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 Committee. Please submit the original and 10 copies.

Name: Dr. Chris Grooms

Title: Professor of English

Division: Communications & Humanities

Have you ever been granted a sabbatical? Yes
If yes: Date: Fall 1994, Fall 2001

Please provide a brief description of your previous sabbatical project:

I was a visiting scholar to the Centre for Breton and Celtic Studies in Brest, Finisterre, Brittany, France in the Fall of 1994 to collect and study folklore.

I was a visiting lecturer at the University of Cambridge, England in the Fall of 2001 to study literature, conduct research about distance-education systems in Britain, and develop online orientations for my web-based courses.

Sabbatical Leave Period Being Requested

Dates: Beginning Date: August 1, 2008
Ending Date: December 31, 2008

Length: [X] One semester  [ ] Two semesters  [ ] Other

RECEIVED

November 13, 2007
Human Resources Courtyard

Applicant's Agreement

ABSTRACT
Please give a summary description of the project and its significance in a language that can be readily understood by persons in areas of expertise other than your own. PLEASE DO NOT EXCEED SPACE PROVIDED BELOW.

I have received a formal invitation to reside as a visiting Research Associate at the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Research in Aberystwyth, Wales, for the Fall of 2008. As a part of the Centre's editorial staff, I will join a team of scholars and editors to explore the process of moving poetry and literary prose from primary manuscripts to edited scholarly texts for classroom use. This institution edits and publishes poetry and prose from ages medieval to modern. As a professor of freshman composition, sophomore literature, and technical communication courses, I have always wanted to more fully understand the process of converting these valuable texts into editions both useful and edifying. How does one create an apparatus and edition through which laymen and scholar can appreciate the literary efforts of authors centuries dead? How does one blend scholarly and popular discourse such that many levels of readers benefit from the fullness and value of this human activity? As a professor of literature, it has been one of my professional goals to understand the intellectual mechanics of creating useful textbooks. This invitation and its privileges will further that goal and ambition. Of course, I will share what I discover with the larger community of scholars and students at Collin College.
SABBATICAL PROPOSAL FOR FALL 2008 - DR. CHRIS GROOMS

(based on Collin College’s guidelines as stated in the “Priorities for Sabbatical Proposals”)

VISITING RESEARCH ASSOCIATE - THE CENTRE FOR ADVANCED WELSH AND CELTIC STUDIES

For the Fall of 2008, I have received a formal invitation for residence as visiting Research Associate at the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth, Wales, in the United Kingdom. One of three major centers of research in the European Celtic world, this prestigious study center publishes many primary language texts and studies of both poetry and prose for students, scholars, and laymen with interests in literature and history. Attached to the National Library of Wales, a British copyright library, this center also shares the site with the Centre for the National Dictionary of the Welsh Language. The Centre oversees Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia (5 volumes) as well as many important literary and cultural projects dealing with manuscripts and records extending as far back as the sub-Roman period in native Britain. Recently, they have received extensive grants to review, study, and publish the extant work of poets and authors ranging from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, including most recently Edward Williams (Iolo Morganwg), a contemporary of many nineteenth-century British literati, and a figure whose writings may have influenced Thomas Jefferson to undertake the Lewis and Clark expedition.

THE WORK OF TEXTBOOK EDITORS: FROM MANUSCRIPT TO CLASSROOM

In the teaching disciplines of composition and literature, primary source texts are the original exemplars with which students build their communication skills, both in response and imitation. As both professor and private scholar since the mid-seventies, I have worked with numerous textbook anthologies, and negotiating how students read, perceive, and respond to literary texts has been the focus of my vocation.

As this center produces a variety of primary text editions and studies, participating formally in the rigorous demands of editing primary texts and editions will benefit my students. My experience as a Research Associate will directly impact the success of teaching research in Composition and Rhetoric I and II (English 1302), World Literature II (English 2333) and Technical & Business Communication (English 2311). The Centre’s activities and training will also help me promote effective reading in all of my courses, a college-wide concern. Understanding the whole process of creating a scholarly text start to finish in an environment that blends academic and commercial frameworks will provide some invaluable tools for both personal and professional growth.

Participating in these activities first-hand, I will explore answers to these questions:

- What editorial principles dictate the printed and digital format and production of the manuscripts as books?
- How do editors choose relevant secondary materials as ancillaries to the primary texts (biography, social and political history, and literary criticism), and how does the organization of these materials create a nurture a deeper appreciation and discussion of the author for students?
- What audience-and-use principles dictate decisions about the final format and appearance of the primary text in print and on screen (web-based), and how do students effectively navigate these materials?
TEACHING / METHODOLOGIES

Because our English department continually reviews the practicability of cost and content of textbooks and the ancillary materials that support each course subject, such experience will aid me in evaluating more thoroughly the choice of textbooks and their quality with reference to both edited content and price. By understanding and participating in the total editing process, I may better evaluate:

- the quality of ancillaries and support rubrics that accompany textbooks.
- the quality of textbook writing prompts.
- my own writing prompts with an informed sensitivity to philosophical and textual influences in editing a particular author’s work.
- the purpose and effect of print and digital primary and secondary materials with reference to the outcomes of my courses.

