

Sabbatical Leave Proposal  
Rachel Messinger  
Discipline: Anthropology  
Hired: August 2008  
Request for: Fall 2020  
Previous Sabbaticals: 0

## Background

The California Virtual Campus Online Educational Initiative (CVC-OEI) was initiated to ensure access to high quality distance education courses, and to help students succeed in those courses. Among the resources created by the CVC-OEI are access to a common course management system (Canvas), shared resources such as the OEI Course Design Rubric, and the OEI consortium which includes the OEI exchange, and the CVC-OEI Course Design Academy. Moorpark College became an OEI consortium college in the fall of 2018, which allows our courses to be on the OEI exchange, and allows our students to become exchange students. There are several factors that make it difficult for faculty members to get their courses on the OEI exchange. Aligning an existing course with the OEI is a long process. Courses must be submitted into CVC-OEI Course Design Academy, resulting in changes that must be implemented to get the course badged by the Design Academy. These changes are frequently technical in nature, and can be time consuming to implement, especially if faculty have created content without specialized knowledge of the OEI Course Design Rubric. The CVC-OEI outlines that institutions should form a Peer Online Course Review (POCR) group to mitigate these factors and accelerate the ability of faculty to get their courses approved for OEI. The POCR group provides a peer review group structure that allows faculty members to “self-align” before submitting their courses to the CVC-OEI. Moorpark College does not currently have a POCR group, and only a limited number of full-time faculty have been “badged” by the CVC-OEI as having their courses exchange-ready (two faculty members that I know of as of this writing).

There are multiple benefits to having courses on the OEI exchange. First, it allows for seamless registration of online courses for exchange students (e.g., a Moorpark student could take an online course at Lake Tahoe without having to register as a student at Lake Tahoe or fill out CCC Apply again). Or vice versa, a Lake Tahoe student could take an online course at Moorpark College with a more seamless registration process. Even though the logistics of the registration process are still being worked out at the District level (I learned this at the last DDEAC meeting), that is ultimately the goal. There is also the opportunity for increased FTES, as the “home” school gets the FTES from the registration, and the “teaching” school gets the completion. However, the most compelling reason to have courses on the exchange is that they meet a higher standard of aligning with the OEI Course Design Rubric, which makes students more likely to succeed in these courses. As the District would like to increase its online offerings and programs, it makes sense to ensure that students have access to high quality distance education courses.

## Proposal

### **Objective: To form and lead a Moorpark College Peer Online Course Review (POCR) Group**

My sabbatical leave proposal is to implement and run a Moorpark College Peer Online Course Review (POCR) group. My qualifications to do so are that I am currently completing the CVC-OEI Course Design

Academy, and should have my badge to have my course on the OEI exchange by the end of this current semester. Having gone through the process of working with the CVC to understand what it takes to bring an online course into alignment, I am now qualified to help other faculty members align their courses. If faculty members can self-align with each other through working in a POCR group, they will be able to get their courses approved through the CVC much faster than the current process. I would like to share and communicate the knowledge that I have gained through aligning my course so that I can in turn help other faculty members align. The size and scope of this project would be too much to achieve while maintaining my regular classroom assignment, which is what makes it perfect for a sabbatical leave project. In addition to going through the Design Academy, my other qualifications for this role are serving as Co-Chair of the District Distance Education Advisory Committee (DDEAC) for the 2018-2019 academic year, serving as Co-Chair of the Distance Education Standing Committee from 2017-2019, and serving on the CVC-OEI Common Course Management System (CCMS) Committee since September of 2019. I have taught online in Canvas since the Fall of 2017.

### PAQs (Possibly Asked Questions)

Why is the size and scale of this project suitable for sabbatical leave rather than regular professional assignment?

