Sabbatical Proposal for Spring 2018
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<u>Introduction</u>

In spring 2010 I was granted a sabbatical leave to develop a website for articulation. The website went live in fall 2010 and is being used by our counselors and students daily across the district. The website has been a great resource for our department, college, and district and can be viewed at http://www.moorparkcollege.edu/departments/student-services/articulation-office.

With the success of the articulation website, I would like to continue to support our counselors with their daily duties by creating two online transcript evaluation forms and developing a computer database where the department can store comparable courses from external transcripts (non-VCCCD) that have been evaluated. The evaluation forms and database will help streamline our process of transcript evaluation.

<u>Current Status, Perceived Needs and Proposal</u>

The counseling department currently does not have a formal process for which students can initiate or request a review of their prior college coursework completed from another college(s). Our current process includes asking the student, when they schedule a counseling appointment if they have completed coursework from another college(s). If they do then we request (verbally) that they either send them in prior to or bring them in when they have the appointment. Some students will remember to have them sent in prior to the meeting or at least bring with them to the appointment, others will forget. For the students who forgot, they would have to schedule another counseling appointment since it's futile to provide a comprehensive student education plan (SEP) without having all of their transcripts available.

Every day, counselors spend a good amount of time in their appointments and on express counseling evaluating students' transcripts from VCCCD (Ventura County Community College District) and non-VCCCD. Transcripts from VCCCD are often easier to work with as the comparable courses have already been reviewed, identified, and approved by our discipline faculty across the district through the project known as the "VCCCD List of Comparable Courses" and the information is stored in our Banner system. But for coursework completed from other colleges, we do not have a department rubric or guidelines for how these external transcripts should be evaluated. Some evaluations are done with the course title and a brief course description from the institution's catalog, others are reviewed using the course outline and/or syllabus. Yet, others are forwarded to the discipline faculty for further review. This currently process is time consuming, inconsistent and subjective, which can create variable results. To ensure accurate review and consistent result of courses taken outside of our district, there needs to be a department's rubric with clear instructions and guidelines.

As noted in previous paragraph, VCCCD comparable courses are stored in Banner but non-VCCCD comparable courses, once evaluated are not being saved or store anywhere. In other words, we currently do not have a course-based data system where we can store comparable courses coming from other colleges. Our current process uses GradeFirst, a student- and web-based advisement system where counselors make notes of the comparable courses after an evaluation has been done for a particular student. GradeFirst is student-based and in my opinion,

this is not the most efficient way to track and store course comparable as the same course taken by a different student could be evaluated by a different counselor(s) with possible different results.

Based on the needs stated above, I'm proposing the following projects for my sabbatical leave for Spring 2018:

1. Develop the "External Transcript Evaluation Request Form" which will be initiated and completed by students who have prior college coursework when they apply to our college. The form will have clear instructions of the step-by-step process, Board policy of the types of courses that our district accept, and course data information to help identify how the courses will be used to meet the student's educational goals (general education, major and/or elective units for local and or transfer requirements). The form will make clear of the student's intent of how they would like their prior college coursework to be used while attending our college.

2. Develop the "External Transcript Evaluation Form" which will be an in-house form to be used by our counselors when evaluating external transcripts to determine comparable courses which can be applied to meet local program and/or transfer requirements. Like the form for our students, this form will also provide the step-by-step instructions for our counseling staff and will include the criteria and guidelines set by our district, the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) in determining if a course is appropriate for general education, major and/or electives.

3. Develop a homegrown computer database where our Counseling faculty and staff can store these comparable courses once they have been evaluated by our counselors. The key elements and various components of the database will depend on the results of my research from other colleges that have similar databases.

Value of project to all students

A lot of our students are multi-campus attendees, they come to us with coursework completed at another college or colleges. Our current process of verbally asking them to make sure that we have their external transcripts on file or remembering to bring them in for the appointment is not the most reliable way as students will often forget. The "External Transcript Evaluation Request Form" will allow the students to initiate, online, the request to have their outside transcripts evaluated prior to meeting with a counselor so that during the first counseling appointment, the students will know exactly how their previous coursework will be applied (either to meet general education, major, area of emphasis, and/or electives for an associate degree, certificate of achievement, proficiency award, and/or transfer requirements). They will have a clear, accurate, and comprehensive student educational plan which will ensure on time graduation or transfer, or both.

