President's Sabbatical Award Request

Employee name: Nicholas Gaffney
EMPLID: 5675140

Campus: Alexandria
Dept/Division: Liberal Arts
Discipline: History

Rank: Assistant Professor
Original appointment date: 8/16/2011

Dates of previous sabbatical leave: N/A

Dates of previous educational leave with pay: N/A

Dates of requested sabbatical leave (limited to one semester): Fall 2016

JUSTIFICATION (purpose of sabbatical leave): Attach a description of proposed sabbatical plan, no more than 1,000 words in length (excluding bibliography). Include a 50-word executive summary. (Both proposal and summary should be sent as attachments by e-mail to Human Resources.)

AGREEMENT

1. I agree to furnish a written report summarizing project accomplishments through the provost/dean (if appropriate) to the College president.

2. I agree to present a seminar on the result of my sabbatical, to be presented at the president's award lecture series, at an appropriate time during the academic year following the leave.

3. I agree to serve twice the time of the approved leave with pay at the College after return from leave with pay.

4. If selected, I agree to sign the promissory note (to be prepared by Human Resources).

Fall 2016
Date of leave request

Provost approval

Employee signature

Human Resources approval

Academic dean/supervisor approval

President approval
Nicholas Gaffney
Assistant Professor, History
Liberal Arts Division
NOVA, Alexandria

"President's Sabbatical Award:
Project Proposal"

Project Title:
"The Neighborhood Arts Center, Cultural Pride, and Community Self-Awareness, Black Power and Black Arts in Atlanta, 1975-1985"

Executive Summary:
I am applying for the President’s Sabbatical Award for the Fall 2016 term to complete a scholarly essay and related digital history project that I will present at the 2016 national conferences of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History and the National Council of Black Studies. The project details the contributions that the jazz community made to the Black Power and Black Arts Movements of the mid-1960s-1980s.

Project Detailed Description and Significance:
This project’s focus on the relationship between the jazz community and the Black Arts/Black Power movement centers on the socio-political activism of the Neighborhood Arts Center (NAC), a politically aware cadre of Atlanta-based jazz musicians and creative artists. First organized during the winter of 1975, these class conscious musicians and artists, describing themselves as “cultural workers,” sought to use jazz and the arts to promote the black power principles of self-sufficiency, cultural pride, community development, and self-awareness within Atlanta’s black working-class and working-poor communities. Contextualized by the unique jazz history of Atlanta, and the city’s political landscape between the 1960s and the 1980s, this project details the arts education and performance activities that the NAC used to support Atlanta’s marginalized black communities. The NAC was most active in communities that were not positioned to benefit from the major civil rights legislative reforms of the mid-1960s. Additionally, this project situates the socio-cultural activism of the NAC in the larger context of a national, black arts era, "jazz collective movement" as it compares the creative strategies and tactics the NAC used to improve the lives of black Atlantans to the

1 "Digital history" is an emerging field within the historical profession. Digital history projects are concerned with using digital technology to engage students and the general public with historical information in new and creative ways.
strategies and tactics used by jazz collectives in other American cities including Chicago, Los Angeles, St. Louis, and New York.

The Sabbatical Award will allow me to accomplish three goals related to this project. First, the award will provide me a needed time window to travel to Atlanta to complete archival research related to the NAC. Second, the award will provide the time needed to draft the final version of the conference paper. Third, the award will provide the time needed build a virtual, multi-media timeline charting the evolution of the NAC that incorporates text, image, and sound. The third goal represents the “digital history” component of this project.

A fourth goal, outside the scope of the project that I am proposing for the Sabbatical Award, is to transition the final conference paper on the NAC into the final chapter of a book manuscript titled *Jazz Goes to Work: The Jazz Community and Black Socio-Political Activism from the New Negro Movement to the Black Arts Revolution, 1920-1980*. An extended revision of my doctoral dissertation, “Jazz Goes to Work” presents a historical examination of how culture, through the example of jazz music, was transformed into an invaluable political resource, and was effectively mobilized by African-Americans as they successfully worked to accomplish a variety of goals across the spectrum of twentieth century socio-political movements. The book manuscript will be completed with the inclusion of this essay.

Planned use of Sabbatical Tenure:

**Goal 1: Completion of Conference Paper**
Part of my award time will be spent completing research and completing the final version of the conference paper on Neighborhood Arts Center.

I have completed the necessary preparatory work to accomplish this goal within the sabbatical period. I presented preliminary research findings on the NAC during a September 2012 conference at the College of Charleston, in Charleston, South Carolina, and received valuable feedback. In order to complete a final draft, I need approximately one month to re-examine the research collections archived in the Auburn Avenue Research Library in Atlanta, Georgia. The list of specific research collections follow below:

**Auburn Avenue Research Library Collections**
- *Sweet Auburn Avenue Neighborhood Project Oral Histories*
- *The Paul E.X. Brown WERD Records*
- *The James Neal Montgomery Collection*
- *The Komosi Woodard Amiri Baraka Collection*
- *The Neighborhood Arts Center Program Files*
Goal 2: Construction of Digital Timeline Supplement
The other portion of my award time will be spent building a virtual interactive timeline, highlighting the key turning points in the historical narrative that the conference paper presents. I plan to use Omeka -- the open-source web-publishing platform developed by George Mason University’s Center for History and New Media -- to construct this interactive online feature.

I have completed the necessary preparatory work to accomplish this goal within the sabbatical period. During the Spring 2014 semester, I created a physical exhibition of the timeline, which was displayed in the Liberal Arts mini-gallery. Creating the physical exhibition allowed me to identify and organize the historical artifacts and draft the written content that will be digitally published on Omeka’s platform. The sabbatical time will be used digitizing the exhibition materials and building them into the Omeka platform.

Project’s Value to College:
This project will make a contribution to the larger goals of the college. The completion of this project will provide new multi-media material that I can include in my approach towards teaching the history of the 1960s in my HIS 122 (Modern U.S. History) and HIS 142 (Modern African American History) courses, making the course content more dynamic and engaging for students. The creation of the virtual interactive timeline supports the goals of the Extended Learning Institute and their efforts to identify open-source, digital learning and teaching tools that can be incorporated into their virtual classrooms. Additionally, this project will give me training working with Omeka that can be applied to the future redesign of the Survey of American history sequence offered by ELI. Finally, the conference paper that will be completed at the end of this project will contribute to my professional development in the domain of “scholarly and creative engagement” by allowing me to make a unique contribution to the study of the Black Arts Movement and the historical profession.