

Sabbatical Leave Proposal for Fall 2015

Ventura College

Submitted by: Guadalupe Moriel-Guillén

Counseling Department

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Faculty Background

I have been working as a member of the counseling faculty with the VCCCD district since 1996. I began my employment in the district at Oxnard College where I spent two years as part-time counselor. I have spent the past sixteen years as a tenured full time counselor at Ventura College, serving students and faculty in the capacity of EOPS Counselor and later as a General Counselor. Additionally, I have been teaching in the Child Development Department for fourteen years. During my tenure at Ventura College, I have served on various campus and district committees including, but not limited to: Enlace, Accreditation, Matriculation, Budget, Senate, Crisis Intervention, Sexual Harassment, Student Success Team, and at the District level, I am a member of SB 1456 Implementation Task Force. Presently, I serve as the Department Chair for the Counseling Department.

This is the first time that I have applied for a sabbatical in my sixteen years at Ventura College. I have the full support of my Division Dean and our Executive Vice President.

Background of Sabbatical

Excerpt SB 1456

The Mandate

SEC. 4.

Section 78211.5 of the Education Code is amended to read:

78211.5.

(a) The purpose of the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012 is to increase California community college student access and success by providing effective core matriculation services, including orientation, assessment and placement, counseling, and other education planning services, and academic interventions. The focus of the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012 is on the entering students' transition into college in order to provide a foundation for student achievement and successful completion of students' educational goals, with a priority toward serving students who enroll to earn degrees, career technical certificates, transfer preparation, or career advancement. The Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012 targets state resources on core matriculation services that research has shown to be critical in increasing the ability of students to reach their academic and career goals. By focusing funding in these core areas and leveraging the use of technology to more efficiently and effectively serve a greater number of students, the goal of the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012 is to provide students with a solid foundation and opportunity for success in the California Community Colleges.

With the implementation of Student Success Service Program (3SP) Ventura College needs to be in compliance with this new mandate to offer Orientation, Assessment and Placement, Counseling, Abbreviated Student Educational Plan, and Comprehensive Student Educational Plan, and follow-up services. The primary goal of 3SP is to provide all students with access to student support services so that students may receive the necessary assistance to complete their educational goal in a timely manner.

Proposal

The purpose of this sabbatical is to compile promising initiatives and best practices from several community colleges in California who have established successful **First-Year Experience (FYE) Programs**. Over the course of my sabbatical, I plan to visit several community colleges throughout the state, and learn first-hand the innovative programs for first-year freshmen and how they are implementing the 3SP mandate. My visits will include meeting with department counseling chairs, counselors, department deans, support staff, and students who are actively involved with coordinating and implementing FYE programs at their campus.

My goal is to capture their best practices, gather important information, and provide valuable feedback to my department and Ventura College. In addition to exploring what makes each program successful at each campus, I plan to:

- 1 Review the FYE mission statement
- 2 Assess the physical location and services offered
- 3 Interview students who are part of the program
- 4 Assess the main emphasis of each program component
- 5 Examine their retention figures and identify programmatic challenges
- 6 Ascertain the organizational structure and student/staff ratio
- 7 Identify campus and administration support
- 8 Examine MIS data collection for state reporting purposes
- 9 Study marketing and communication practices
- 10 Identify follow-up services and assess their effectiveness

The information I gather will help Ventura College during the implementation and expansion of our own First Year Experience Program. As Department Chair involved in the implementation of SB 1456, I have first-hand knowledge and experience working with this mandate and I have the necessary experience and familiarity to complete this project.

Proposed Campuses to Visit:

College of the Canyons – “First Year Experience Program”
Pasadena City College – “First Year Pathway”
Santa Monica College – “First Year Experience”
Rio Hondo Community College – “First Year Success”

De Anza College – “First Year Experience”
Grossmont College – “Freshman Academy”

The campuses identified above have solid programs and have established practices for serving special population such as first generation, low income, Dreamers, and disadvantaged student populations. I will compile a summary visit for each college and secure copies of material and marketing tools used at each college.

More importantly, I will meet regularly with our FYE counselor at Ventura College to share my findings and explore how to adopt and implement successful practices.

Benefit to Faculty

This research project is directly tied to the implementation of SB 1456. All faculty and staff at the college have been called upon to participate in 3SP in one way or another. The main goal of 3SP is to create access and equality for all students and to assist them to reach their educational goal in a timely manner. Faculty will benefit by learning innovative ways to reach out to their students and by developing strategies for improving their course retention and completion. This new mandate falls heavily on the Student Services Department. It is mandated that **all new students** have an Abbreviated Student Educational Plan (SEP) before they register for classes and that all students need to have a Comprehensive SEP once they complete 15 units or one semester. The SEP needs to be done in an electronic format for transferability across Student Support Services (e.g. Financial Aid and Counseling). A “follow up” requirement is also mandated by 3SP, particularly for students on academic probation and/or dismissal. All of the aforementioned steps need to be completed by an academic counselor. Learning new ways to serve our first year students will improve our delivery of services and ideally, will help to increase student retention and success.

Benefit to Students

All newly matriculated students will be encouraged to participate in our enhanced First Year Experience Program. Students will benefit by participating in a well-developed program that is designed to ensure access to support services, effective educational planning, and is structured to enhance their success in reaching their educational goal. Well-informed counselors, who develop their SEPs with accuracy, will guide them. The FYE at Ventura College will be a source of support and accessibility to all students at our college, particularly first generation students and other underrepresented student populations. This is especially important to meet the new mandated Student Success Act. Students will receive the knowledge they need to complete their educational goals.

Benefit to the College

The goal of FYE program at Ventura College is to have one of the best programs among the California Community Colleges and to serve as a template for others to emulate. We want to develop a program that focuses on student success, that meets the needs of our students and that provides all students with the support and assistance to create an optimal learning environment.

This project will put into action promising practices and the most innovative ways to deliver our services that have been proven to be effective. By researching, visiting, and collecting resources and data from other FYE programs that have demonstrated efficacy, I will be best equipped to help develop our FYE program at Ventura College.

More importantly, Ventura College will benefit greatly by the information I gather, which can be implemented effectively at our college. As we expand our own FYE program, this project will help lead to a stronger, more robust, and comprehensive delivery model of student support services.

As Ventura College vision statement says:

“ Ventura College will be a beacon of learning—a source of inspiration and guidance—for our students and community.” The development of a strong and impactful FYE program will help to create a solid foundation for our beacon; a foundation upon which all new students will develop their career and educational plans, and through which we can best equip our students for a successful future.