

Sabbatical Leave Proposal
Cynthia Minet, MFA
Professor of Studio Art, Moorpark College

Proposal Date: October 31, 2024

Proposed Leave time: One Semester: Fall 2025

Previous Sabbatical Leaves: Fall 2017-Spring 2018
Fall 2008-Spring 2009

Seniority of Service: August 2001-present

Overview of Sabbatical Proposal:

This project will focus on our alumni art students. Art department faculty often wonder what the alumni are doing now, where they went to school, and how successful those programs are in preparing them for their careers. We create a community in our art program, but the connections between all the members of the community, (faculty to student, and student to student), is often lost once students move on from Moorpark College. I hope to reconnect our community, and forge new connections, by the following four strategies:

1. Gather data: (Fall 2025)

- a. I will work with our Office of Institutional Research to gather data on our art alumni who have graduated from an art or design program at a 4-year institution in the last 10 years.
- b. I will create a survey for the alumni to aid in gathering relevant data, and work with the Office of Institutional Research to sort and analyze the data. (Dean Oleg Bespalov has agreed to assist me).
- c. I will visit some of the area schools to meet with faculty and see their facilities.
- d. I will enter the data into the alumni document.

2. Showcase Alumni Artwork: (Fall 2025)

- a. I will curate an exhibit of small artworks by alumni, meeting with them and seeing their current artworks.
- b. I will present this Moorpark College Art Alumni exhibit at the Brewery Artists' Colony in Los Angeles, during the Fall Artwalk, 2025
- c. I will send the invitation for the alumni show to art faculty teaching in Fall 2025, and ask them to invite their current students to attend the show.

3. Build Community and Share information: (Spring 2026)

- a. I will present the alumni exhibit from Fall 2025, at the new Moorpark College Art Gallery, in Spring 2026.
- b. Concurrent with the alumni exhibit at Moorpark College, I will moderate a panel discussion with select alumni, and live stream on our Moorpark College Art Instagram page.
- c. Organize a reception for the artists on campus, inviting all to attend.

4. Expand my artistic practice: (Fall 2025)

In addition to this work focused on our alumni, I plan to use the sabbatical period to explore opportunities to create new public art in my studio. I am in contact with curators in New York and Washington, DC, as well as Los Angeles, and will be researching new materials such as cast aluminum and translucent plastics and glass for my sculptures.

Details of the Proposal:

If awarded this sabbatical, I plan to spend the Fall 2025 semester engaged in data gathering, survey creation, distribution of the survey, analysis of the survey results, travel to area schools, curating and mounting an exhibit of alumni artwork, and seeking new public art opportunities.

In Spring, 2026, when I am back from sabbatical, I will mount the second alumni exhibition and moderate the alumni panel discussion.

1. Information gathering about art alumni and the 4 year institutions they graduated from: (Fall 2025)

As mentioned above, the Office of Institutional Research, and Dean Oleg Bespalov, is willing to have his assistant, Shawn, help me with the data and analysis. We will gather the alumni details that are already available in the National Student Clearinghouse, input the survey, and analyze the data to answer my questions about where our alumni have graduated from, what the strengths of each program in the relevant 4 year institutions might be, and what they are currently doing with their degrees.

The survey will contain multiple choice questions asking the participants to identify the specific programs they were part of, and ask them to quantify the strengths of the facilities, the faculty, etc. It will also have space for brief testimonials.

I will make the document we create available to faculty in our Art Program Canvas shell, as well as anywhere else it might be requested. I am hoping that the survey will give us some insights into what our current students can expect from the schools they transfer to.

2. Travel: (Fall 2025)

To further my understanding of the strengths of the programs, I will contact department chairs at area art programs and visit the campuses of universities and private art schools, with a focus on schools that our alumni have graduated from. These schools may include:

In Southern California:

CSUCI, CSUN, CSULB, CSU Fullerton, UCLA, UC Irvine, UCSD, UCSB, Art Center College of Design, Otis College of Art and Design, CalArts, Laguna College of Art and Design, Gnomon, USC, Claremont Colleges

In Northern California:

UC Santa Cruz, UC Berkeley, San Francisco State, California College of the Arts, Academy of Art College.

I will enter the data I gather about the schools into the document, for analysis by Shawn in Institutional Research.

