

Ventura College Sabbatical Leave Proposal

Submitted by

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I respectfully request a one semester Sabbatical leave to be taken in the Spring semester of 2020. I plan to use this time to develop a series of Non Credit classes to address the needs of our students that will have difficulty if placed into transferable level math. This is my 28th year as a full time faculty member at Ventura College and I've had only one sabbatical back in 2005.

Background

When I took my last sabbatical 13 years ago, only between 4% and 8% of students taking the Math assessment test qualified for transferable Math courses. Our department took steps to move away from relying so heavily on assessment test and approved multiple measures as a means of placing students higher. In fall of 2017, 35 % of our first time students placed in transferable level math. Then on October 13 2017, the Governor signed AB 705 that requires that a community college district or college maximize the probability that a student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and math within a one-year timeframe. The recommendation is that we use high school coursework, high school grades, and high school grade point average as our guide when placing students. This is intended to reduce the number of exit points and increase student success. Many of our students however, are not ready for transferable level math. We need to find a way to get them ready while keeping in compliance with the law and without negatively impacting students' financial aid. We now have a responsibility to create new noncredit courses to meet student's needs around developmental education. We can also use noncredit courses as prerequisites or corequisites to credit courses in the math that support students to complete the transfer courses within the one-year time frame required by the law. In addition to the requisite models, noncredit classes can also be used as support classes to help students tackle the more strident coursework they might face when our math department redesigns our placement practices to comply with AB 705.

Moreover, if we package these noncredit courses as Career Development and College Preparation (CDCP) certificates so that they qualify for the CDCP apportionment rate, this will make them cost-effective for our college.

Goal

My goal is to create a series of DE noncredit math classes and develop all of the materials for the courses so that there would be no additional work required for any teacher who teaches it. The students will earn certificates once they have completed a specified number of topics, which will signify that they have the basic knowledge required for success in the next level.

I've done some preliminary research on how other colleges handle noncredit and I plan to spend some more time looking at best practices. I will examine which programs are the most successful and why. I will also consider the recommendations of the California Community Colleges Math and Quantitative Reasoning Taskforce that was developed by ASCCC and the California Mathematics Council of Community Colleges to address math and quantitative reasoning education in the California community colleges for both STEM and non-STEM majors especially in response to the requirements of AB 705.

Additionally, I will research and incorporate best practices around online collaboration and design these courses with these practices in mind. I envision these classes as hybrid courses. I'll include activities for building community, engaging students and giving students opportunities to collaborate on rich tasks that build on what they know while exploring deeper for a more lasting knowledge base. Research has shown that this way of learning mathematics supports equity and opens up opportunities for nontraditional learners. Moreover, engaging in these types of activities helps to promote a more enduring understanding of mathematics. I have discussed my project with Sharon Oxford to gain some insight into the amount of time typically needed to set up a course in Canvas.

Time line and method

Weeks 1-4: Further research best practices, determine and design the best format for our students. Start to write the curriculum and learn how to enter into our new Course leaf system. Talk with counselors and others about the best way set up the courses so that it can serve as both

support classes, to supplement students who get into trouble in the transferable class, and as prerequisite for other students.

Weeks 5-11: Write and gather all material for first half of the courses including but not limited to worksheets, activities, projects, videos on metacognition in math, growth mindset and useful mathematical habits of mind. I will set up all these on Canvas for anyone who teaches the class.

Weeks 12-16: Write and gather all material for second half of the courses including but not limited to worksheets, activities, projects, videos on metacognition in math, growth mindset and useful mathematical habits of mind. I will set up all these on Canvas for anyone who teaches the class.

Value to Self

My goal as a teacher is always to help ALL students succeed in math. I'm excited about all the changes that will provide ways to increase our success rates. I do have concerns, however, that all the quick reactions to legislation could actually hurt several of our students. I see this project as an attempt to address the needs of these students that could be overlooked with broad stroke changes while at the same time helping ALL students. This will be of great value to me.

Value to Students

All Students will benefit from having a noncredit option for their developmental math. For most students, having to go through a series of math classes not only astronomically reduces their chance of success, but also negatively impacts their financial aid, hurts their GPA, discourages them from continuing in math, leads to procrastination in taking their math and sometimes even keeps them from accomplishing their goals altogether. My plan is to have a well-designed noncredit option that will address their fear of mathematics, their study skills, and their mindset as well as give them an enduring understanding of the fundamental mathematical knowledge that they need to be successful going forward.

Value to the District

In light of the new student centered Budget Allocation Model, this project will be a win-win for the district and Ventura College. Offering noncredit curriculum in situations where it is best for students will be beneficial to the district since noncredit offerings no longer sacrifices apportionment funding but instead equalizes funding for career development and college preparation (CDCP). Additionally, helping students be more successful in math would potentially help with most of the student's success metrics that factor into our current funding model.

Report Back

I plan to have my work available to share with all faculty in the math department and any other departments interested in DE noncredit. I will be available to share during flex times if there is and interest.