

Ventura College Sabbatical Leave Proposal: Spring 2010

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TITLE: The Student Athlete: Don't Count Them Out...Statistics Show The Winning Score!

Instructor's Sabbatical Leave Status:

Fulltime Hire – August 1985; Number of Sabbaticals taken since August 1985 = 0

BACKGROUND FOR SABBATICAL PROJECT:

In the past, whenever Ventura College has been faced with budget cuts, inevitably the topic of cutting Athletics from the college budget comes up and possibly having the fulltime counselor for Athletics move into general counseling. The Dean in an effort to justify its worth would present anecdotal information and raw FTES enrollment figures for the classes. Also presented were average of units carried by the student athlete population and other such data. When possible, the Dean would even present our best guess on the graduation and transfer rate for the previous year for the high profile sports as verification that our Athletics program is viable and valuable thus making us a important part of Ventura College's success.

On the surface, one could say that gathering this information can't be that bad, but it is. Ventura College has 18 intercollegiate sports, with 7 headed by fulltime faculty and 11 have part-time head coaches, divided evenly over Fall and Spring, with basketball spanning both semesters. Approximately 400 to 450 students participate annually with another 100 "redshirts" (i.e. students who are enrolled fulltime, enrolled in the sports class for practice purposes only, and does not participate in games) or "grayshirts" (i.e. first-time college students who do not enroll fulltime in order to save his/her athletic clock) and another 100 to 200 "wanna-bees" (i.e. those students who use the counseling services in preparation for tryouts or because they "think" they want to play, and then never see the grass, track, water, or field.) In any one year, the student-athlete population encompasses all of these students and can number from 600 to 800 students.

Within the last 15 years, I can recall at least 5 times that the Dean, PE/Athletics faculty, and myself as the Counselor for Student Athletes, usually had very little time to come up with the statistical information to support athletics. After each of these harrowing experiences, I would say to myself, "Next year, I going to take the time to gather the real data to prove that my Student Athletes are valuable to my college." But that "next year" would come and go with no time to get to this valuable project. A sabbatical at this time will give me an opportunity to compile a comprehensive report to support Athletics at VC and support for continuing to have a fulltime Athletics Academic Counselor.

PURPOSE AND COMPONENTS OF SABBATICAL PROJECT:

My sabbatical proposal will look at the last 5 years Student Athlete population within the 18 sports at Ventura College. The purpose will be to gather the data to support the premise that the student athlete population is important to the College on different levels and should continue to receive support. I have 3 main areas of focus:

1) Gather the Facts!

Our VC student athletes are not flagged within the Banner system, unlike other special student populations such as EOPS or EAC. This flag allows these programs quick access to information on their students and after a few keystrokes, reports can be generated for most types of statistics necessary - - Number of students in the program, number of units carried, ethnicity, average age, gender data, graduation applications, etc.

For students who are involved in athletics, one has to type in each Student ID number and then search various screens to gather the same data. For example, to view the information for the areas mentioned above, I would have to go to: SFAALST, SFAREGS, SPAIDEN, SPAPERS, and SHADEGR, then manually record the information on a notepad. Toggling between the screens involves at least 3 to 4 keystrokes for each and then writing the information down is time-consuming. So for me to gather information on, for example, Football with 91 students, that's a lot of keystrokes, and a lot of notes.

A sabbatical would give me the time to do all of this toggling and writing. A possible future recommendation could be Banner-flagging of all student athletes in the future.

2) Show our Financial worth! FTES and Retention

With data on actual units carried, I will be able to show more accurately how much FTES is generated by this student population. The student athlete is the **ONLY STUDENT POPULATION** required to be enrolled fulltime in order to participate in their program. Programs such as EOPS and EAC, and even the Associated Students of VC, are encouraged, but not required, to be fulltime enrolled in order to participate or to hold office.

In addition, the short time frame in which a student athlete has to get their education done requires continuity from one year to the next. I will look at the retention rates by sport team from year to year.

3) Prove VC's time and money was well worth it! Graduation and Transfer

The student athletes are one of the few, if not the only, student population required to "get it done" in a very short time frame. Primarily, this is because of the rules set forth on the national intercollegiate level, and secondly because of the rules within the California Community College Athletic Association, which governs intercollegiate athletics for 110 state community colleges that have over 25,000 student athletes annually.

Briefly, the collegiate student athlete has 5 years to complete 4 seasons of participation in a sport or multiple sports. In order to participate each season, he/she must make degree progress by completing a minimum number of units each semester and maintain a minimum GPA throughout participation. In addition, the student athlete has to make educational decisions much earlier than the general student population and then is held those decisions, without much wiggle room for change, for the rest of his/her college career. It is then incumbent upon the Athletics Academic Counselor to design an individual educational plan for the student athlete that will not only meet the requirements for participation at the 2-year college but will also meet the admission and/or minimum requirements for transfer to the 4-year university where the student wishes to continue his/her education and participation.

The measure of success will be shown in the data on the graduation and transfer of our second season student athletes. Since most student athletes who continue to participate leave within a 3-year timeframe, I will use Fall 2002 thru Spring 2007 data.

SUMMARY:

Approximately 4% of the total student population at Ventura College is involved with athletics, either as a participant, redshirt, grayshirt, or wanna-bee. It has also been speculated that every student athlete brings at least 2 other non-athletic students to the college. It is my goal to have all of the data gathered and compiled demonstrate the impact, quality, and continuity of providing athletic opportunities for our students and continue providing athletic academic counseling services to this targeted student population.