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<th>SUBMISSION DATE</th>
<th>April 15, 2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>PRIMARY FACULTY APPLICANT</td>
<td>Catherine Kurkjian</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENT</td>
<td>Literacy, Elementary and Early Childhood Education</td>
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<td>DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF PROPOSAL</td>
<td>Bridging the Gap between Cultural Authenticity and Cross-Cultural Transportability: International Children’s and Young Adult Literature,</td>
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<td>Faculty Co-Applicant(s)</td>
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<td>Student Co-Applicant(s)</td>
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<td>Please include Student ID# and status:</td>
<td>G- Graduate or UG- Undergraduate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TYPE OF GRANT</td>
<td>Full-Time Faculty Development</td>
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<td>Faculty – Student Research</td>
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<td>Part-Time Faculty Development</td>
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<td>Curriculum Development</td>
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<td>AMOUNT REQUESTED</td>
<td>$1484.97</td>
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PLEASE NOTE: The office of Grants and Funded Research implements a blind review process. Please do not include your name or other identifying information on any page of your proposal besides the cover sheet.
Significance

This Faculty Development Proposal to support my work as a Visiting Scholar at the University of Milan (February, 2016) has significance by enhancing my teaching and research agenda, and by advancing the university agenda to internationalize curriculum and enhance global awareness of faculty and their students.

Cross-cultural communication and understanding is an essential aspect of what it means to be a literate person in a global and interconnected world. Educators argue that children’s literature can play an important role in this process by helping to bridge cultural differences in understanding self and others (Lehman, Freeman & Scharer, 2010). The International Board of Books for Young People (IBBY), which emerged from the ruins of World War II, is based on the premise that children’s books are a way to promote international understanding. In the process of globalization, however, there exists a tension between the preservation of cultural identity in children’s literature and the need to make texts more universally comprehensible and marketable to international audiences. My research interests center on this tension as it intersects with cross-cultural response to international literature.

My role as a Visiting Scholar builds on a body of my research and teaching of children’s literature (Teaching Children’s Literature, Teaching Multicultural Literature, Teaching Graphic Novels and Bibliotherapy: An issues approach to Children’s Literature), and in particular my focus on international children’s literature. Notably, my activities as the Editor of Bookbird, a Journal of International Literature of the International Bureau of Books for Youth (IBBY) and my facility in Italian has prepared me to contribute to teaching doctoral students at the University of Milan as a Visiting Scholar.

I bring an array of publications focusing on children’s literature, multicultural and global/international children’s literature (selected articles include: Authors, 1997 to Fall 1999; Authors, 2003; Authors, 2004; Authors, 2005; Authors, 2007; Authors (Eds), 2009-2012; Authors, 2012; Authors, 2012a; Authors, 2013) and presentations on global/international children’s literature (Authors, 2012; Author, 2012; Author, 2014; and on visual narratives (selected presentations include: Authors, 2009; 2009a 2011; Author, 2010; 2010a.).

As a Visiting Scholar I will be able to significantly enhance both my teaching and research agenda. I will be able to serve as a teacher researcher and collect data as part of an ongoing cross-cultural response to literature inquiry. In collaboration with European scholars, Dr. Francesca Orestano at the University of Milan and with Dr. Peter Hunt at Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia, I will develop a full day Institute on Children’s Literature. As evidenced by events listed on Dr. Orestano’s website at http://users2.unimi.it/childlit/events.html, and the extensive archival children’s literature holdings, the University of Milan is a rich center for the study in my area of interest. Moreover, both mentor professors are leaders in literature and so this experience at the University of Milan offers me the unique opportunity to learn from them.

While I am at the University of Milan, I will take the opportunity to explore the possibility of developing a study abroad program in Italy in relation to departmental and possibly cross-departmental collaborations at the graduate level. As a long time committee member of the CIE I-Lab, I believe in the importance of study abroad programs. In discussions with professors in graduate programs across departments, we note that there is very little opportunity for study abroad within the School of Education and Professional Studies. My recent work on developing hybrid classes in the Quality Matters Project directed by David Oyanadel at the Instructional Design and Technology Resource Center (IDTRC) is quite relevant to this endeavor. I anticipate my efforts in Italy in conjunction with the development of hybrid classes may open some doors
for cross-country exchanges at the graduate level, in particular for the Department of Literacy, Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

This project will contribute to the achievement of CCSU’s strategic plan to internationalize the curriculum and provide international learning opportunities for faculty and students. This project clearly addresses several key elements as listed in the CCSU goals. First, as a result of my expanded understanding cross-cultural response to literature, I will be better equipped to support meaningful student learning (Goal #1). Also, as the project contributes to an expanded awareness of education practices in other countries, and offers possibilities of study abroad initiatives, I will be better able to promote global awareness for our students and colleagues (Goal #5).