USING TECHNOLOGY

Research centers and libraries explore many digital solutions to provide quick access to the content of edited materials. I will explore how these tools influence data design formats in both print and digital format. Much of the primary and secondary research materials relevant to my composition and sophomore literature classes exists in searchable databases accessible from the Collin College library. Knowing the mechanics of this digital journey will allow me to improve student access to research and streamline documentation and content access for my web-based courses as I work with our Collin College librarians. I will inquire about the following academic technology questions:

- How do computer database programs and design interfaces improve or hinder access to the materials in ways that affect research time for students and scholars?
- From where do these materials arise, and how do they shift digitally into the web-based database programs to promote faster access?
- What download formats best provide universal accessibility for students and scholars?
- What economic factors influence each stage of the editing process from manuscript to searchable database, and what costs pass on to the students and representative institutions?

PROFESSIONAL ENRICHMENT

Although I have continued to produce research in the field of language and literature since my dissertation, (one book, a dictionary of folklore, and design and content for web-based journals and study sites in language and literature), I need to revisit the world of research and explore new methods for knowledge mining in print and digital formats. Although I design and edit web-based materials and web-based courses as both an instructor and independent scholar (not attached to a major research center), my teaching demands do not allow me to pursue a comprehensive review of new research and editing techniques, based on current and emerging technologies for publishing and databases. By working at a state-of-the-art research center, I can expand this professional skill and expertise, which always translates to my teaching. This activity also reveals the entire research and publishing process, from which my students can benefit greatly. I wish to pursue answers to these questions:

- Aside from harnessing the passion for a subject with a specific editorial rubric, what published materials benefit students and scholars most?
- What are the specific pitfalls and limitations of presenting research at each editing, production, and publication stage?
GOALS AND QUERIES

Although goals and queries appear at the end of each section of this sabbatical proposal, past experience dictates that these questions will create even more questions for academic exploration and professional growth. I will bring this discussion back to our college in the form of reports, presentations, and professional development activities that will promote both the national and international reputation of Collin College as a destination site for education in North Texas.

TIMETABLE – FALL 2008

By Mid-August: Arrive in Aberystwyth and meet with the director for project assignments.

September-November: Participate in a program of research at the Centre.

By Mid-December: Finish research program and return to Texas.

FORMAL LETTER OF INVITATION FROM THE CENTRE

The Director of the Centre has extended a formal invitation to participate in the capacity of a Research Associate at the Centre for the Fall of 2008 (letter attached).

BIBLIOGRAPHY - CENTRE PROJECT PUBLICATIONS – AN OVERVIEW:

As an extensive reading list, I subscribe to and own the following 50+ volumes of project work from the Centre. As a contributing editor, I have also authored entries for the Centre’s Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia.

- Project 1: The Poets of the Princes Series (6 volumes).
- Project 2: The Social History of the Welsh Language Series (7 volumes).
- Project 3: Poets of the Nobility (34 volumes+ – ongoing).
- Project 4: The Visual Culture of Wales Project - Main series (6 volumes).
- Project 5: Celtic Languages and Cultural Identity (5 volumes as encyclopedia).
- Project 6: Iolo Morganwg and the Romantic Tradition in Wales 1740-1918 (5 volumes).

CENTRE WEB SITE: http://www.wales.ac.uk/defaultpage.asp?page=e4004
Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies
Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3HH
National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3HH

Dr Chris Grooms
Division of Communications and Humanities
Collin College
2800 E. Spring Creek Pkwy
Plano
Texas
75074

25 October 2007

Dear Dr Grooms

I understand you are seeking funding from your University to enable you to undertake a programme of research in Wales during 2008. This institution is prepared to offer you the use of its facilities – in a Research Associate capacity – during your proposed sabbatical leave, and I’m sure you would benefit from this arrangement as well as from the unparalleled resources available at the National Library of Wales to which this Centre is attached.

Yours sincerely

Geraint H. Jenkins
Director

PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
UNIVERSITY OF WALES

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Yours sincerely

Geraint H. Jenkins
Director
12 November 2007

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in support of the application by Professor Chris Grooms for a Sabbatical for Autumn 2008. Professor Grooms is one of our strongest professors with both a solid scholarly record and a reputation for outstanding teaching. His proposal, which centers on the process of moving poetry and literary prose from primary manuscripts to edited scholarly editions suitable for classroom use is promising from both a scholarly and a pedagogical standpoint. He poses clear, well defined questions, has outlined the methods he will use to answer them, and has obtained significant institutional support, in the form of an appointment as a Visiting Research Associate at the Center for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Research of the University of Wales in Aberystwyth, Wales.

He has my unqualified support.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Anthony Manuel
Dean, Communications and Humanities
Spring Creek Campus