer without being a reader.

### **Conclusions Drawn**

Translation is a difficult art in itself, an art that is vital in bringing the diversity of global voices in the world to larger audiences. Poetry is an old art form that has existed in a variety of styles in various places. Some other nations beyond our own place a high value on poets and poetry. For as small a country as it is, Chile has an incredible tradition in poetry. They have two Nobel Prize recipients in poetry, Pablo Neruda and Gabriela Mistral. These poets are revered in their country. Their former homes and their burial sites are national monuments. In addition, the art of poetry is thriving in their culture. Where the United States seems obsessed with employment, skills and training at the expense of lifestyle, education and culture, the Chilean people appreciate balanced living, which includes as instrumental the arts. In my roles as a writer and teacher of writing, I need to expand my students' perceptions of the possibilities in their lives to live a better, more fulfilling existence that what they are bombarded with in advertising and consumerism. When traveling in Chile, I was given the book of poems I translated. The poems were written throughout most of the twentieth century. They had never appeared in English. I wished to translate the poems and seek at some point a publisher for them in the United States. Many of the poets I most admire have worked on poetry translations from a variety of languages, cultures, and historical periods, and I wanted to engage in this new experience since I'd never done it before in the many years of my writing career. The work spellbinding in many ways, like solving a set of puzzles, and I spent hours losing track of time as I worked out the possibilities for lines and words.

I believe very strongly that teachers of writing need to write themselves. Though I don't think they necessarily need to be published authors, they should be regular practitioners of the craft. Their students will then be instructed in meaningful ways as to the challenges and satisfactions all writers face, in the process that leads to success in professional writers, in the priorities that writers establish as they work through the conception of an idea to the completion of a draft and beyond. I believe my writing and my teaching inform one another. I am a better writer because of my students and my students are better writers because I write. I don't have to hand out grammar exercises to my students each class and pretend I am interested in the subject of English while doing nothing more than "drill and kill."

Some of my students are interested in the practical aspects of publishing writing, and since I am a publishing writer, I can tell them about submitting to journals, about preparing a book for publication, about the pain and inevitability of rejections, about working with galleys, and a whole range of concerns that serious writers face beyond putting words on the page. I have taught at KVCC for almost thirty years and I am proud to write that many of my and my colleagues' former students have gone on to publish award winning books, work for magazines, and become college professors of writing themselves. Many of them write to me to say that it all started here.

### **Summary of the Manner in which the Criteria for Sabbatical Leave Proposals Were Fulfilled**

*A. "Likelihood that the proposed activities will enhance the faculty member's effectiveness in the areas of teaching/learning, scholarship including the scholarship of teaching/learning, professional development, assessment of student learning outcomes, and/or usefulness to the college."*

The activities I completed during this sabbatical have enhanced my effectiveness in the areas I teach, including the teaching of writing and in the teaching of literature. The work on my own writing continues my professional development and the reading in which I engaged through the semester made me more knowledgeable of my subject matter. The process of translation from Spanish into English prepared me to more capably examine the writing of students who might not have been brought up with English as their first language and offer suggestions in bridging the gaps that occur between languages.

*B. "Likelihood that the proposed sabbatical leave will enhance the institution's ability to fulfill its mission and/or improve service to students or other publics we serve."*

I believe this college has a responsibility to employ college professors who are expert in their disciplines and who engage in academics. When the college hires these people who are representative of academic culture, the students know it and feel they are getting a real college education. This is one of the greatest challenges confronting KVCC today as we face declining enrollments. I'm glad to say that my work in the classroom and as a working writer enhances the reputation of the college in our community.

C. *"Degree to which the proposed sabbatical leave objectives exceed expectations for routine, ongoing professional development..."*

The objectives for my sabbatical leave far exceeded the typical expectations for professional development. While teaching writing, we should write ourselves, but when reading student work for many hours each week it is impossible to engage in one's own writing with the focus and block of time that one can while on sabbatical leave. I might have been able to translate a few poems over a semester if I were teaching full time. I would never have been able to complete the translations, the writing and the reading I did had I not been granted this leave. The sabbatical made this work possible.

D. *"Provides an opportunity for reflection and renewal."*

This was one of the wonderful aspects of the leave, returning to the students, colleagues and college community with excitement and enthusiasm for this work. I felt that I had been away a long time and knew I wanted to return to this profession, that the work still animated my being, that I was not, after almost thirty years at KVCC, ready to just call it a day. I would not have felt as invigorated and renewed had I not been given this sabbatical leave. It was truly wonderful for me professionally and personally.

### **How You Plan to Use the Outcomes of Your Sabbatical Leave to Benefit the College, Students, and Colleagues**

In my own classroom, I will expand my range of writers discussed to include Chilean poets. I'll recommend to students and colleagues to read poetry in translation, and I'll share with both some of the works I translated and what I learned about the poems, about translating technology and about the challenges in moving from one language to another. I'll be sharing my own writing at the college as well, at a reading this winter semester and likely some in the fall as well. I'm leading book talks for the Faculty Success Center. I expect some of my own writing will appear in journals and magazines over the next year and more until my next book of poetry is completed and published. Finally, I will try to be an example to my students and

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Robert Haight  
Final Sabbatical Report  
January 2018

colleagues that our writing and teaching lives are of value, are integral to our happiness and humanness, and are worth accomplishing in a spirit of joy and not merely obligation.