3. Build Community and Showcase Alumni Artwork:

During the Fall 2025, semester, I will use the data I have gathered from the Office of Institutional Research to contact alumni and curate a selection of their artworks for an exhibit at the Brewery Arts Complex in downtown Los Angeles.

In Fall 2025, the show I curate will be on view during the Fall Artwalk weekend, in October 2025.

Former students who wish to, will help to install the show, and participate in the community building activities of the Artwalk. The Brewery Art Colony has been hosting Artwalk weekends twice a year for the last 30 years, and thousands of people attend each year. It is a great networking event, as people from all walks of life come through, from curators, collectors, other artists, to members of the community and families.

I have lived in my studio at the Brewery (as it is known), for the past 27 years, and have participated in many Artwalks myself, so I know what a great opportunity this exhibit will be for our alumni.

If this sabbatical is approved, I have already arranged that we can rent the Brewery Art Colony gallery space of Kate Hoffman Studio to use for the alumni show. I will pay the fees for the space myself, unless College funds could cover that expense. For more information about the Brewery Art Colony and the biannual artwalks, please visit:

<https://breweryartwalk.com/>.

Participating in the Fall Artwalk exhibit and experience will bring exposure to the larger Los Angeles art scene for our former students, and I am eager to see what reactions they will receive from their peers and others.

4. Build Community and Share information:

By Spring 2026, Moorpark College will have a new gallery space in Technology Building. To further showcase alumni artwork, I will present the exhibit from the Fall Brewery Artwalk in our campus gallery during February of Spring 2026. Since it is a larger space, there will be an opportunity to potentially add additional works by other alumni to the show at the College.

a. Alumni Panel Discussion:

Concurrent with the alumni exhibit at the Moorpark College Art Gallery, in Spring 2026, I will organize and moderate a panel discussion with select alumni, and live stream on our Moorpark College Art Instagram page. This will be a great opportunity for our alumni to share their stories with our current art students, and with the campus at large.

Former students will be able to reconnect with their faculty, and with each other, and it will create new opportunities for community.

Current students who are transferring will be able to get first-hand information from the alumni as well, with great potential for new relationships.

b. Reception for the artists:

I will organize a reception for the alumni artists on campus, inviting all to attend. This will create a social activity for current students to mix with the alumni students and faculty. It will showcase the work of the alumni, inspiring our current students and bringing to our alumni a recognition of their accomplishments.

5. Expand my artistic practice: (Fall 2025)

In addition to my work on campus, I maintain a very active exhibition schedule. I am currently working on a new commission for a public art sculpture that will be on view in the City of Santa Monica from January 2025-2027. Although most of my work is constructed from recycled plastics, this new work is my first large outdoor sculpture. My artwork addresses environmental issues such as our society's dependence on plastics and electricity, and this 8-foot tall piece, made from Styrofoam packing materials that will be replaced with sand-cast aluminum, focuses on our human contributions to waste on the planet, and the consequential extinction of animals. It usually takes me approximately a year to make a new large-scale sculpture. With my full-time responsibilities, it is challenging to experiment freely and make mistakes. I am interested in creating more outdoor sculpture, and exploring the potential of cast metals, their surface treatments, and what translucent materials could withstand the elements. Outdoor sculpture usually requires a commission, so I hope to see new opportunities as well as experiment with materials during the Fall 2025 semester.

Background:

I have been teaching studio art at Moorpark since 2001. I teach Figure Sculpture (which I developed), 3D Design, and Sculpture classes. I have also taught Drawing, and Life Drawing during my tenure at the College).

I serve as lead faculty in the drawing discipline, and share responsibility for our program development with the other full-time faculty (Gerry Zucca and Erika Lizée). This year, I am also serving as the Art and Design Department Co-Chair (with Gerry Zucca), with art faculty evaluations as my primary responsibility.

I am currently serving on the Student Equity and Achievement committee. In the past few years, I have served on the Faculty Senate, the Distance Education committee, numerous tenure committees, full-time and adjunct hiring committees, the Campus Environment committee, and the Multicultural Day Committee. I am particularly proud of my role as a mentor to our students, many of whom are professional artists and designers. Three of my former students are now teaching here at Moorpark in the art history and art department.

