I. Project Description and Work Plan

I am requesting a one-semester, full-pay sabbatical to pursue research related to my ongoing research on collegiate sport hazing and initiation, particularly in relation to gender, race, and sexuality.

**Context.** Hoover (1999) defines hazing as “any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses or endangers, regardless of the person’s willingness to participate” (p. 8). In the United States, forty-four states have enacted anti-hazing laws that vary widely in scope and consequence. Although some individual universities in Canada have a specific Student Athlete Codes of Conduct policy outlining hazing infractions, the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) system does not have extensive hazing laws or policies. The relative newness of this area of study leaves many issues in need of research, including an analysis of the experiences, meanings and significance of hazing rituals for girls and women in sport. Analyzing the phenomenon of hazing through the lens of race, gender, and sexuality is important as such analyses can provide insights about the dynamics of hazing for male and female athletes, and for athletes who may be targeted because of their race or perceived sexual identity. Several scholars have examined hazing in light of socio-cultural identity dimensions with consideration for how the performance of gender (masculinity, femininity) intersect with homophobia to shape environments where certain types of hazing are normalized (Anderson, McCormack, & Lee, 2012). Understanding ways in which socio-cultural identities may be implicated in hazing is vital for developing effective prevention.

**Project Goals.** I propose to use my sabbatical time to: A) complete data analysis and write a journal manuscript for a national study examining hazing practices in Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS), funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and B) draft and submit a co-edited book proposal for an anthology on gender and sport hazing. The overall goal of the proposed projects is to examine the prevalence, nature and experience of hazing among college student athletes in order to propose policy changes and recommendations to address issues related to initiation rituals performed by college sport teams. With the large number of athletes participating in collegiate athletics, and the increasing number of reported harmful hazing practices in sport, it is important to carefully
examine the ways in which hazing impacts university sport systems and cultures and the participation of athletes therein.

**Proposed Methods and Procedures.** The methodological protocol for the SSHRC research project is modeled after Allan and Madden’s (2006; 2008) studies on hazing in the United States. After conducting a pilot study to assess sampling protocols and to test the effectiveness of recruitment strategies for respondents, Allan and Madden developed a web-based survey instrument and tested its reliability, refined interview protocols, and conducted a trial analysis of data. This was followed with a larger national study of student hazing, which included both quantitative and qualitative survey and interview questions exploring the intersections of gender, race and ethnicity, sexuality and homophobia. The methodology for the current project closely follows the research protocol developed and tested by Allan and Madden (who are also co-investigators on the SSHRC grant) and is detailed below. During the proposed sabbatical period, data collection will have been completed or have reached a stage near completion and I will be working on analysis of interview data and write-up of the results.

**Data Collection Stage One: Distribution of survey.** Web-based surveys will be delivered to a random sample population of CIS student athletes from 52 institutions and 21 sports. **Data Collection Stage Two: Interviews and policy research.** Individual, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 10 student athletes and 10 staff members at 8 institutions (two institutions from each of the four CIS regions). **Data Analysis:** Qualitative data collected through interviews and open-ended survey questions will be analyzed using established methods of coding and categorizing key themes (thematic data analysis).

For the hazing anthology, I will work with the lead investigator of the SSHRC research study to identify current trends and dominant theoretical perspectives relevant to the study of gender, sport, and hazing. We will then use the literature review as well as data from the SSHRC research study to draft a proposal and outline for the co-edited anthology. With a focus on the gendered perspective of hazing, the proposed anthology will make a unique contribution to the areas of sport sociology research and hazing research.

**Completed Preparatory Work.** Survey and preliminary interview guides have been constructed and all elements of the SSHRC study have received ethics approval. The survey will be distributed this semester
(Fall 2014) with interviews scheduled to take place next year (2015). Since the grant period began in January 2014, by the start of the proposed sabbatical period in Spring 2016, all preparatory work will have been completed and most of the data will have been collected. An extensive literature review has been completed on gender and hazing which will be used to identify key topics and themes to be included in the hazing anthology.

II. Benefits to the university

The work I complete on these projects will contribute to my professional development as a leader in scholarly, sociological research on hazing and initiation practices among college athletes. Not only will I have the chance to work closely with some of the leading scholars on hazing, but I will also gain experience working on a large-scale, national research project. The work that I plan to complete in the sabbatical period will make an important contribution to the 3-year hazing research project. At the completion of the study, I will have the opportunity to collaborate on publications and presentations for academic/research audiences as well as general audiences of community coaches, administrators and parents. I will also have the opportunity to write up the results to produce one or more manuscripts to submit to academic journals such as Sociology of Sport Journal and International Review for the Sociology of Sport. Further, the work to be completed in the proposed sabbatical period has the potential to significantly impact SJSU students’ learning experience. Currently, I serve as the core and research specialist in the Department of Kinesiology. I will directly incorporate the hazing study’s findings into core classes, such as Introduction to Kinesiology and Senior Seminar, when discussing issues of gender, sexual orientation, sport, race, and social justice. In addition, I will gain valuable experience analyzing large qualitative data sets and collaborating with Canadian researchers and institutions; from these experiences, I will be able to develop and share strategies related to collaboration, triangulation, and international research with students in one of our department’s core research classes, Fundamentals of Qualitative Research. These efforts will contribute to the university’s overall mission to establish international research partnerships, promote positive student experiences, and produce high quality critical student researchers.
III. Evidence of Ability to Complete Project

*Research experience and familiarity with subject.* I have previously conducted and published research on hazing and initiation and have developed a strong familiarity with the relevant literature on this subject. I have prior research experience conducting interviews and conducting qualitative, thematic data analysis. As a trained social science researcher, I have the knowledge and experience needed to establish rapport with participants, conduct interviews, and analyze qualitative data. In addition, I will be working with colleagues who have established themselves as leading scholars in hazing research, and I will thus have direct access to valuable resources for completion of data analysis and write-up of the hazing study results as well as developing the anthology proposal.

IV. Timeline for Project Completion

**January-February 2016.** Travel to Canada to collaborate with co-investigators of SSHRC study and devise coding strategy for analyzing qualitative survey and interview data. Begin thematic coding (data analysis). Conduct research on potential publishers for gender and sport hazing anthology.

**March 2016.** Complete coding and confer with co-investigators to compare results of hazing study data analysis. Contact potential contributors to gender and sport hazing anthology.

**April-May 2016.** Using initial results of hazing study, prepare journal manuscript. Prepare draft of hazing anthology proposal.

**June 2016.** Complete revisions and submit hazing manuscript to peer-reviewed journal. Complete revisions and submit completed gender and sport hazing anthology proposal to publishers.

References


