I was awarded a Fall 2011 sabbatical leave to work on a seven-chapter manuscript of creative nonfiction entitled *Mother’s Grief: a Memoir*, and also to do scholarly research in the teaching and learning of creative writing at the undergraduate level, the latter in order to strengthen the pedagogical foundation for our creative writing program. In particular I researched and identified the signature pedagogies and best teaching practices in the field of creative writing on both the course and program level, and developed assessable objectives for student learning in this area, specifically with regard to developing their skills in critical and creative thinking and effective communication (both UW System Shared Learning Goals). Based on what I have learned through my research, my creative writing colleague, Dr. Kara Candito, and I will collaborate to apply the information I have gathered about signature pedagogy and best practices to our creative writing program—which we are in the process of redesigning and expanding to meet increased student demand—and to develop a process for evaluating their effectiveness.

**Description**

**A. Complete a Book-length Manuscript Entitled *Mother’s Grief: a Memoir***

I wrote the remaining four chapters of my seven-chapter manuscript of creative nonfiction entitled *Mother’s Grief: a Memoir*. This story of my traumatic journey to parenthood details my struggle against the destructive stereotypes and stigmas associated with female sexuality, infertility, and childbearing, as well as the trying and rewarding process of international adoption, including my husband’s and my journey to Ethiopia to meet our child’s birthmother and bring our son home. The book explores my grief in the face of infertility, and the grief of my son’s birthmother in making the painful choice to place her child for adoption, although ultimately it is a hard-won celebration of motherhood, adoption, and family.
I also extensively revised the three existing chapters of my memoir and prepared them for publication.

B. Research the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the Field of Creative Writing and Apply Best Practices to our Expanding Program

In conjunction with my work on this manuscript, I conducted scholarly research in the teaching and learning of creative writing at the undergraduate level in order to strengthen the pedagogical foundation for our creative writing program on both the course and program level. In particular, I researched and identified the signature pedagogies and best teaching practices in the field and developed assessable objectives for student learning in this area, specifically with regard to developing their skills in critical and creative thinking and effective communication, both of which are UW System Shared Learning Goals. Some of the topics I investigated in surveying the scholarship in this field included the effectiveness of both content- and technique-based assignments, methods of peer review, and various classroom techniques, assessable student learning outcomes, evaluation methods, and related extracurricular activities and support.

Based on what I have learned through my research, my creative writing colleague, Dr. Kara Candito, and I will collaborate to apply the information I have gathered about signature pedagogy and best practices to our creative writing program—which we are in the process of redesigning and expanding to meet increased student demand—and to develop a process for evaluating their effectiveness.

In short, the work I was able to complete during my Fall 2011 Sabbatical Leave was very rewarding, and I am grateful for the opportunity to make such good progress on my research and writing. Thank you.