

Sabbatical Leave Proposal

A. Applicant

Name: Molly M. Matheson

Department: Learning Resources and Education Technology - Library

Type of Leave: Independent Study

Leave Dates: Fall 2018

B. Purpose of Leave

I will investigate reference services best practices in California college libraries. I will examine existing literature on the evolving trends in reference services in academic libraries and will investigate alternative models through visits to other colleges. The intent of this research is to identify and propose enhanced reference services offered by the SRJC libraries in support of scholarly research.

C. Leave Objectives

1. Review academic literature on trends in reference service delivery and create an annotated bibliography of current research covering models of academic reference services.
2. Visit at least three California college libraries that have different reference services models than the SRJC.
3. Write a report of my findings with a proposed outline of recommendations and present it to the Library and Information Resources department for discussion and consideration.

D. Narrative

The way students explore, locate and interact with information continues to change as with the increasing complexity of the information ecosystem. While academic librarians continue to embrace an expanded role in supporting the student information discovery process, competing demands for increased and specialized reference and instruction assistance calls for innovative models of service to meet growing demand. SRJC librarians have a track record of responsive delivery of academic support services to students by maintaining an open and adaptive philosophy to service. The library program would benefit from an exploration of other library models to craft the most effective information support network for students. What haven't we considered? What might improve these interactions? What newer service models might we consider? How might we create a newer model of reference services?

Objective 1: I will begin my sabbatical by conducting a literature review of the appropriate scholarly journals articles and independent reports on the topic of reference services. As a result

of this research, I will produce an annotated bibliography of the relevant sources as part of my final project.

Objective 2: I will travel to three college libraries in California and will conduct interviews with academic librarians and identify best practices being employed in their reference services. I have chosen the following institutions because of the innovative nature of their reference services: Moffitt Undergraduate Library, UC Berkeley, Charles Young Library, UCLA and the Love Library at San Diego State University.

Objective 3: I will integrate the findings of my site visits and literature review to prepare an outline of recommendations for consideration by the Library and Information Resource department. I will present a report of the findings from my research to my department for discussion.

E. Evaluation Summary

1. How will the objectives of this sabbatical leave enhance my work performance at the college?

As a faculty librarian I am involved in a variety of activities that directly support student learning, but at least 15 hours of every week is spent providing reference services. Studying the best practices inherent in newer reference services models will allow me and my colleagues to directly apply the key principles to our daily interactions with students and to improve our existing model in order to increase student retention and success.

2. How will the objectives of this sabbatical leave benefit students in my discipline?

Recent research performed by the Association of College and Research Libraries indicates that student retention and student success is directly affected by interactions with librarians, both early and often. Taking a careful study of our own reference services practices and carefully considering additional models could help us adjust our own practices in order to reach more students and improve their retention and success.

3. How will the objectives of this sabbatical leave benefit my department?

I will do a formal presentation to my department on the key findings of my sabbatical. SRJC Libraries are in the midst of adapting their spaces to a learning commons model. Studying the design of other similarly sized libraries' reference services will help us decide what changes to our current model of delivering reference services will benefit our students. Currently librarians' student contact hours are met at the reference desk and there may be other models that may improve student success, increase retention and student engagement.

4. How does your proposed project address the SRJC Strategic Plan and/or your department's educational plan?

Exploring how we can improve and potentially change or expand our outreach to students needing reference and research services meets Goal A, supporting student success: "expand and sustain access by eliminating barriers, expanding strategic outreach efforts and delivering

services effectively through current technologies”. In addition, Goal B, fostering learning and academic excellence, by “identify and implement responsive instructional practices that increase the learning and success of our diverse students” is addressed in this evaluation. Our department is in the process of changing to meet the evolving information needs of our students. The individualized instruction students experience in reference interactions develops their competencies as self-sufficient and informationally competent researchers and informed citizens.

F. Abstract for Board Proposal Summary

Molly Matheson will investigate best practices for California college library reference services and reference desk models. She will visit at least three California college libraries where she will learn how other similarly sized and configured libraries are meeting increased student demand for flexible and specialized reference and research support. She will summarize her findings through an outline of recommendations for potential implementation at the SRJC libraries. These recommendations, along with an annotated bibliography of the literature on this topic will be presented to the Library and Information Resources department for discussion and consideration.

G. Approval

Applicant Name
Department/Program
Review and Signature

Department Review

Signature of Dean

Date

Sabbatical Leave Committee Review

Signature of Committee Chair

Date

Board of Trustees Review

Action Taken

Date