The reason this project is suitable for a sabbatical leave is that the training I am proposing is at least at the scale of our Canvas Online Teacher Training Course, if not larger. It is not a merely a “one and done” professional development or flex week activity. Also, inevitably it takes more time to modify an already existing online course than to design an online course from scratch (and we have more already existing online courses than completely new online courses). The changes related to accessibility alone can be particularly daunting. The other advantage of this being a sabbatical leave project is that I can meet with faculty when it suits their schedules, rather than the usual restrictions of a regular teaching semester. Just this past Friday (10/25/19) I attended a session at Caninnovate (an annual online CCC Canvas conference) entitled “Design 2 Align Camp: A Model for Redesigning Courses in Community.” This session emphasized the value of reviewing courses as a community (rather than having just one-on-one with an instructional designer). This not only enhances the faculty professional development experience, but also affords the opportunity to build awareness about what is happening at a state-wide level. In addition, this type of faculty-driven review group allows for the opportunity to experiment with new tools as a community e.g. Canvas Studio, Camtasia, Proctorio.

My responsibilities would consist of:

- Designing a “Moorpark College Campus POCR Group” Canvas course
- Hosting in-person and Zoom meetings on each section of the rubric, at times that work the best for faculty members
- Assigning faculty members “homework” of aligning to a particular section of the rubric
- Reviewing examples that faculty to submit to make sure those examples are aligned
- Organizing examples that faculty members upload to the course, drawing attention to the best examples of alignment
- Meeting with faculty one-on-one to fix problem areas or to provide mentorship to those faculty desiring more guidance
- Moderating discussions inside the course where there are questions about alignment

- Hosting any special sessions on topics of interest to faculty members e.g. “This is how you can make flashcards in your online course for student self-assessment”
- If possible, working through new or relatively new tools or Canvas apps/LTIs with faculty e.g. Canvas studio, Camtasia, Proctorio

What resources would you need for the project? What are the project logistics?

For this project to succeed, I would need assistance advertising the Campus POCR group (see parties already consulted elsewhere in this proposal). I would also need Tracie Bosket to make the Canvas shell for the course, and add those faculty members that would like to participate. It would be helpful if I could book LLR smart classrooms for faculty meetings. It would also be helpful if I had some IT support to make sure the microphone works during Zoom meetings in the LLR rooms (sometimes it can be challenging to present both in person and online simultaneously). This can be both an on- and off-campus project. I can certainly be around if faculty members prefer on-ground meetings, but I can also host the meetings in Zoom if that is the faculty preference (either way I would record meetings for those that cannot be there live).

What material would be covered, discussed, or taught to faculty in the POCR group?

While it is not possible to include an entire lesson plan in this proposal, I thought I would include the highlights of each section of the OEI Course Design Rubric that would be covered. I am emphasizing the points that I thought were the most confusing from the rubric, but were easily clarified once I worked with the CVC-OEI Instructional Designer. This is what would save faculty so much time—if this information could be conveyed to faculty members before going through the alignment process with the CVC-OEI. I have spoken with Cynthia Sheaks-McGowan and Shannon Coulter, who have completed the Design Academy, if they would be willing to lend examples from their aligned courses, so I am not limited to examples of my course alone in terms of how to best align (because there is more than one way to meet a particular criterion). Both Cynthia and Shannon are happy to lend examples from their courses.

### **Section A: Content Presentation**

From the OEI Course Design Rubric: Key elements include course navigation, learning objectives, and access to student support information

The objective of this module would be to ensure that:

- Course homepage is navigable, with a clear “Start Here” feature
- Students have access to student support information, including but not limited to a “Help and Resources” module at the top of the “Modules” page
- Each learning unit or module includes objectives, and that these objectives are aligned with course content
- There is page-level and unit-level “chunking” (this is a frequently misunderstood prompt, but it can be easily clarified)
- Content is presented in “page” form (again, this is not clear from the rubric but easily demonstrated)

- There are individualized learning opportunities to support both Basic Skills or resources for advanced learning

### **Section B: Interaction**

From the OEI Course Design Rubric: Key elements of quality course design covered in this section include regular effective contact, both between and among instructors and students.

The objective of this module would be to ensure that:

- Courses have a regular and effective contact policy
- There are opportunities for regular and effective contact in the course
- There are opportunities for student-initiated contact in the course
- There are opportunities for students to have contact with other students

### **Section C: Assessment**

From the OEI Course Design Rubric: Key elements include the alignment of objectives and assessments, the clarity of instructions for completing activities, and evidence of timely and regular feedback.

