

STATEMENT OF LEAVE PROJECT

Attach a statement explaining the nature of the proposed leave project, showing how the applicant and University will benefit as a result of the experience to be gained by the faculty member during the leave. Attach copies of any documents that would clearly support your proposal. Your application will be judged based on criteria previously identified. The following three elements should be included in your leave statement:

1. Provide a brief summary of the leave project (100-300 words).

During the proposed leave, I will complete my first major book and enter into an agreement for its publication. The proposed project will result in the book *Assessment of Student Outcomes in Higher Education: A Practical and Effective Approach*, co-authored with my colleague in the School of Business.

We expect that the book will be a welcome addition to the libraries of members of the Academy, Centers for Teaching and Learning, executive officers, deans, departmental chairpersons at colleges and universities across the country, and others interested in a proven approach to student outcomes assessment.

For three years, [redacted] and I have worked to develop a method by which the faculty of a university, college, school, department, or program can effectively measure how well it has prepared its students, according to its own, validated guidelines. Our investigation has led to many presentations and papers throughout North America, publication of a manuscript in a prominent MIS journal¹, a \$30,000.00 grant² for development of the program, and modest recognition within the Teaching and Learning community within the U.S. In our own major program (MIS in the Organizational Department), the faculty has adopted the "SOAR" program (Student Outcomes, Assessment, and Review) developed by [redacted] and me. The project has its own website and database. All department syllabi (Master Course Outlines) include *key learning activities* developed by our faculty to facilitate the SOAR project. The SOAR approach also includes an interface with the Student Electronic Portfolio.

Our SOAR approach to student outcomes assessment has the added dimension of curriculum review, assessment, and revitalization. Data gathered on each and every student can be presented in a cumulative format, depicting the students' capacity to demonstrate competence in important abilities that are pre-determined by the faculty and validated by external stakeholders.

This sabbatical leave will allow me to have the uninterrupted time to complete the book. I am fully committed to the project. Pre-sabbatical activities – proposals to publishers (three have been targeted at this point, Jossey-Bass being the frontrunner), finalization of chapters and topics, additional literature review, and determination of responsibilities for each of the authors – has already begun and will proceed throughout the Spring and Summer.

Our expectations for this book are high. I believe that this endeavor will positively contribute to the recognition of my institution as a home for scholars and will allow for tremendous personal and professional growth.

[redacted] (2003) "A Model for Assessing Students and Curriculum in an MIS Program," *Review of Business Information Systems*, 7:4 (Fall 2003), pp. 83-92. [For further listing of monographs by the authors on the subject, see *Vita*]

² The Interim Dean of the School of Business, [redacted], and the Coordinator for the ISU Student Portfolio Project and Lilly First-Year Experience, Robert Guell, provided the grant for which Dr. Harder and I were the principles. The book will acknowledge these individuals and the organizations they represent for the support they have lent to the project.

2. *Provide a brief summary of the principal results of your most recent ISU sabbatical leave (if you have had one) including articles accepted, exhibitions held, courses developed, and so forth.*

I have not had a sabbatical before, although I've needed one for years! I came to ISU the year that I was due a sabbatical at my previous institution. I will complete my 30th semester (including summers) without a break at the end of this academic year. I really don't want to be the Cal Ripkin of *academe*!!!

LEAVE NARRATIVE

3. *a. Identify specific objectives and expected outcomes for this leave.*

The specific objectives of this project are:

- Completion of a book, *Assessment of Student Outcomes in Higher Education: A Practical and Effective Approach*, co-authored with my colleague in the School of Business
- Complete an agreement to publish the book with a reputable, national or international publisher;
- Bring the knowledge gained from the research into the classroom;
- Provide a vehicle to further synthesize and refine the concepts and practices relating to student outcomes assessment; and
- Bring additional prominence in the field to our institution and the authors.

- b. Explain the anticipated contributions of the leave to the faculty member, department, and University in relation to teaching, research, and/or service.*

I anticipate that the leave will contribute enormously to my professional development. Having never published a major book before, I will face a steep learning curve. Yet, how does one ever do something the first time? Dee Fink, noted scholar and teacher at the University of Oklahoma, has declared that we've "got it" and that "everyone is looking for this, but you guys have really found it" during conversations with _____ and me. Dr. Fink was consulting to ISU's Center for Teaching and Learning at the request of Terry O'Connor. I _____ and I were able to spend an afternoon discussing the SOAR concept with him. We hope for such positive recognition (for our institution, as well as ourselves) when our methods are available to a wider audience, for such would certainly bring additional opportunities for personal and professional development.

