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**Sabbatical Proposal for Kimberly Lower  
Professor of Nutrition  
Sabbatical Leave Period: August 2024 - December 2024**

## **Abstract**

Over the years of my teaching career, I have witnessed students from diverse backgrounds share their stories related to food and culture in the BIOL 1322 classroom. As these anecdotal stories are shared, I see students connect and find a sense of community with one another because of common dietary customs, and many become aware of their views and perceptions of their own cultural competency. College students may acknowledge that food preferences are influenced by culture, but many do not understand the rationale behind certain food behaviors, such as the practice of fasting during Ramadan or the practice of vegetarianism by Hindus because of the concept of ahimsa. An introductory nutrition course can serve as an excellent environment for students to learn about the food and culture connection by learning new content and participating in group discussion.

Currently, a large information-gap exists in Collin College's BIOL 1322 curriculum on the topic of cultural foods, specifically as it relates to the dietary guidelines and nutrition priorities, food preferences and cuisines, and climate concerns among regions around the world. Current college nutrition textbooks focus on U.S. dietary intake patterns and provide dietary examples using commonly consumed foods from the U.S. diet. Much of this information does not resonate with our growing international student population who enroll in BIOL 1322 at Collin College. Therefore, I would like to bridge this gap by creating a new learning unit for the district's BIOL 1322 course that focuses on the dietary practices, cuisines, and nutritional priorities that exist within five regions of the world (northern and southern Europe, Mediterranean sphere, Africa, Asia, Latin America) due to factors such as religion, social connections, climate, and the native plants and animals. This learning module will include Open Educational Resource (OER) sources for reading, PowerPoint lecture notes, videos, individual assignments, and team-based assignments. I would also like to create a "Cultural Perspectives" addendum for some of the existing modules (Carbohydrates, Lipids, and Proteins) to include the dietary guidelines from around the world and to include foods and meal plans that are more culturally inclusive. This new learning content will be created after completing an online college course, "N&D 335: World Food Patterns" and conducting extensive research and reading of current literature relevant to this subject. Thank you for your consideration.