The objective of this module would be to ensure that:

- Assessments are aligned with a demonstration of learning outcomes and with course objectives
- Both formative and summative assessments are included throughout the course
- Assessments are frequent enough throughout the course
- Assessments contain rubrics or a scoring guide
- Meaningful, timely feedback is provided on assessments
- There are opportunities for self-assessment in the course

### **Section D: Accessibility**

From the OEI Course Design Rubric: Instructors need to verify that content they create or add to their courses is accessible to all students.

The objective of this module would be to ensure that:

- Heading styles are consistently used to aid navigation
- Lists are created using the bulleted or numbered list tool
- Links are identified with meaningful text instead of displaying the URL
- Tables are accessible (header rows identified, etc.)
- Color contrast is appropriate, and color alone is not used to convey meaning or emphasis
- Images have alternative text
- Reading order is set correctly
- Slides are accessible with alt text and all text is visible in "Outline View" of PowerPoint
- Videos have accurate captions
- Audio files have a complete transcript
- No underlining of text unless it is a link (in which case it should be a link, not underlined); using bold for emphasis instead of underlining

How will you advertise the Campus POCR Group?

I have spoken with Anasheh Gharabighi, Distance Education Coordinator, and she has agreed to send out advertisements for the Campus POCR group to DE faculty members in Spring 2020 and early Fall 2020. I have also spoken with Brian Burns, Professional Development Coordinator, and he is willing to advertise the POCR group at Spring Flex and Fall Flex. I will also reach out to DE faculty on my own and recruit for the group. It is also possible that the faculty members involved in the CVC-OEI grant would find the POCR group helpful, because they must align their courses with the OEI Course Design Rubric as part of the grant.

How will you ensure sufficient enrollment in the Campus POCR Group?

I will do my best to ensure sufficient enrollment in the Campus POCR group through advertising the promoting the group as much as possible through Spring 2020 and early Fall 2020. Although I cannot guarantee a specific number of faculty members, my twelve years at Moorpark College have taught me that faculty are genuinely interested in professional development opportunities that afford them the opportunity to improve their courses and teaching. Also, as the course will consist as a series of Zoom videos within a Canvas shell, any faculty member can “take” the course and benefit from it, even if they cannot be there for the “live” meetings. As the Campus POCR group leader, and I will respond to questions and emails from faculty members in the POCR group who cannot be there live but would like to participate asynchronously. It is also possible to recruit VC and OC faculty for the POCR group—it does not need to be limited to Moorpark College in scope.

What about instructors of hybrid or on-ground courses?

For the “online” portion of hybrid courses, the OEI Course Design Rubric still applies as a best practices document, so hybrid instructors can equally benefit from participation in the Campus POCR group. While the benefit to on-ground courses may seem less clear, I would argue there is also a benefit there. All faculty members have Canvas shells, whether they teach online or on-ground. All content in that Canvas shell needs to be accessible, regardless of whether that faculty member teaches online or on-ground. In addition, I have found a constant back-and-forth between my online and on-ground courses, where changes for one can improve the other. For example, once I aligned an extra credit assignment with the OEI Course Design rubric for my online course, I also placed that revised assignment in my on-ground Canvas course (since those students have the same opportunity to complete the extra credit). The completion rates for the extra credit assignment went up in both the online and on-ground courses once it was aligned. When I made a rubric for the grading of the essay for my online exams, I took that same rubric and put it in the essay questions for my on-ground courses. Hence, aligning to the OEI Course Design Rubric enhanced both online and on-ground instruction.

## Outcomes

### Value of the Proposed Leave on Instruction

The opportunity to work with the CVC Instructional Designer has vastly improved my abilities as an instructor, which improves the quality of the student experience. I would like to share the benefits of what I have learned by communicating this knowledge with other instructors by forming a POCR group. As we all know, one never really understands something until they must teach it to someone else. Therefore, coordinating a POCR group will enhance my own teaching, which will again improve the quality of the student experience. Also, there is more than one way to align to any particular criterion in

the rubric, and the more ways faculty can align, the faster they can get their courses set, submitted, and badged by the CVC-OEI.

