

Ventura College Sabbatical Leave Proposal
Submitted by Lisa Anderson
Department of Mathematics

I am requesting a one semester sabbatical leave to be taken in the spring semester of 2010. The purpose of the sabbatical is to design a 0.5 unit Math Summer Bridge course designed for in-coming Ventura College students who place into developmental mathematics.

Background

There is research to show that students who take a basic skills math course in their first semester of college increase their chances of staying in school and succeeding. Unfortunately, many students do not adequately prepare for the math placement exam, or delay signing up for required math courses often due to math anxiety. With the new California Community College math competency requirement of Intermediate Algebra for an AA degree, Ventura College students who place into basic skills math must now complete up to 4 courses to receive an AA/AS degree, and up to 5 courses to move on to a transfer-level math course. Taking into account the math anxiety dilemma and the fact that success rates are low in basic skills math courses, a new Ventura College student may be spending more semesters than desired to complete a degree.

Goal

The goal is to develop a 0.5 unit summer bridge course designed for students placing into basic skills mathematics. This would include components to improve success to follow the students through their first semester, along with math study skills addressing the habits and techniques college students need to achieve success in a math class. Over-coming math anxiety and improving students' confidence in themselves and their abilities would also be a component of the course.

The summer bridge course would aid in-coming students with preparation for the math placement exam, provide learning skills specific to success in mathematics, and develop students' confidence to register and succeed in mathematics beginning with their first semester.

The goal would be to evaluate and incorporate several components into the bridge program at Ventura College, including strengthening the student's

self-efficiency and goal-setting through learning communities, supplemental instruction and counseling.

Time Line

The first month of the semester will include visits to campuses with summer bridge programs that are regarded highly by the students and faculty. Pasadena City College has one of the most successful programs with their Math Jam Program. The College of the Siskiyous has modeled their summer bridge program (implemented last year) after Pasadena, and it would provide input on how the program is succeeding elsewhere. Chaffey College has a Summer Readiness Program which includes Math Workshop. Santa Monica has a summer bridge program for their First Year Experience grant students and Cerritos Community College has a Math Enhancement workshop. The intent would be to take the best part of each program in developing the Math Summer Bridge course at Ventura College.

The next two months will be used to write the course using all of the information gathered from other colleges and incorporating math study skills and overcoming math anxiety as part of the material. It will be important to coordinate with Ventura College counselors, the tutoring center and math instructors in order to gauge their future level of participation in the summer bridge program. Close coordination with the Math Department Chair and the Vice President of Instruction will be required in order to propose an extra benefit (e.g. priority math registration) for students that take and succeed in the course. A Title V grant may help in the success of implementing the course.

The last month of the semester a new course will be proposed and presented to the Academic Senate and Curriculum Committee. This time will also be spent presenting the course to the Ventura College counselors. In addition, I will work closely with the high schools to make sure they understand the benefit of the course to incoming new students in basic skills mathematics to encourage enrollment.

Outcome

With a Math Summer Bridge course, Ventura College will have more connection with the local high schools. Ventura College will be reasserting

its support of the "Ventura College Promise" while supporting other new students such as returning veterans and newly unemployed returning to school. With a Math Summer Bridge course, Ventura College will have an opportunity to raise the success level of students in basic skills math thus providing more students with the opportunity to achieve a degree.