In the past eight years, (since my last sabbatical), my work has been exhibited in solo and group museum shows, both in the Los Angeles area, in McAllen, Texas, and in Washington, DC. I currently have a large sculpture on view for the next two years in the City of Pasadena's Convention Center. (Please see attached resume). I always proud to mention that I teach at Moorpark College in my artist talks and panel discussions. I am honored that my participation in exhibitions helps our art program's reputation to grow, and the College's visibility to spread to new audiences.

Here are a couple of photos of my current public art sculpture, on view at the Pasadena Convention Center at part of the Rotating Public Art Series IV, through 2026.



Detailed Plan:

Fall 2025

- Create survey for alumni.
- Obtain contact information for alumni going back to 2015.
- Work with Shawn and Oleg in the Office of Institutional Research to input and synthesize the data.
- Travel to visit art programs at 4-year institutions.
- Complete the analysis of the alumni document.
- Contact alumni to view their work and curate the exhibit.
- Prepare the exhibit for the Fall Artwalk, securing the rental of the space, labels, publicity, and alumni student participation
- Gather the artworks for the show.
- Install the alumni exhibit for the Fall Brewery Artwalk.
- Invite students and faculty from Fall 2025 to attend the alumni show at the Fall Brewery Artwalk.
- Plan the alumni panel for the Spring, securing the participants.
- Research new materials such as glass and plastics, as well as casting in metals for new public art opportunities.

Spring 2026:

- Mount the alumni exhibit at the Moorpark College Art Gallery in February, 2026
- Moderate the alumni panel.
- Coordinate the artists' reception

Benefits to the Students:

This sabbatical project is geared towards benefiting our art students, both current and alumni. The alumni document I create will be available to students as well as faculty. Current students will be able to research the schools that interest them and gain an insider view. If it is permissible under the FERPA regulations, they could potentially contact alumni via the document. That process could create networking opportunities for current students. For alumni, the benefits are many: the recreation of a community they may have lost, and the potential to become involved with our programs and campus once again. Via the exhibits I will curate, the alumni will gain a sense of pride, a new audience for their work, and opportunities to mentor current students. The panel discussion and receptions on campus will generate a lot of energy for networking and community building. This project is definitely students first!

Benefits to the District:

According to Dean Bespalov, the data gathering document I will create through this project "aligns with Julius's goal to have our programs collaborate with their counterparts at csu/uc. If possible, the survey could be a good conversation topic if you choose to connect with csu/uc counterparts at some point".

I hope to be able to make the document available to our sister college faculty and students, and to administrators at the District level. I am hopeful that the document will help our art faculty at Moorpark College, and potentially counselors, have more information about the transfer programs that we all advise our students about.

Additionally, the art exhibits that I will mount will demonstrate the strength of our programs, as we faculty have prepared the alumni for transfer. When I was in Washington, DC, last May, on a Staff Development-sponsored trip for the reception of my exhibit at the Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy, I had the honor of meeting Jeffrey Gibson, the current representative of the United States at the Venice Biennale. When I told him I taught at Moorpark College, he said "Well, good for you! Community college is where I really learned to draw". The work we do prepares our students for their future careers.

As mentioned above in my background, my consistent work in my own studio benefits the District as well, because as my artwork gains recognition beyond the regional to include shows in other states, and in other countries, it reflects back on the strengths of our colleges here in the Conejo Valley.

Benefits to the candidate:

The benefits to me, the candidate, are many. Through my research into other art programs and the alumnis' experience, I will learn about what is offered at the 4-year institutions. Through visiting the schools, I will be inspired to visualize what kind of new facilities and programs I may want to initiate at our campus, as well as forging some new relationships by meeting other faculty in person. By connecting with some of my former students, the alumni, I will regain some community, benefitting me as well as them. Additionally, I will be able to advise our current students with more confidence. Curating shows is always great practice, so putting together the alumni exhibits will help me be ready for the next shows I may curate. Finally, by having time to research new materials to use in my artwork, and potentially secure a new public art commission, I will recharge my creativity, so that I can return to campus refreshed and inspired, both by my own artwork, and the work of our alumni.

My Dean, Elizabeth David, is supportive of my sabbatical proposal, so I respectfully submit this document to the committee, as is my colleague, Department Chair, Gerry Zucca. Please find letters of support attached.

Thank you,

Cynthia Minet