Collin County Community College District
APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE

Instructions

Please complete this application by responding to **all** items. Attach requested documentation (in the order requested) and secure the appropriate signatures prior to submitting the application to the chair of the Sabbatical Leave Committee. **Please submit the original and 10 copies.**

Name **Gerald Sullivan**   CWID **110726067**

Title **Professor of Anthropology**   Division   **SCC Academic Affairs**

Have you ever been granted a sabbatical? **No_** If yes: Dates of Prior Sabbatical(s): _____
Please provide a brief description of your *previous* sabbatical project:

Sabbatical Leave Period Being Requested

Dates: **Beginning Date Jan 1, 2019**   **Ending Date   May 24, 2019**

Length: [x] One semester   [ ] Two semesters   [ ] Other _____

Applicant's Agreement

ABSTRACT

Please give a summary description of the project and its significance in improving teaching and learning at Collin College. Please use language that can be readily understood by persons in areas of expertise other than your own. **PLEASE DO NOT EXCEED SPACE PROVIDED BELOW.**

I am applying for a sabbatical for the Spring Semester of 2019 so that I may work on a book tentatively entitled *From the Origins of Schism to the Doublebind: The Development of a Theme in the Work of Gregory Bateson.* At present I have between sixty and seventy pages of text which I envision expanding to approximately two hundred fifty pages, not including notes and bibliography. The anthropology editor for an important academic press and several scholars have expressed an interest in this book.

Gregory Bateson (1904-1980) was a British-born polymath, anthropologist, education theorist, biologist, student of the communicative systems enveloping schizophrenics and dolphins as well as an attendee of the Macy Conferences on Cybernetics in the 1940s and 1950s. He (along with others) did much to develop a notion of a second order cybernetics more appropriate to the activity of organically responsive minds than mechanical devices.

Bateson's notion of deutero-learning, or learning how to learn, is of particular pertinence to the interests of the College and to my own pedagogical practice. Bateson suggested that creatures, including but not limited to human beings, when presented with similar stimuli will not only learn how to respond to those stimuli but will also learn to learn about other related sorts of stimuli, i.e. they will learn not only details but also contexts.

My book makes use of unpublished and as yet uncommented upon materials as well as published, but sometime obscure works by Bateson. It thus both adds to and expands on what we can know about this once obscure but increasingly influential man.

In addition to the book, I am using Batesonian notions in my courses, both in the classroom and online. I will also present this work at scholarly conferences including at the Faculty Development Conference at Collin.

I am applying for a sabbatical for the spring semester of 2019 so that I may have some time to work on a book tentatively entitled *From the Origin of Schism to the Doublebind: The Development of a Theme in the work of Gregory Bateson*. At present I have between sixty and seventy pages of text which I envision expanding to approximately two hundred fifty pages, not including notes and bibliography. The anthropology editor Berghahn Books has expressed an interest in seeing a manuscript with an eye to potentially publishing a book. Lech Witkowski, Professor of Philosophy at Akademia Pomorska, Phillip Gudemi, President of the Bateson Idea Group and Managing Editor of *Cybernetic and Human Knowing* and Levi Bryant, Professor of Philosophy, Collin, have all expressed an interest in reading the book.

Gregory Bateson (1904-1980) was a British-born polymath, anthropologist, education theorist, biologist, student of the communicative systems enveloping schizophrenics and dolphins, as well as an attendee of the Macy Conferences on Cybernetics in the 1940s and 1950s. He devised a science, once obscure but increasingly influential, examining the interrelations of process, context and form in living beings and joining formally two great stochastic processes: evolution and learning. His father, William Bateson (1861-1926), was a leading British biologist engaged in all the disputes of his day, proponent of Gregor Mendel (1822-1884) and coiner of the term "genetics." Gregory Bateson's first wife, Margaret Mead (1901-1978), the most famous American anthropologist of her day, was the world's leading authority of the systematically variable psychological development of individuals within cultures. Bateson's friend, C. H. Waddington (1905-1975) was instrumental in the development of the study of epigenetic processes.

Much recent work on Gregory Bateson, e.g. the books by Peter Harries-Jones, has concerned Bateson after he became "Bateson," the theoretician and scientist versed in processes of communication and learning. I currently have commissions to produce book reviews of some of this work (Kline, Harries-Jones, Chaney) for both *The Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* and *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*.

My book takes up the study of how Bateson became that later "Bateson." It makes use of unpublished and as yet uncommented upon materials from the Margaret Mead Papers at the Library of Congress as well as published, but sometimes obscure works by Bateson.

As currently constituted, the book begins with an observation Bateson made in the afterword he wrote for the second edition of his book *Naven*. When *Naven* first appeared in 1936, Bateson had been of the opinion that the schismogenic processes (literally the origins of schism) he had observed among the Iatmul of New Guinea were so strong that these processes were tearing the society apart, contrary to the expectations of both functionalist and Marxist theory. By 1958, when the second edition appeared,

Bateson contended that the *naven* ceremonies constituted an important feedback mechanism by which the relations between matriclans, and especially between mother's brothers and sister's sons, were continually reemphasized and the social relations between clans constituting Iatmul society reproduced. Along the way, Bateson had engaged and abandoned Ernst Kretchmer's (1888-1944) notions of the ways in which persons of distinctive bodily forms developed specific forms of character presented as psychiatric symptoms. With Mead, he had developed a dialectical theory of the differentially embodied, psychological developments of persons in various cultural settings; I have written extensively on this part of Mead and Bateson's thought. He had written on the control of schizmogenesis and contributed to the discussions surrounding John Dollard (1900-1980) *et al*'s theory frustration and aggression. He had lived and worked among the Balinese whose lives, Bateson contended, did not involve observable schismogenic sequences because Balinese did not seek to maximize any value save balance. He had learned the notion of feedback as a participant in what became the conferences on cybernetics, and subsequently with others (esp. Heinz van Foerster (1911-2002) and Mead) developed notions of a second order cybernetics more appropriate to organically responsive minds than mechanical devises. This trajectory led Bateson to propose the notion of the doublebind, i.e., those communicative catch twenty twos in which schizophrenics, among others, become entangled.

Particularly pertinent to the College and to my own pedagogical practice is Bateson's notion of deutero-learning, or learning how to learn. Influenced by both Kurt Lewin (1890-1947) and I. P. Pavlov (1849-1936), Bateson suggested that creatures, including human beings, when presented with similar stimuli will not only learn to respond to those stimuli but will also learn how to learn about other related sorts of stimuli, i.e. they will learn not only details but also, and more importantly, contexts. I seek to run my courses in ways which stimulate such learning in my students. I am also using notions such as deutero-learning to develop an overarching theme for General Anthropology (ANTH 2346), a theme I call "mind as entangling adaptation." I am currently developing a web-based version of this course.

I will supplement the materials I have already gathered by spending some time at the Bateson papers at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Given that Bateson was so influenced by his father's work and the disputes around evolutionary and genetic theory, I will also study works by participants in those disputes (e.g. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), Samuel Butler (1835-1902), a trenchant critic of Charles Darwin (1809-1882), as well as Darwin's *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*) with special attention to questions of mind, learning and memory.

In addition to the book and General Anthropology course, I expect to present my work at scholarly conferences, both here at Collin and elsewhere.

Selected Bibliography (Further Sources to be Added as Necessary)

Archival Sources:

GBP   The Gregory Bateson Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Santa
    Cruz.

MMP The Margaret Mead Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress.

Published Sources:

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