Professor Shannon Sullivan

My sabbatical proposal consists of two projects. I'll explain them both below.

1. **Curatorial project in partnership with the Morris Graves Museum of Art that celebrates working artists in our community who are College of the Redwoods Alumni.**

   In August of 2019 I was approached by Jemima Harr, the Curator of the Morris Graves Museum of Art. She expressed an interest hosting me as a guest curator to showcase the work of College of the Redwoods Alumni in an exhibition at the Museum that would open in October 2020. The exhibition will showcase the breadth and depth of our department's alumni and will include photography, digital art, painting, drawing, sculpture, jewelry, ceramics, and mixed media.
   The museum is having its 20th anniversary in 2020 and is dedicating the exhibition season to the work of artists living in our community.

   My role will be to select the artists through a series of studio visits, and communique. Once the artists have been selected, the individual artworks must be chosen for the exhibition. Once the work is delivered to the museum, I'll be working alongside the Museum Preparator to install the artworks in the space. I'll also prepare a physical and digital catalog for the exhibition that will be made available widely to the public.

   The objective of this project is to create visibility for our outstanding alumni, which in turn creates awareness about our outstanding faculty and impending new facility. This exhibition is intended to highlight the contributions that CR makes to the art and culture landscape in Humboldt County.

2. **Transition from low-fire electric and high-fire gas glaze firing to mid-range electric glaze firing.**

   This project is multifaceted. I'll provide some history to give context for the momentum of this work.

   Our course offerings have contracted considerably since I began teaching at CR in the fall 2006. Back in the pre-ADT, pre-Guided Pathways, pre-financial aid restrictions, pre-repeatability restrictions we typically offered five ceramics classes and five Art 2 classes (which all have a ceramic component) per semester. Today, we're much more focused in our offerings. We typically offer two sections of ceramics (Art 31A and Art 31B) and two sections of Art 2.

   We currently have a gigantic gas kiln, which is what we needed previously to process a much larger volume. Today, we are not able to fire often enough to get student work through the process in a timely manner.

I recently learned that the new Creative Arts building project has $30,000 reserved for a kiln to replace our gas kiln. This came as a complete surprise to me during one of the last meetings we had with Phil and Daniel, the architects working on the CA project. This knowledge was the catalyst in going forward with the second part of my sabbatical project. The timing is perfect and there are funds in place to make some logical shifts in how we fire to streamline procedures for students, instructors, and ISS workers, model good environmental stewardship, and improve pedagogy.

Phil asked me to send him a link to the kiln that we need so it can be included in the plans. I selected a smaller front-loading electric kiln instead of a gas kiln for our replacement. It should be noted that this kiln only costs about $22,000. With this machine we will fire more often, and without a 10-hour firing schedule. This alone will be a huge efficiency for our ISS. Our ISS has taken on many of the work study tasks because our work study hours have been reallocated. The 10-hour firing days have become almost impossible. An electric kiln can be fired using a computer program that requires one entry versus 10 hours of turnups and checking. Also, electric kilns can be fired half empty--not that we'd want to do that, but we could if needed at the end of the semester. This is a huge perk.

This sabbatical proposal supports my research into mid-range glaze firing in an electric kiln. I can start from one of two places. Either all of our high fire glazes need to be chemically reformulated to melt at a lower temperature, or I need to find all new recipes. Either way hundreds of glaze recipe samples will need to be made and fired to find our new palette. This is outside the scope of work to be performed by our ISS worker.

A statement of the anticipated benefits that may accrue to the college and its students (this statement should also clearly specify the outcomes or products that can be expected from the sabbatical).

1. **Curatorial project in partnership with the Morris Graves Museum of Art to celebrate working artists in our community who are College of the Redwoods Alumni.**

   I am honored that a respected local cultural institution sees and values the work we do at College of the Redwoods. In collaboration with CR's press outlets and the Museum's press contacts, this event will be promoted properly to create visibility for CR's contribution to the art community in Humboldt County.

   This sabbatical would support the production of a catalog for the exhibition. The catalog is a critical piece in the exhibition creating longevity for viewers beyond the two-month exhibition slot. This artifact will be made available to the district in PDF and hard copy form. It will contain high quality digital images, details about each artist and their work, and a curatorial statement. I can see this in the president's office, in our gallery, the CA office, the counselor offices, on recruitment visits, and anywhere else where we want the public to read about the work of our incredible art students.

Curating this exhibition will require months of legwork and communication with the museum, the artists, and the promotional channels. Creation of the catalog using will require weeks or more time to produce correctly. The sabbatical will allow me to fully immerse myself in this project which clearly benefits College of the Redwoods as a whole, our department, our current students, and our alumni.

2. **Transition from low-fire and high-fire gas glaze firing to mid-range electric glaze firing.**
   The benefits of reformulating our utilitarian glazes from high-fire to mid-range is twofold. The first interest I have in this research is using less energy during firings and creating less wear and tear on the kiln. If I reduce the melting point of our glazes the firings will be shorter and require less fossil fuel. In an era where conservation is in the forefront, there is a growing trend in institutions, private studios, and industry to fire with clays and glazes that mature at a lower temperature than traditional stoneware. I inherited a stoneware program in 2006 that I'm ready to part ways with. I've had this on my mind for years. With a chunk of time dedicated to reformulation and the knowledge that in a couple of years I'll have a kiln to match our reformulated glazes, I can make this move. This will put us as a College on the right side of history when it comes to making mindful changes in institutional practice that benefit the environment.

   The second opportunity for improvement is increased student understanding of the ceramic process. Making the switch to mid-range will allow me to discontinue both stoneware firings for utility and low-fire firings for sculpture. Mid-range will work for both. This will be significantly more efficient for teaching the glaze surface process to our students. I hypothesize that by simplifying the process of creating a ceramic surface the students will be more successful sooner in the semester. Once the glaze application procedure is streamlined through the completion of this project, I can inquire more for quality of cumulative experience rather than quantity of experiences in my assessments.

   Both of these projects will enliven my teaching. Students thrive knowing that their professors are active in their disciplines. They learn by example when their professors are making a difference on campus and in our community.