

## **Ventura College Sabbatical Leave Proposal**

**Research and Program Modification Project for Spring 2011**

**Submitted by Art Sandford,**

**Coordinator, Off-Campus Programs**

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**Instructor Sabbatical Leave Status:** Full-time hire date – August, 1991. Number of sabbaticals during 19 years as a full-time faculty member – 0.

### **Background for Project:**

Since becoming Coordinator of Off-Campus Programs at VC's East Campus in March 2006, I have become increasingly involved in and familiar with our college's Allied Health training programs. The term "Allied Health" typically refers to vocational training programs in the medical field that do not require a bachelor's or an advanced degree. Typical Allied Health programs offered at community colleges around the country include: dental assistant, dental hygienist, massage therapist, medical assistant, medical billing/coding, medical imaging, medical transcription, pharmacy technician, phlebotomist and respiratory therapist.

At Ventura College we offer the following programs and courses that can be considered as part of the Allied Health field: Medical Assistant (A.S. Degree and Certificate of Achievement); Medical Transcription and Medical Terminology (Proficiency Award in Medical Transcription); and Phlebotomy (Instructor Certification of Student having passed required coursework and having completed required clinical practice.)

The Medical Assistant program prepares students to work in physicians' offices either in the front office (which handles appointments, billing and insurance coding) or back office (which deals with hands-on work with patients such as taking vital signs, administering medications, etc.). The East Campus offers BUS V97 Multi-Skilled Medical Assistant 14-unit program that includes both front and back office procedures. The college also has an A.S. Degree and Certificate of Achievement for Medical Assistant. At the East Campus we offer two additional 3-unit medical assisting courses that are applicable to the A.S. Degree in Medical Assisting. Those courses are BUS V28A Medical Procedures: Front Office and BUS V28B Medical Procedures: Back Office.

The Phlebotomy training program certifies that students are prepared to sit for the State of California Phlebotomy Technician I exam. Phlebotomists are typically employed by diagnostic laboratories and hospitals. They perform venal blood draws and capillary sticks to obtain blood

for medical diagnostic purposes. This program is only offered at the East Campus. The Phlebotomy Training Program consists of BUS V23 Basic Phlebotomy, BUS V24 Advanced Phlebotomy and BUS V95 Business Internship. This latter course is for phlebotomist trainees to go out to a clinical site, under supervision, and perform their required blood draws.

**Employment Situation:**

The California Employment Development Department lists Allied Health jobs as having the fastest job growth (% change) in Ventura County (EDD, Ventura County Profile, February 2009). Given the demographics of this area with aging Baby Boomers approaching retirement age, not only does the field have replacement needs as a result of these retirements, but the number of people needing the services of Allied Health professionals is expected to increase substantially.

Specifically, EDD projects the following demand for the following occupations in Ventura County over the period 2006-2016:

Medical Assistants: 500 new job openings projected. 27.2% increase.

Phlebotomist: 50 new job openings projected. 10.4% increase. However this number is misleading, as many other Allied Health employers (such as physician's offices and hospitals) now require or prefer their staff to possess the Phlebotomy certification. Recent Statewide certification requirements have also increased the demand for people with this certification.

**Current VC Situation:**

Recently the college was awarded a \$256,000 grant from January 2009 to December 2011 to increase the number of enrollments in Allied Health courses; I am the project director for that grant. With these grant funds we have been able to add additional sections of medical office assistant (front and back office) classes as well as additional basic and advanced phlebotomy classes. We have also partnered with Community Education to offer a series of not-for-credit "Tools for Caregivers" workshops both at the East Campus and main campus. Overall, Allied Health courses constitute a significant portion of our course offerings at East Campus and they provide valuable job training skills to close to 200 students every year.

As was described above, these Allied Health courses offered at the East Campus are located in the Business department. (Basic Phlebotomy, for example, is BUS V23.) Recently the college hired a full-time faculty member who does teach in this area (Deborah Newcomb, who teaches front office and medical terminology.) Her hiring is fortunate since for many years there was no full-time faculty member teaching or writing curriculum for any Allied Health courses and, as a result, I have been called upon to become involved in curricular, state regulatory compliance, and staffing decisions, even though my background is in languages and second language instruction. I am more than happy to continue my involvement in these "orphan" programs as they are essential to serving the training needs of students at the East Campus; however I have

become aware of the need to possibly re-work and re-shape our Allied Health programs in order to make them into a more coherent, cohesive and student-friendly operation.

**Purpose of Sabbatical Leave:**

The purpose of this proposed one-semester sabbatical leave is work with faculty teaching in the Allied Health field and in the Nursing Department to gather information from this college and other community colleges specific to their Allied Health programs. The idea is gain an understanding of "best practices" in this field in the areas of curriculum design, organizational structures and program offerings and configurations. The outcome of this project would be a series of recommendations for program changes and possible additions that could enhance these programs and increase the possibility that more students would earn Proficiency Awards, Certificates of Achievement and Associate's Degrees in these and related fields. These changes, in turn, would lead to greater employment opportunities for our students.

**Components of the Project:**

**1. Gathering Data**

I propose to research via the Internet at least 10 community colleges and their Allied Health programs. I will be looking for such things as courses and programs of study, degree or certificate programs, credit programs versus non-credit programs, organizational structures, and curricula. Secondly, I will visit at least three colleges and meet with key faculty and administrators in their Allied Health programs to get their perspectives on the positives and negatives of their own programs. I will also attend at least one conference that focuses on Allied Health career preparation at community colleges in order to become better informed on current trends in the field of Allied Health education.

**2. Identifying "Best Practices"**

I will write a summary of the findings my data gathering, paying particular attention to what appear to be commonalities that are generally considered conducive to successful Allied Health programs. I will compare different programs in terms of units, whether they offer an Associate's Degree or some sort of certificate, and especially how the programs are structured regarding required courses, sequences of courses, etc. I will also note how Allied Health courses fit into the college's organizational structure. For example, are Allied Health programs housed in the nursing department? Do they have their own department? What specific training programs are offered in each program and are there clear "career ladders" within the different programs?

### 3. Recommendations

The final piece of the puzzle will be to write a series of recommendations for program and other changes to our college's Allied Health program, based on the data I have gathered and analyzed. These recommendations will be, of course, only recommendations; I am not a faculty member in this area and I can only offer suggestions. However, should the faculty in these disciplines be amenable to my recommendations, I will offer to assist in any curriculum development or modifications that might meet with their approval. Again, my only purpose is assist in making our Allied Health programs as coherent, cohesive and student-friendly as possible both for students at the East Campus as well as the college as a whole. My goal is to have more Ventura College students complete Allied Health courses of study and succeed in earning proficiency awards, certificates of achievement and associate's degrees.