#### Value of the Proposed Leave to the College

What is exciting about the potential for this project is that it is not just about myself and my teaching, but the potential to improve the teaching of other distance education instructors at Moorpark College. The Moorpark College Mission Statement includes the passage, "With a "students first" philosophy, Moorpark College empowers its diverse community of learners to complete their goals for academic transfer, basic skills, and career education." When online courses align with the OEI Course Design Rubric, students are more likely to succeed. This proposal will enhance the teaching of DE instructors at Moorpark College, and therefore enhance the quality of the student experience and the students' ability to meet their goals of transfer, basic skills, and career education. In addition, Moorpark College has adopted the OEI Course Design Rubric as a best practices document. However, even the most seasoned of instructors are probably not in alignment with the rubric. This project affords the opportunity to break the rubric apart one criterion at a time, and give faculty members the examples they need to understand the rubric and bring their course into alignment with current best practices. The more courses the college has that are exchange-ready, the greater the benefit to students, as students are more likely to succeed in these courses compared to un-aligned courses.

#### Value of the Proposed Leave to the District

It is in the Mission of the District to provide "students, in its diverse community, with access to comprehensive quality educational opportunities that support student learning and student success." By improving the quality of my instruction and the instruction of other faculty members, this improves the quality of the student experience and student learning. In addition, this project would create a video archive that could be utilized by the instructors at our sister colleges in order to align their courses. These means that the instructors and students at Ventura College and Oxnard College can also benefit from the knowledge gained by this project in tangible, not theoretical ways. The District would like to increase its online offerings and programs, and this project would help ensure that students have access to high quality distance education courses.

#### Value of the Proposed Leave on the Candidate's Professional Competence

In addition to the benefits to my instruction, the instruction of other faculty, and benefits to students, being the project lead on the POER group is a professional development experience that would enhance my skills as a leader, instructor, and organizer. It would be a privilege to have this opportunity. This is a skill set I will take with me upon my return to my regular classroom assignment and college duties.

#### Implementation, Dissemination and Timeline

I have spoken with Matt Calfin, Dean of Distance Education, Anasheh Gharabighi, Distance Education Coordinator, and Shannon Macias, Distance Education Faculty Co-Chair. All three are in support of this project. In theory, this project could be completed in either Fall or Spring. However, the fall semester is preferable so that the information about how to align with the Course Design Rubric can be disseminated sooner to faculty members. I have spoken to my Department Chair Andrew Kinkella, and he is fine with the sabbatical leave being in the fall semester were it to be approved.

### Proposed Timeline:

**December 2019**—Complete the CVC-OEI Course Design Academy and obtain a “badge” for having my course OEI Exchange-ready.

**Spring 2020**—Complete the @One course to become a CVC-OEI peer reviewer. I will have a better understanding of how to align a course after completing the Course Design Academy, but completing the @One Peer Reviewer training would be beneficial to the project.

**Spring Flex 2020**—Advertise the Campus POCR group to faculty, recruit members, and explain how the project will work. Ask Tracie Bosket to make a Canvas shell for the POCR Group.

**Fall Flex 2020**—Again, advertise Campus POCR group, enroll participants, decide on a meeting schedule for the semester

### Proposed Schedule and Location of Meetings:

POCR group meetings will be held in Zoom (and on-site as well, if that is the faculty preference). Zoom meetings will be recorded for those unable to attend live.

**Late August 2020**—POCR Meeting on Section D, Accessibility. The POCR group will cover Section D first, as it doesn't make sense to align Sections A-C of the Course Design Rubric if the content produced is not accessible. From August onward, we will cover Accessibility as we move through the other sections of the rubric.

**Early September 2020**—POCR Meeting on Section A, Content Presentation, participants prepare examples for Section A

**Mid-September 2020**—POCR group discusses, creates, and uploads examples of alignment for Section A

**Early October 2020**—POCR Meeting on Section B, Interaction, participants prepare examples for Section B

**Mid-October 2020**—POCR group discusses, creates, and uploads examples of alignment for Section B

**Early November 2020**—POCR Meeting on Section C, Interaction, participants prepare examples for Section C

**Mid November 2020**--POCR group discusses, creates, and uploads examples of alignment for Section C

**Late November 2020**—Summary meeting on all sections, opportunities to answer any questions moving forward

**May 2021**--Completion of final report for sabbatical project, the Canvas course of POCR resources that was created, and all video archives of sessions