Value to the district

It is the Ventura County Community College District's mission to provide "…students, in its diverse community, with access to a comprehensive quality education opportunities that support student learning and student success." My proposal of the development of the two external transcript evaluation forms and the database align very well with our district's mission stated above as it will provide our college and district a means to ensure that all students will receive a

fair, accurate, consistent, and comprehensive coursework evaluation which will lead to their success in obtaining their education goal(s).

Value to the college and department

The evaluation forms will help streamline the evaluation process and assist the department in maintaining its commitment in providing efficient and high quality services. The forms will contain the department's rubric to ensure integrity of the transcript review process since the evaluation will be done following the same set of policy and standards. Having the rubric will also help the counselors develop a sense of competency as they will know exactly what to look for and how a comparable course will be applied.

The computer database will provide the department with a well-organized and effective way of storing comparable courses and will help the college and district save money as it will eliminate the duplicate work by multiple counselors and will also help reduce the multiple course substitution petitions going to our discipline faculty for review.

The database will be accessible during the counseling appointment, which means the counselor will spend less time determining comparable courses and more time conducting academic and personal counseling, the skills to which they were trained to do as counselors. Transcript evaluation in itself is not the most effective use of a counselor's training and expertise.

I have spoken to both Traci Allen (department chair) and Howard Davis (dean of our department) of my sabbatical proposal and they are both very supportive and hopeful as they see the potential value and use of the forms and the database will have for our department. The department's rubric will help define our process which will yield more consistent results and therefore assist our department to be more effective and efficient.

Value to my own professional development

As an Articulation Officer, one of my roles is to be a resource for our faculty so it's not unusual for me to receive multiple phone calls or emails weekly with requests to help determine and identify how a course could be used. Most of the time, I'm available and more than happy to assist. However, there are times when I'm not available (e.g., in a meeting, at a conference, or working on a time sensitive project). Having the rubric and database will allow the counselors a place to start their evaluation process by checking to see if an evaluation has been done with a particular course before calling or emailing me for help. This will reduce the volume of calls or emails that I will receive, allowing me more time to do my work more efficiently.

The rubric will ensure the transfer institutions that our evaluation process was done with integrity and that our students are well-prepared and ready for their upper-division coursework.

Lastly, having the evaluation forms and database will give me a personal satisfaction and accomplishment that I have a direct positive impact in the department being more efficient while providing high quality counseling services.

Proposal Time Line

My sabbatical proposal is for the Spring 2018 and below are the time line:

January
- Identify and research two or three homegrown transcript databases from different California Community Colleges.
- Survey and meet with a few California Community College articulation officers to learn of their campus evaluation process of external transcripts.
- Conduct a survey of MC counseling faculty to find out the needs and wishes of the database and evaluation forms. What information would we need and what would be most helpful to us?

February
- From the survey and research of the other colleges' databases, identify the key components of the database needed for Moorpark (for example, Name of the College, Course ID, Title, Units, MC comparable course, etc…)
- Begin the design and development of the database – incorporating the data elements found from counseling survey and researched institutions.
- Work on the draft of the External Transcript Evaluation Request Form for the students and the in-house of External Transcript Evaluation Form for the counselors. Incorporate best practices found and the needs and requests of the department in the development of these forms.

March
- Finalize the draft of evaluation forms
- Beta test the computer database.
- Identify and select at least 2 counselors and have them test the database and try out the evaluation forms.

April
- Revise the evaluation forms and database, if needed, to ensure it meets the department's requests.
- Finalize the evaluation forms and database

May
- Present the evaluation forms and the database to counselors at a department meeting or in-service and train faculty on the appropriate use of the database.
- Once the department agree that the forms and database are ready for use, I will work with the appropriate people (e.g. IT department) to upload the database to an existing and available campus computer program (e.g. mcfiles) and link the forms to the application process) so that the information will be accessible for our students, counselors and anyone else that might find the information useful (Admission and Records).
- I'm always more than happy to share the information with our sister campuses as we are here to serve the students of VCCCD and not just Moorpark. And if my colleagues have the desire to use the database, I'd be more than willing to share and train them.

August
- Provide written summary of sabbatical project to the district upon my return.
- It's my desire that the information from this database will be of use when our district is ready to have them in the Banner system.