Dear Provost Ford:

I would first of all like to begin this report by acknowledging and thanking the UW Platteville for the opportunity of taking a sabbatical leave for two semesters during the 2008-2009 academic year. The time was used productively for the purpose of reading, research, and writing on the author, Ramon del Valle-Inclan, and for further exploring in greater depth many of the avant-gard European influences that helped to shape his writings during the later part of his life, or during the decades of the nineteen twenties and the early nineteen thirties.

As stated in my request for this sabbatical and other requests for funding such as SAIF Grants, my research focused on completing chapters for a long-term project in the form of a book, or for presenting scholarly papers on expressionism, which was a strong artistic and literary movement that influenced many aspects of European literature and art at the times mentioned above. More specifically, my work focused on a little know connection between the above author and the popular genre in Latin American literature which dealt with turmoil, social upheavals, and dictatorship expressed in the form of bold and dynamic metaphors that reflected the new automation and the industrialization of the time with the power of new machinery and weapons of war.

To this end, I was able to complete much reading and I put together an article which focuses on how a Spaniard from Galicia, Spain captured the essence of these all powerful dictators who are omniscient and omnipresent in the novels of many Latin American writers. However, as I reveal, and what almost always is overlooked is that Ramon del Valle-Inclan, a Spaniard, wrote the first, and perhaps one of the best novels on dictatorship in Latin America which is titled Tirano Banderas. My work makes literary links between the motifs, metaphors, and the themes found in Valle-Inclan's Tirano Banderas and the Nobel Prize writer from Guatemala, Miguel Angel Asturias, who wrote a highly acclaimed novel concerning a god-like dictator, El Senor Presidente and his fallen angel, Miguel Cara de Angel.

My immediate goal is to present my article as a paper at a UW Platteville departmental literary symposium, and then to seek publication of this study, especially with regard to the emphasis and the connections that are made between how a Spanish writer became so influential in providing a prototype for subsequent Latin American writers regarding their novels on dictatorship.

Part of my plans consisted of going to the writer’s birthplace as I did when I was in Spain in 2002. I went there for the purpose of successfully gathering on-site and first-hand research at a small town in his native Galicia where they have built a museum in his honor and where I was able to conduct research from papers and other records of his writings and his life. My plan was to go there again, but I was informed that out-of-state travel was suspended during the time of my sabbatical. As a result, I plan to go there as soon as possible for the purpose of continuing my scholarly work. As stated above, I will share my research with my colleagues in my department, and even with artists who are interested in viewing the expressionist connections that flow back and forth from literature and from art.

Professor Raymond Spoto