Sabbatical Leave Proposal
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I. Brief non-technical statement of proposed activity

This proposed sabbatical is to enhance my skills and expertise in the area of assessment. I have recently been given the responsibility to coordinate the assessment efforts in the Career Planning and Placement Center (CPPC) and I have limited background in this critical area. I plan to enhance my professional competence in this area by being involved in a number of activities.

1.) Research the literature on assessment in career services and career planning and placement.
2.) Seek out conferences and/or workshops to enhance my skills.
3.) Network with other career planning and placement centers and review their assessment programs and services.
4.) Review the Career Planning and Placement Center’s ongoing assessment efforts, evaluate their effectiveness and modify them where needed.
5.) These efforts would be directed toward having a comprehensive plan in place and two years of data for our program review scheduled for 2003. In addition, these two years would be the foundation of continual assessment of the services CPPC provides.

II. Project Description

A. Nature of Project and
B. Methods

I have recently been given the assignment of being the assessment coordinator for the Career Planning and Placement Center. We are in the beginning stages of putting together a comprehensive assessment plan for our Center. In April of this year I attended an assessment seminar sponsored by ACT and our team began to develop some assessment plans we will be implementing during the 2000-2001 academic year. My proposal for this sabbatical is to continue my education about assessment and continue to develop and enhance our plan.

We have developed a working mission statement for year one (2000-2001) of our assessment efforts and they include the following rational, purpose, audience and achievable goals for the year.

The rationale for our initial assessment efforts is to provide student clientele with a set of job search skills and the knowledge necessary to choose and attain a career placement to match their interest and abilities.

The purpose is to prepare graduating seniors for a job search so they can enter the workforce in an appropriately challenging career.
The audience, for this initial year, is students graduating from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Visual and Performing Arts. Questions we hope to answer are:

- What are students learning needs in a career search?
- What are their expectations from CPPC?
- What are effective ways to communicate with students?

Achievable educational goals we have established for this year include:

- Students should be able to conceptualize and be aware of the marketable skills that their academic and collegial experience has given them;
- Provide access to employers who can articulate necessary skills and the value of liberal arts students
- Provide experiences for students to enhance job search skills including:
  * workshops,
  * employer panels,
  * web-based major links to direct students to opportunities in their majors
  * on-line intranet chat rooms, list serves, distance learning facilities
  * work with faculty on career information from professional associations
  * develop web pages to facilitate communication between employers and students
  * provide increased access to CPPC job vacancy bulletins.
- Students should identify these skills in a meaningful way and consider how they can transfer them into the workforce environment
- Professional staff should create effective links with faculty to enlist their help in achieving the educational goals of students.

As my proposal indicates, I would like to take this sabbatical over two summers. Summer of 2001

- Review literature about assessment, including information in professional journals that focuses on career planning and placement centers or career services.
- Identify benchmark programs at other institutions.
- Collect information from other career planning and placement centers have comprehensive plans which they feel are effective, including schools in the MAC conference and other schools with programs similar to NIU’s.
- Evaluate the data collected during the 2000-2001 academic year and determine if the data collected is adequate and appropriate. From the ACT Conference I learned how important it is to evaluate progress at a midpoint and to determine if objectives are being met. By reviewing the data after a year I will be able to determine what kind of programmatic changes we need to make to enhance CPPC services to the students targeted in our plan.
- In reviewing our assessment plan I would examine the goals identified above to determine if they have been achieved. If not, I would evaluate the progress and review the goals to identify alternative methods of achieving them.
- If we have successful achieved the goals identified with the students from College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Visual and Performing Arts, I would propose that we expand our targeted colleges to include students in Health and Human Sciences.
Summer 2002

- Continue to review the data identifies above,
- Review, modify and expand our assessment efforts and
- Assemble the data needed to put together our program review, scheduled for the 2002-2003 academic year.

C. Projected Results

- Enhance my competency in the area of assessment. This would benefit not only the CPPC but I would also be able to share my expertise with others in Student Services.
- As we continually assess what we do I would expect the service we provide to students would be greatly enhanced and delivered in a manner that students would find user friendly and effective.
- Continue to refine the assessment plan of the Career Planning and Placement Center so we are ready to do a comprehensive report as part of our program evaluation in 2002-2003 academic year.
- At the end of the two years we will have a comprehensive assessment plan in place that will continue to evolve and address the career development needs of students at NIU.

III. Relationship Between Proposal and Professional Work

The relationship between this proposal and my professional work is critical and evolving. As I indicated earlier, I have recently been given the responsibility to be the assessment coordinator in the CPPC and in order for me assume this role and assume it effectively I need to find ways to increase my knowledge and competence in assessment and specifically assessment in career services. The entire campus is working on doing a better job of assessing what we do and the CPPC is no different.

As this is a new expertise I need to develop, I have no previous work or research in this area besides the ACT Conference Assessment Institute I attended in April 2000. The Institute was very general and I did develop a general understanding of the elements of assessment. What I see this sabbatical providing is the opportunity for me to take that general information, and develop specifics that relate to CPPC.

IV. Benefits of Leave

Benefits for Professional Development

- This sabbatical would give time to develop my competence to do an effective job of coordinating our assessment efforts.
- My research could result in writing and submitting as article to professional journals for publication
- My research could also result in writing program proposals for presentation at professional conferences.
Benefits to Career Planning and Placement

- Having a professional staff member with time dedicated to reviewing and refining our assessment plan.
- It would also mean our Center being fully prepared for our program review in the 2002-2003 academic year.
- Continual assessment is critical for a strategic, evolving organization and this sabbatical would provide a critical foundation for ongoing assessment efforts in the Career Planning and Placement Center at NIU.

Benefits to the University

There are many issues identified in the State of Illinois, Board of Higher Education, Citizen Agenda for Higher Education, The Illinois Commitment: Partnerships, Opportunities and Excellence which relate to the placement of our graduates. As an office, which is instrumental in facilitating the relationships between students and the employment world, continual assessment is critical in this changing world. As one of our stakeholders, the assessment of our services would also need to consider the needs to the employers. Although that is not addressed in these first two years of our assessment plans, we are in the process of establishing an advisory board which will help us refine the services we provide to employers.

Goal One in the Illinois Commitment lists, under Result and Accountability, “Annually increase the number of graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to meet new or emerging occupational demands.”

Goal Five identifies, ”Annually increase placement of graduates in careers appropriate to their education and training.”

The assessment we are conducting will assist NIU in addressing these challenges.

V. Advanced Preparations to Secure Outside Resources

N/A

VI. As outside funding is not part of this proposal, I have been given assurances that the CPPC will provide access to telephones, funding for travel, registration fees for conferences, and other necessary expenses.

VII. Results from previous sabbatical:

N/A