**Robert Haight**  
**Sabbatical Proposal**  
**October 21, 2016**

**Requested Date**

Fall Semester 2017, Beginning in September and Ending in December

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this sabbatical is to provide a block of time in which to translate a book of poetry by the Chilean writer Luisa Adelina Del Rosario Philppi Quintana into English, to create new writing of my own, and to work on associated activities related to the business of publishing writing.

**Objectives**

To translate a collection of thirty-three poems by the poet Luisa Adelina Del Rosario Philppi Quintana (1896-1976) from Chilean Spanish into English.

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**Narrative Description, Activities Planned, Benefits to Applicant, Students, Colleagues**

Chile is a nation that takes poetry seriously. It comprises a people who greatly value the written word and who especially esteem their poets. For a comparatively small nation, Chile has been the birthplace of many fine poets including two winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Gabriella Mistral (1945) and Pablo Neruda (1971) (the United States has numerous fiction writers who have been named Nobel Laureates and recently one song writer but no one in the art of poetry). Chile has celebrated Mistral and Neruda, turning their homes into museums and their burial

sites into national monuments visited by thousands each year. Chile offers an example for how a nation might respond to poetry.

When I visited Chile last year, I was able to go to Pablo Neruda's home in Santiago, La Chascona, view his Nobel medal, peruse the copies of his books (including *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman) and see his reading chair underneath a large window that looked out on his courtyard and the other sections of his house. When I was telling my daughter-in-law's father about how emotional the experience of visiting Neruda's home was for me, he gave me a published collection of poems written by his grandmother who had been a professor through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The poems were written in Chilean Spanish, but I could see by the lineation, enjambment and stanzaic organization they were poems of an individual well versed in the art form.

For part of my sabbatical, I propose to translate these poems into English and later publish the translated collection. Translation is known as an art form in itself. One cannot simply turn Spanish words into English equivalents and end up with a suitable result. When Ursula Le Guin translated Gabriella Mistral's poems into English, she left a number of poems untranslated because she felt she could not find the right poetic equivalent in English. In short, translation takes as much knowledge and skill in poetics as it does in language. Some of the poets I most esteem have done works of translation, including WS Merwin, Gary Snyder and Robert Bly. This will be a first for me in my poetry career and it offers a challenge that excites me.

In addition the translation portion of my sabbatical supports the KVCC mission in developing and teaching diversity. I will be able to bring experience and knowledge to the classroom in both writing and literature classes. My experience will broaden student and faculty perspectives in how poetry is approached in countries other than our own and how it can be moved from one language to another, yet retain the integral qualities of the art form.

The second part of my sabbatical will include the complementary activity of focusing on my own work as a poet. I will write new poems, submit completed poems to journals and magazines for publication, write correspondence related to poetry, perform readings and work to build a new collection that I will eventually publish as a book. My writing work gives me credibility with my students and, I hope, with my colleagues as well.

My most recent book of poetry was published three years ago. That book would never have been possible to finish had it not been for my last sabbatical. When teaching writing, one must allow a lot of time for responding to student work. Though it doesn't prevent one from engaging as a writer and it shouldn't, the work of classes slows down the completion of one's own work. It's just a part of the writing and teaching life. I have always enjoyed my work as an educator. I never



have thought of it as something I have to do to get to the work I want to do. However, as a writing teacher, I have always wanted to practice writing in my own life. Because of the demands of working with students, reading their writing, planning classes, being an engaged professional, I have learned to work on my writing at a pace where it gets done, but slowly and continually. My teaching life informs my writing. It keeps me engaged with the work of published professional authors and the work of aspiring student authors. In addition, my writing life informs my teaching. My students know I have faced a blank page on many more occasions than they have, know I have worked through countless revisions to try to get a piece "right," know I have at numerous times had pieces that never went anywhere, and are aware of certain successes.

This portion of my sabbatical meets the college's mission to provide quality programs with quality instruction and capable faculty who are experts in their field.

I will complete this work at my home and at my cabin on Lake Michigan in the Upper Peninsula. It will allow me to return to my students more knowledgeable, more practiced, and more credible as a source of information and as an example of a working writer.

#### **Ways Objectives & Activities Meet Criteria Including Benefits to Students and the College's Mission**

The translation project will broaden my professional experience, enhancing professional effectiveness. It will open a new area to engage student learning about writing and literature.

Having a practicing published writer employed at the college improves the college's reputation with students who desire documented expertise in the field.

Engaging in intellectual and creative activity for the sustained time of a sabbatical refreshes the spirit and motivates professional enthusiasm.

This project recognizes and supports diversity in literature and language.

#### **Expected Dollar Value of Any Grants, Fellowships and Other Anticipated Income**

None.

Robert Haight  
Sabbatical Proposal  
October 21, 2016

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### **Courses Taught and Likely Future Courses**

English 110, College Writing I; English 111, College Writing II; English 220, Creative Writing; English 222, Advanced Creative Writing; English 205, World Literature.