

This letter outlines my request for sabbatical leave. I feel I am an excellent candidate for sabbatical leave because I have stumbled upon a unique opportunity to grow as an employee as well as offer a tangible benefit to Maricopa Community Colleges District. In brief, I have been offered room and board for up to five months on the island of San Cristobal in the Galapagos archipelago. The Galapagos archipelago is important biologically because many of its plants and animals are endemic, and are therefore found nowhere else. This unique island biodiversity is credited in part for Darwin's inspiration and ideas about evolution. Galapagos organisms are important because of this historical significance and also because they are the focus of some of the longest term research projects in biology. This trip will give me the opportunity to develop a visual teaching resource for biology faculty, improve my spanish-speaking skills and increase my knowledge of the world's biota. The following pages will detail goals, objectives, and expected results.

## Goals

It is my intent to use my time spent in the Galapagos to pursue three main goals, and more specific plans to achieve these goals follow in the Objectives section below:

- 1. Develop a teaching resource for biology faculty in the form of a digital image collection and website.**

My plan is to capture digital images of animals and plants that will be available for instructional use by biology faculty in their lectures and labs to illustrate examples of important biological concepts and foster an appreciation of the planet's biodiversity. Additionally, I plan to make a selection of the best images available on a website that I will develop and publish.

- 2. Improve foreign language proficiency to better communicate with Latin American students.**

The archipelago is under the jurisdiction of Ecuador and the majority of its inhabitants are Spanish speakers. Since English is spoken very little there, my immersion into the culture and its language will significantly improve my Spanish speaking skills.

- 3. Increase my understanding of flora and fauna.**

As coordinator of biology labs, the opportunity to increase my knowledge of the world's plants and animals will directly improve my background in biology, as well as my ability to provide support for the higher level biology labs that deal with taxonomy.

These goals align with MCCCD's first mission statement:

**To participate responsibly in a culturally diverse, technological and global society**

My goals mesh with this mission in a number of ways. First, by immersing myself in the culture, I will acquire a firsthand experience of diversity. Second, by developing a teaching resource that will be publicly available on the web, I will engage in our technological society and invite students and faculty to participate. Last, by investigating plants and animals of different regions, I am able to grow personally in a manner that is beneficial to my department.

## **Objectives and Expected Results**

### **1. Create a digital image collection of organisms endemic to the Galapagos archipelago for use by faculty for their lectures and labs.**

The emphasis of the image collection will be on less-studied flora and fauna, such as terrestrial invertebrates, in addition to the classic Galapagos organisms (e.g. tortoises, iguanas, finches, and tree cacti). The image collection will be an important visual aid resource for many of the instructors that are making the transition to digital presentation media, such as MS Powerpoint. This objective will be accomplished by undertaking daily photography excursions on San Cristobal and neighboring islands. I will be hosted by the minister of tourism and will have access to many locations on the islands not typically available to the average tourist. I plan to capture 25-100 biologically relevant images per day, which is comparable to rates I've achieved during field work in the past. To facilitate this work, I already own all the necessary equipment (e.g. Canon 20D SLR camera, lenses, flash, tripod, and storage media).

### **2. Provide digital images for faculty and public use on a website.**

Images will be organized by taxonomic groups and will be navigable on a website located on the Glendale Community College server. This will give faculty, students, and the public access to the images that I am able to collect while I am there. This resource will be most appropriate for biology courses such as BIO 181 (biology for majors), BIO 182 (biology for majors 2<sup>nd</sup> semester), BIO 105 (environmental biology), and BIO 149AL (summer field course).

### **3. Improve fluency in Spanish**

To improve my foreign language proficiency, I have completed a number of courses through GCC (SPA 201, SPA 202, and SPA 225). My plan is to communicate entirely in Spanish whenever possible by living with a family in the community. This opportunity will enhance my professional growth as science lab coordinator in terms of my ability to communicate more effectively with Latin students and student workers.

### **Timeline**

#### **Image collection**

Duration of stay- 4 months

25-100 images per day X 120 days= >3,000 images

#### **Website- image gallery**

Initiation- Jan '07

Estimated completion date- June '07

### **Estimated cost**

I will require a full-time replacement

**Replacement cost** (full-time at grade 13 step 1 for 20 weeks)

16 weeks, x 40h/wk, x 17.65/h= \$11,296 replacement salary