**Objectives, Activities**
The faculty development objectives for my sabbatical include:

1) Supporting my ongoing research agenda and updating my knowledge by immersing myself in the world of International Children’s Literature through a variety of activities by
   - Teaching a 20-hour graduate laboratory class in children’s literature determined by host university during the month of February. This will entail teaching ten two hour blocks once each week for five weeks (pending official scheduling).
   - Developing a full day symposium on international children’s literature as a culminating project (end of February(pending official scheduling)) I assume I will begin some of the preparation for this project prior to arrival during summer and fall 2015
   - Collecting data on cross-cultural response to literature in my role as a teacher researcher (within the 20-hour laboratory course
   - Drafting a paper and conference proposal March 2016
   - Attending The Annual Bologna BookFair (March 30-April 2)

2) Networking and collaborating with Italian and European scholars and publishers to build scholarly bridges and to seek out venues for our Center for International Education studies abroad initiatives by
   - Exploring the possibility of cross-cultural/cross campus exchanges with Dr. Orestano and Dr. Hunt (formal meeting will be arranged to discuss this in February)
   - Meeting CIE faculty at the University of Milan and at the Università Ca' Foscari Venezia to explore venue possibilities during the first two weeks in February (formal meetings will be arranged to discuss this in March)
   - Drafting a hybrid plan for graduate study abroad at a designated venue or prospective venues
Results
First, my research and teaching will result in a heightened awareness of international children’s literature. As a result of this work in Milan, it is likely that I will revamp my existing syllabi to pass on new learning to the graduate students I teach. This might mean incorporating new books, professional resources, new teaching strategies to assist students in critically evaluating international texts, and providing students with newly learned strategies in teaching international books to their own students. It may also open the doors to cross-cultural online collaborations among CCSU students and students at the University of Milan.

The Annual Bologna BookFair is a convention that draws publishers, authors and illustrators from around the world. Attendance at this event will be an invaluable way to enhance my awareness of the latest children’s international books and award winning international artists, and to meet with publishers. All of this new learning will serve to enhance my teaching of Children’s Literature, Multicultural Literature, as well as support my ongoing research on cross cultural response to children’s literature, since in part its focus considers the degree to which international books maintain cultural markers in texts.

Second, it is anticipated that I will establish new possibilities for cross-cultural interchanges and study abroad opportunities for graduate students. As I interact under the mentorship of Dr. Orestano, and Dr. Hunt, I will have the opportunity to consider the University of Milan and as well as other Italian universities as possible venues for study abroad. Additionally, my recent studies through the Quality Matters Project sponsored by the IDTRC will provide the needed flexibility for the development of a hybrid course which will allow faculty to stagger teaching to allow graduate students, with inflexible schedules, to have an opportunity for an international experience. At the end of my stay as Visiting Scholar, I plan to develop, at the very least, a rough sketch of alternative ways to offer study abroad experiences to our graduate students enrolled at CCSU, and if possible will have a designated venue where this might take place.

Third, my time as a Visiting Scholar at the University of Milan will lay the foundation for one publication in a premier journal as I pursue my ongoing research on cross-cultural response to children’s literature in Italy. I plan to collect data as part of an ongoing teacher research project during the 20-hour laboratory graduate class with permission of my university hosts. I anticipate analyzing this data during the rest of my sabbatical and to present my findings at The World Congress (International Bureau for Books for Youth) held in New Zealand on September 2016.
Dr. Orestano is trying to secure a stipend from the University of Milan as recompense for my 20-hour laboratory graduate teaching assignment. This will help to offset costs of room and board. I am asking for financial support that is in keeping with the faculty development objectives of my sabbatical. Application has been made for $1000 AAUP funds.

**Budget**

BookFair Expenses Total: **$551.00**

Casa Ilaria 2015 prices $76 per night X4= $306.00=$431.00
Largo Respighi, 8, Bologna, Italy
+39 051 412 4760
Entrance Fee to BookFair= 4-Day pass: € 70,00 = $75.00
Travel from Milan to Bologna Milan to Bologna $21, Bologna to Milan $29 Rail Europe=$50.00

**Airfare Total:** **$933.97**
icl. taxes and fees

**PRICE BREAKDOWN**

**New York to Milano**

Mon, Feb 1, 2016 - Mon, Apr 4, 2016

1 Ticket: Round Trip - economy
Passenger 1 : Adult
$933.97

Documentation regarding my sabbatical leave, and the invitation extended to me are included in the form of a letter written by Dr. Orestano as well as follow up emails regarding inviting me to serve as a Visiting Scholar with the opportunity to engage in the described activities outlined in this proposal.

**References**

Authors. (1997 to Fall 1999). Let’s talk: A forum for multicultural literature.

CONNection, the official newsletter of the Connecticut Reading Association, (quarterly column).

Authors. (2007, March). The importance of children’s literature in a global society. The Reading Teacher, 60(6), 594-602.


Authors (2013). Insights Into Negotiating Shaun Tan’ The Arrival Using a Literature Cyberlesson. Sequential Art in Narrative Education. 3(1) online at [http://www.sanejournal.net](http://www.sanejournal.net)


**Presentations**


Author. (Invited Presenter) (2010). Leading out our profession through advocacy: Empowering teachers, learners and researchers in the advancement for all:


Authors. (2009). 19th Biennial IRSCCL Congress, Frankfurt, Germany (accepted, did not attend/no funding available for conferences in August)

Authors. (2010a). *A Stranger in a Strange Land: Cyberlesson Study of Shaun Tan’s Graphic Novel The Arrival*, International Reading Association World Congress, Auckland, New Zealand (July)
