

## **Ventura College Sabbatical Leave Proposal**

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**Department of Fine Art**  
**Ventura College**  
**October 31, 2016**

Instructor's Sabbatical Leave Status

Full-time hire date: August 2004. Part-time district hire date: August 1999

Previous Sabbaticals: 0

### **Statement of Purpose**

This application is for a sabbatical leave for fall semester 2017. I intend to use this time to research and develop a dynamic and forward thinking digital media program and department within the Art Department. The digital media area includes digital painting and illustration, graphic design, design for web and devices, digital photography and film. An understanding and working knowledge of all aspects of digital media is critical for our students to be competitive and effective in any area of fine or commercial art. Graphic designers, web designers, digital artists and photographers need solid and functional digital expertise. Fine artists working in traditional media also need basic digital tools to develop a digital portfolio for college transfer and applications to art schools or galleries. Artists also need the capability to market themselves through printed materials, web sites and social media. Having stated this, it is counter intuitive to find that our digital classes have dropped in enrollment in the past couple years. My sabbatical proposal involves research and fact-finding to better understand this situation and support our students with appropriate dynamic classes and instruction. My proposal includes program and curriculum development, market research on current trends and employment, community outreach and promoting our program.

### **Sabbatical Project Background**

Ventura College offers a variety of excellent digital classes, ranging from Typography to Digital Painting. The Art Department is in the process of adding a Graphic Design degree and a Film Studies degree. Every year the VC art department offers 12 classes in our digital area (ART68, ART70A, ART70B, PHOT70A, PHOT70B, ART71, ART72, ART73, PHOT73, ART74A, ART74B and PHOT02.) In order to serve our students and offer them competitive art education we have added a digital component to several of our traditional media art classes. ART11A, ART11B, ART29A and ART29B now are taught as a hybrid class. We have instructors that utilize our digital classroom on a project-by-project basis to enrich classes that are taught with traditional media, such as ART12A; beginning drawing.

However, the digital area has experienced a decline in enrollments in many of our digital classes. In the past we have offered and filled several sections of classes such as Beginning Photoshop, Graphic Design and Digital Photography. We want to actively address this and make the necessary changes to serve our students. We know a digital component is vital to our students' success and we want to meet that need.

## **Sabbatical Project Components**

The greatest challenge in keeping a digital program vital and relevant is keeping current with the quickly changing technology and demand. As our dependence on computers and digital savvy has increased, I have watched the last two years as our enrollments in our digital classes have decreased. This is a surprise and it is alarming. It came to my attention last fall that two of Moorpark's digital classes were also cancelled due to low enrollment. I hope to collaborate with Moorpark as I proceed with my research. We know that students need to be computer smart and competitive in their knowledge of software programs. We also know that we have excellent instructors who receive good reviews and are knowledgeable in their areas of expertise. The issues I want to explore, synthesize and resolve are:

1. What aspects of digital media do we need to offer to our students, in both traditional and digital media classes now and in the future?
2. Are there classes offered that no longer need to be offered at the college level?
3. Are the students learning some of our course content in high school?
4. Have new technologies such as sophisticated cell phone Apps and programs replaced the need to learn beginning digital technology?
5. What are employers looking for?

As I compile answers to these questions I can construct a program with vibrant and necessary classes. It may be that much of our digital content now needs to be integrated into our program and into our traditional classes as supplemental knowledge rather than individual classes; in other words, not as a subject itself but as a tool within other class content.

Proposed research:

1. Research and examine other college's art and digital offerings, including opening up dialog with other digital media instructors.
2. Examine enrollments at other colleges, especially local colleges and universities; both our competition and our transfer institutions.
3. Investigate what special interests groups such as MEI and SCREMEC are publishing in terms of current trends and predictions for the future.
4. Research current and future trends in digital media education.
5. Devise a program and rewrite curriculum.
6. Add an online option for all our digital courses.
7. Consider Workforce and CTE.
8. Consider community internship programs.

## **Value of the Sabbatical Project:**

### **To Ventura College and the community**

As we become more informed, the community benefits by our educating our students in areas of needed knowledge and expertise to enter the work force and become contributing citizens. The community can also benefit by sharing the findings with local high schools. Ventura College benefits as we continue our goal of educational excellence and service to the community. VC also benefits as we target our resources in more productive, concise and meaningful ways.

**To the Instructor**

This research will allow me to build our program and provide a foundation to lead our digital program forward. This project will also help establish a protocol on how to gather this vital information to continue to remain current for years into the future.

**To the Student**

Students will benefit, as we will be offering degrees, certificates and classes that have direct relevance to the needs of employers. We can offer classes at the level needed by students so they are not spending time on classes that are outdated or irrelevant or redundant to lower level education. With this information and a process in which to continue to gather this information we can keep our students informed about current and future trends in digital media.

**To the District**

The district will benefit as we share this information with the other colleges, especially Moorpark College, who has a large Multimedia program. We can make better use of resources including instructors, computer labs and software needs by knowing what classes and programs to offer.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Sharla Fell

**VC Classes directly affected by this proposal:**

ART68 – Introduction to Digital Technologies  
ART70A, ART70B – Photoshop for Art I and II  
PHOT70A, PHOT70B – Photoshop for Art I and II - photo credit  
ART71 - Typography  
ART72 – Graphic Design  
ART73, PHOT73 – Digital Imaging – art or photo credit  
ART74A, ART74B – Digital Painting  
PHOT02 – Photo with Digital Techniques  
ART11A – 2D Design  
ART11B – 2D Design – Color Theory  
ART 12A – Beginning Drawing and Composition  
ART29A, ART29B – Illustration I and II  
ART49 – Portfolio Development