

Collin County Community College District  
APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE



**Instructions**

Please complete this application by responding to all items. Attach requested documentation (in the order requested) and secure the appropriate signatures prior to submitting the application to the chair of the Sabbatical Leave Committee. Please submit the original and 10 copies.

Name James (Chris) C. Gray

CWID 110525735

Title Professor of Art

Division Fine Arts

Have you ever been granted a sabbatical? -No\_ If yes: Date: N/A

Please provide a brief description of your previous sabbatical project:

**Sabbatical Leave Period Being Requested**

Dates: Beginning Date August 25 2014

Ending Date January 20 2015

Length: [  ] One semester [  ] Two semesters [  ] Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Agreement**

**ABSTRACT**

Ceramics is a very hands-on, technique-driven discipline. In fact the measure of an artist of clay objects, is how well they can perform the most basic techniques within the best design principles. These basic, core techniques are, of course, vital to the future of ceramics students and consequently majors.

My goal is to travel to universities that are known as the finest schools in the country for ceramics, to research and observe how beginning ceramics students are taught. I will collect the written information used by professors in their studio courses. By immersing myself in the classrooms and studios of these schools as the beginners are being taught to create ceramics and collecting the documentation, I can increase my knowledge, understanding and education in ceramics and apply it to my own pedagogy and the ceramics discipline at Collin as a whole.

My observations from demonstrating ceramics -- or throwing pots -- at Springfest and Art Day on the Spring Creek Campus are that students are passionate about learning but hesitant because of a lack of skill and the natural "fear factor". Observing a number of other successful programs help me to translate their passion to learn into a skill, overcoming the fear of students who are not "art majors" or lack art experiences.

Through my continual participation in NCECA (National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts), I have obtained commitments from several universities and a private art center to allow me to explore their teaching pedagogy as well as further my own exploration and growth in creating ceramics. My recent solo exhibition in *THE ARTS gallery* highlighted for me the difficulty of teaching studio art classes while staying current in and pertinent to my field of study and craft (or art).

The success of this sabbatical would enable me to expand the Collin College ceramics program by enhancing recruitment of beginning ceramics students, thereby increasing the number of ceramics-specific transfer students while assisting the retention of students in the art core for transfer to area and concurrent enrollment universities.

Collin College Sabbatical Leave Proposal  
Fall Semester 2014  
Chris Gray - Fine Arts  
Professor of Art/Ceramics

### **A. Objectives**

1. My methods and objective of sabbatical is to personally observe Professors at Universities that are considered the finest ceramics schools in the country and document their methods of teaching beginning programs and students.
2. Research and document what Professors and Universities consider critical in a ceramics transfer student.
3. By observing techniques and projects, I will improve success for the beginner, and apply this to my pedagogy to aid in student retention and transfer rates.
4. Participating in an Artist in Residency, I will enrich and grow. I have standing agreements with two institutions for this. As a Studio Arts professor it is crucial to stay current and well practiced in ones field. Ceramics is a fairly unique discipline in that it is often a group activity. By immersing in these environments, I would learn and improve as an artist and Professor.

### **Rationale**

1. With the recent increase in "for credit" students in ceramics sections; it has become my focus to increase, not just our student retention rates, but also the number of students who transfer as ceramics majors. I believe it is crucial to be immersed in such an environment so as to give my students the best chance at success when they do indeed transfer.

### **B. Summary Timetable**

**September 2014** - Utah State University, Logan, UT. - Todd Rex Hayes, Professor and Lab Technician there. Professors John Neely and Dan Murphy I will observe all of these classes. I will also be given studio space and be able to make my own work in an academic setting. I will also be given the opportunity to load and fire a wood-burning kiln with the Professors and students there.

**October 2014** - Montana State University - Bozeman, MT. - Dean Adams, the Foundations coordinator of their Art Department. And Professor Josh Dewese. I will be observing beginning students in class. I will also observe any Professors that will allow me the privilege.

For the remainder of October, I will spend as an Artist in Residence at Red Lodge Clay Center in Red Lodge, MT. There I will be able to apply everything I have seen thus far in making my own work and also be in an environment conducive to full immersion in creative growth.

**November 2014** – Wichita State University – Wichita, KS. - Professor Ted Adler. I will observe several different beginning classes and also demonstrate to the students my own techniques.

**December 2014** – Ohio University, Athens, OH. - Professors Brad Schwieger and Tom Bartel. I will be observing all beginning classes there and demonstrating pottery wheel throwing techniques.  
For the remainder of December I will be at home compiling data.

### C. Bibliography

Clark, Kenneth. (1983) *The Potters Manual: Chartwell Books, Inc.*

Hopper, Robin. (2006) *Robin Hopper Ceramics: a lifetime of works, ideas, and teachings*: Krause Publications.

Landberger, Elizabeth, Lundin, Mita. (2012) *Ceramics: a beginners guide to tools and techniques/ Elizabeth Landberger & Mita Lundin*: Allworth Press.

Nelson, Glenn C. (2002) *Ceramics: a potters handbook*: Wadsworth/ Thomson Learning.

Reason, Emily (2010) *Ceramics for Beginners: Wheel Throwing*: Lark Books.

Rogers, Phil. (2000) *Throwing Pots*: University of Pennsylvania Press; London: A. & C. Black.

Zakin, Richard. (2001) *Ceramics: Mastering the Craft: Second Edition*. Kraus Publications.

### D. Resources

Todd Rex Hayes, John Neely and Dan Murphy – Utah State University, Logan, UT.

Dean Adams and Josh DeWeese – Montana State University, Bozeman, MT.

David Hiltner – Owner of Red Lodge Clay Center, Red Lodge, MT.

Ted Adler – Wichita State University, Wichita, KS.

Brad Schwieger and Tom Bartel – Ohio University, Athens, OH.