Our program has approved development of two one-hour classes incorporating the theory and practice of our student outcomes assessment method. These classes will bring added value to our MIS majors, School, and University. _____ and I will be developing and teaching these courses. We intend present and dissect our experiences in the book, making for better teaching in the future.

This program may serve as a model to faculty of other programs within the School of Business and across campus as they search for a method for evaluating their success in providing students a quality education. Many colleagues from other fields, our dean, and a few chairs across campus have expressed an interest in what we are doing and how it might relate to their own programs.

This book will help us to disseminate our approach to these interested parties, thereby reaching other programs at ISU that are looking for continuous improvement and/or a way to document outcomes for third parties.

Research into the growing field of student outcomes assessment in higher education is dominated by a small group of academicians. and I have visited with several of the better-known researchers and practitioners in recent years. As part of our research, we traveled to Alverno College in Wisconsin, where we participated in an intensive workshop that gave us entry to this group of dedicated scholars. In our research, however, we have not found any books (or papers, for that matter) presenting the sort of complete, practical, and sound approach that we have developed. Our book is a much-needed volume on a timely topic. We foresee a research stream in student outcomes assessment that will carry forward indefinitely.

- c. *Provide a timetable for completion of the proposed activity, and explain any contingency plans if needed.*

The milestones associated with the project are listed below:

January 15, 2004 – Submitted book proposal to publisher;
April 15, 2004 – Completed agreement to publish book with publisher;
August 15, 2004 – Completed Table of Contents and Chapter outlines with references;

- Fall Sabbatical Begins;
- November 15, 2004 – Submitted draft of completed manuscript;
- January 1, 2005 – Submitted final revised manuscript;
- January, 2005 – Fall Sabbatical Ends.
- January 15, 2005 – Submitted final report on sabbatical to Provost & VPAA
- Begin working on second edition????????? ©

The necessity for contingency plans is not anticipated. The deadlines are what they are. We will meet them. However, should the book *not* be accepted for publication, we believe that the chapters of the book can be modified for individual publication in academic journals on teaching and learning.

- d. *Explain where and how you will carry out the project. (Cite schools, agencies, industries, etc., where study or travel is planned, the status or preparation required prior to leave, auspices under which study is to be done. Attach copies of appropriate letters of invitation, correspondence with cooperators or institutes, graduate student agreements, etc.)*

Except for an essential fishing trip or two, we do not anticipate that travel will be necessary to accomplish the project. and I suppose that we may have to fund the fishing trip out of our own pockets. The work will be completed at our campus and home offices.

The leave period requested is the fall semester of 2004. This date will allow for adequate time for us to prepare the publisher proposal (in process now) and develop the completed Table of Contents, book chapter outlines with references (also in process), and sample chapters, each of which is preparatory to the sabbatical project of writing the book. However, if it is determined that the leave would be better “covered” by the department in the spring, I would not be averse to that extension.

e. *Explain any time-specific characteristics of the leave proposal.*

The only time-specific characteristic of this project is the sense of urgency that I feel concerning the need for this work. Many institutions are actively searching for an appropriate, formal way to assess student outcomes. Accrediting agencies are adopting requirements for members to document how well the member schools do what they say that they do. Within our own University, there is a discussion about "Programs of Preeminence," each of which will be held to some standard(s) of distinction. Colleagues have asked us for more material about SOAR than we can presently provide. The time is right for this book.

d. *Identify the nature, amount, and sources of anticipated supplementary support (scholarships, fellowships, research grants, etc.) for this project or proposal*

We have no other funding or supplementary support for this project. It is possible that we, as the authors of the book, will receive some sort of advance against royalties. However, we really have doubts as to whether the royalties will even cover the cost of the essential fishing trip, much less anything else.

g. *Indicate any previous work or preparation in direct support of your proposed leave project (include pertinent dates, arrangements or agreements, indications of progress, etc.)*

It is my hope that this application allows the reader to fully appreciate the preparatory work that has already been completed for this project. This book is the culmination of three years of research, workshops and institutes, presentations, and papers, a grant project (summer 2002), dissemination of the method to our MIS program faculty colleagues, refinement of the scheme based upon our colleagues' (and others') feedback, and the actual implementation of the SOAR approach in the Management Information Systems major program. My SOAR-related activities are highlighted in the attached *Vita*.

In addition, I have a previous, positive experience with developing a book proposal for a publisher. Irwin-McGraw Hill offered to publish a book proposed by me in 2001, however I declined the opportunity to concentrate on tenure and promotion, fearing that the time commitment to the book would adversely effect my application. I am sure that the proposal associated with this project is even more attractive to book publishers.

Attachments:

Vita

Journal Article: I

(2003) "A Framework for MIS Student Outcome Assessment and Program Review," Review of Business Information Systems, 7:4 (Fall 2003), pp. 83-92.