

Ventura College Sabbatical Leave Proposal
Interactive Mentoring Site for New VC Faculty to Improve Pedagogical
and Campus Knowledge
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Instructor's Sabbatical Leave Status

Full-time hire date: August 2010

Previous Sabbaticals: 0

**Resources for New Faculty Needed to Combat the "Sage on the Stage"
Vision of College-level Teaching**

**"Despite years of research on effective teaching suggesting that
learners must engage actively in the process and that teachers should
vary their instructional strategies, direct instruction using lecture
continues to dominate in America's college classrooms."**

***Teaching without Telling: Contemporary Pedagogical Theory Put into
Practice***

**Feden, P., *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, v23 n2 p5-23
2012**

Background of Sabbatical Project

This year, Ventura hired over 20 new part-time faculty members, many with limited or no pedagogical training. Similarly, we hired almost 20 new full-time faculty members, many of whom subscribe to lecture methods primarily and know little about the college's student services or cultural offerings. So, although all new instructors have advanced degrees and convinced hiring committees of their commitment to students, many walk into the first day of class relying on their own educational experiences to guide their pedagogy. Often, college professors lectured them, so they lecture as college professors.

Ironically, teachers are often highly successful students who learned well in lecture-based classes. Often attending elite institutions, they understood how to navigate the complex social world of academia. A Hispanic Serving Institution, Ventura College places over 70 percent of students into at least one remedial class. Often, our students have not been fortunate enough to receive the kind of high school education that prepares them for college-level work. Further, as an open-access, 21st Century Institution, students need instructional methods that help them engage with difficult material.

With this in mind, mentoring new faculty is important for the following reasons:

- **Knowing about well-researched high impact practices legitimizes non-lecture forms of teaching (The RP group and the CCCSE reports offer practical suggestions in this area)**
- **Knowing campus resources allows instructors to direct high-achieving and struggling students to the resources they need**
- **Knowing other faculty to increases new faculty access to institutional knowledge**

Currently, I have worked with other members of the Professional Development Committee to pilot a mentoring system for new part-time faculty. We developed a D2L page for Mentors and Mentees, and assigned a mentor to each new faculty member.

The Professional Development Committee has offered FLEX-week orientations for new full-time faculty and new part-time faculty. We are following up with a mid-semester session to help guide new faculty through finals and grade submission.

The pilot has been enthusiastically greeted both by current instructors and new faculty. There is not the time nor energy on the part of the current group to refine this and hone it into a meaningful Mentor Program.

Purpose of Sabbatical Project

I propose to create a digitally integrated resource for new faculty to learn about the student services, cultural life at the college, and best practices in teaching.

This Mentoring Handbook for VC can serve as a template for all future incoming faculty groups. Because it will be housed in D2L (or whatever course management system we will have), it can continue to grow and morph as the needs of new instructors change. Further, because all mentors will have access to editing this resource, it can become the go-to resource for new faculty trying to figure out how to do things like take a field trip, or ask a counselor to talk to their classes about transfer.

Components of Sabbatical Project

Research regarding best practices

I will spend time investigating several other colleges' faculty

mentoring programs to figure out which components fit best at VC. I will then gather video, example documents (such as syllabuses and rubrics), and links to campus resources.

Design of Mentor Resources Site

I will take a good look at what we have developed in our pilot plan and ask for feedback from our pilot cohort for improvement.

Implementation

For the fall semester of 2017, we will have an integrated mentor resource site in place to anchor our mentor matching.

Value of Project to Ventura College and VCCCD

The college and district will benefit from a Mentor Resource page by having this important information put together in an interactive and well-organized manner. New faculty at Ventura College (and Moorpark and Oxnard if they are interested) and their mentors will have a working site that pulls together the vision of what our campus offers and what good teaching looks like.

Value of Project to Ventura College Students

Ventura College students will benefit by having instructors who know what about campus resources and cultural events VC offers. As the most direct link to the college, instructors can better direct students to meaningful campus assets.

Value of Project to Instructor

As the chair of the professional development committee for the past several years, I look forward to helping our newest faculty feel like they are part of a meaningful and integrated campus. I will enjoy the opportunity to look deeply into the best practices at other campuses and to bring this to our own campus.

I look forward to developing my ability to use Drupel and Canvas to update my technical abilities. This will serve me in several areas on campus—in my teaching, for my department, and for the professional development committee.