**Onward and Dissemination of the Project**—This is not a project that needs to end with the end of the sabbatical leave. All parties involved in distance education can discuss the future of the POCR group and ways to create sustainability for the future. It should also be noted that this project is not confined to helping only distance education instructors. In my personal experience, once I made changes to align my online course, I wanted to make many of those same changes to Canvas shells for content in my face-to-face courses. Therefore, any instructor that uses Canvas any capacity can benefit. As for

dissemination of the project, there are many ways that this group can continue. First, at the end of the project there will be a Canvas course for faculty members that will contain explanations of the rubric and examples of how to align to the different parts of the rubric. This will be a valuable resource that will be available to all faculty members. There may be ways that I can stay on in some form as a facilitator of the POQR group, but again I would want to work in coordination with all parties involved in distance education on campus.

### Reasonable Distribution of Sabbatical Leaves Among Departments and Divisions

The last faculty member to take a sabbatical leave from the Life and Health Sciences Division was Audrey Chen in the Spring of 2019. The last faculty member from the Anthropology Program to take a sabbatical leave was John Baker in approximately 2006. Therefore, it has been at least 13 years since anyone in the Anthropology Program has taken a sabbatical leave.

### Rachel Messinger's Service to the College and District

District Distance Education Advisory Committee (DDEAC) Fall 2018-present (Co-Chair for 2018-2019)

Distance Education Standing Committee, 2015-present (Faculty Co-Chair for 2017-2019)

Instructional Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC), 2017-2019

Faculty Co-Chair, Tenure Review Committee of Anthropology candidate, 2014-2018

Outside the Discipline/Division Faculty Member, Tenure Review Committee of Sociology candidate, 2017-2018

AFT Full-Time Vice President, Fall 2012-Fall 2016

Student Success and Equity Committee, 2015-2017

Professional Development Committee, 2011-2015

Faculty Co-Chair, "Year of," 2010-2011 <https://www.moorparkcollege.edu/community/the-year-of/year-of-the-economy>

Participant, Faculty Inquiry Group on Reading Comprehension and Writing Across the Curriculum, 2009-2010

Campus Environment Committee, 2009-2010

Several full-time and part-time hiring committees over the years (currently serving on a full-time hiring committee)

### Other Service

California Virtual Campus-Online Education Initiative Common Course Management System (CCMS) Committee, September 2019-present

Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education, Board of Review Public Member, July 2017-July 2019

I would like to thank the Sabbatical Leave Committee and all other parties involved for their time and consideration of this application.



Letter of Support

Rachel Messinger

Discipline: Anthropology

Dear Reviewing Committee:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support on behalf of Rachel Messinger who is applying for sabbatical for 2020. I have come to know Rachel in her capacity with Distance Education and we have worked extensively together over the past year. In my understanding, Rachel would like to take the sabbatical time to create, design, and foster the local Moorpark College Peer Online Course Review (POCR) group. This is a critical, vital, and necessary step for Moorpark College to take within the Distance Education.

Since Moorpark joined the CVC-OEI consortium, it has been our goal to not only increase online course offerings but to also make these courses aligned with the CVC-OEI rubric. In doing so, the courses would be available on the Finish Faster Exchange which allows students to cross-enroll in other courses from other campuses if they are approved. Rachel's role in facilitating this is essential. Currently we have faculty that are going through the reviewer training process and we are in the midst of a grant with the CVC-OEI which requires CTE courses to go through the alignment process. After this grant is completed in Spring 2020, should Rachel's sabbatical be approved, the local POCR team will be vital in ensuring that the progress made during the time of the grant continues even after its completion.

If Moorpark College establishes and facilitates course alignment with the POCR team, not only will Moorpark College become POCR-certified but we will also serve as a best practices resources for student-centered learning. Rachel is more than qualified to take on this project. Her role as Distance Education Committee's co-chair, a faculty member that is going through the review process, and her work with the District Distance Education Advisory Committee has prepared her for this oncoming venture for which she has my full support as Distance Education Coordinator.

Sincerely,

Anasheh Gharabighi

Distance Education Coordinator, Moorpark College

Assistant Professor, Communication Studies