

A Sabbatical Proposal

by

Joanna M. Miller,

Journalism Faculty

Student News Media Adviser

Digital and Media Arts Department Chair

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Moorpark College

1. Introduction: Current state and need for innovation

The news and information industry is necessarily continuously changing and adapting to keep pace with rapidly morphing technological advancements and resulting reader/user consumption habits. Current news media sites and organizations seek and employ reporters who not only are proficient in fundamentals of journalistic reporting and writing, but who additionally are comfortable with journalistic use of video, information graphics, reader interaction through social media, instant updates through text and photo (Environmental Scans from JOUR Program Plan 2012).

While this faculty member has worked to stay current in digital journalism through ongoing online seminars (Poynter.org, 2010, 2011, 2012) as well as a seven-day KDMC Multimedia Institute (Knight Digital Media Center, UC Berkeley, 2005), the faculty seeks to update skills and knowledge through one of the nation's preeminent institutions at Poynter Institute. The weeklong onsite seminar, to be followed with a month-long self-directed online skills workshop, will provide industry currency. That, in addition to a three-day workshop with faculty at a community college that has already updated and changed platforms for their student news online website, will provide the faculty with the learning foundation needed to update curricula, syllabi, and student learning. Outcomes will include enhanced student learning through the increased use of digital stories in the Student News Media courses, JOUR 10A, 10B and 10C.

2. Background: Changes and Challenges at Moorpark College

The StudentVoiceOnline.com, the current student news media at Moorpark College, has weathered a series of substantial changes over the last seven years. Prior to Fall 2005, Moorpark College had its own student newspaper. The paper was published weekly or bi-weekly schedules depending on the semester. At that time, the paper focused primarily on the Moorpark College community. In the Fall 2005 semester, the VC Community College District Board of Trustees consolidated the journalism programs at Ventura and Oxnard colleges into the Moorpark program. The program published a newspaper that covered events at each campus and accommodated students at each campus via teleconference. Six years later, in Fall 2011, the district eliminated funding for the districtwide print edition of the student newspaper. Information was published on a website. News was still gathered from each of the three campuses. The following semester, the journalism program was refocused to serve only Moorpark College, without a regular print edition. The staff last spring did produce two print editions. In the current semester, students have worked to transition to a new, more interactive website at StudentVoiceOnline.com. To promote the site, the program has started a weekly promotional sheet, essentially a 200-circulation flier that is posted around campus. The flier includes photos, headlines and summary paragraphs of news articles that are featured online. Two full-sized, newspaper print editions are planned for late in the semester.

3. The Project

The proposed project includes three objectives, three educational components and three areas of benefits to students and project outcome implementation.

Project Objectives	Means to Achieve Objective	Timeline
1. Expand and update faculty currency in industry use of digital media for the web in news organizations	<p>Educational Component: Poynter Institute, St. Petersburg, Fla. 9/30/2013 to 10/2/2013 Seminar Title: "Multimedia for Breaking News and Projects"</p> <p>Application/Implementation of content Update syllabus and curricula to reflect greater emphasis on digital stories and digital enhancements to text stories in Student News Media courses.</p>	Attend Poynter seminar: 9/30/13 - 10/2/13. Syllabus/ Curricula revision 10/15/13
2. Expand and update specific faculty skills in digital reporting and producing for the web in news organizations	<p>Educational Component: Poynter Institute, Self-Directed: Reporting, Writing for TV and the Web: Aim for the Heart</p> <p>Application/Implementation of content: Update syllabus/curricula to reset student learning outcomes to achieve enhanced StudentVoiceOnline.com site with increased student use of digital journalistic storytelling to make more professional and appealing to visitors</p>	Seminar 10/5/13 – 10/25/13 Updates by 10/30/13
3. Expand and update faculty knowledge in establishing new StudentVoiceOnline.com digital platform	<p>Educational Component: Attend personal seminar/workshop with faculty at El Camino College to understand multiple components in moving current web platform from outdated College Publisher system to more current and more user-friendly and interactive Word Press platform.</p> <p>Application/Implementation of content: Oversee migration of StudentVoiceOnline.com from College Publisher to a Word Press-based publication to modernize look, user interaction and feel of environment.</p>	Instructional workshop 8/15/13 to 9/15/13, paperwork by 9/30/13 Set launch for 11/15/13

4. Value to Students

Upon return, the applicant will implement new and updated classroom teaching techniques, and update syllabus and curriculum.

The production of news follows a three-part template. Reporters gather information from a variety of sources. Those sources include interviews, research and observation. The gathered information is then distilled. Using news values based on the reporter's audience, the reporter sorts through the information, weighs the value of various elements and organizes it for the third step. That final part is presentation. In the traditional news-delivery days of the mid-20th Century, that involved writing a story on deadline for a newspaper.

In today's news world, the first two steps have remained fairly consistent. Gathering and distilling information remains constant. The world of presentation, though, has broadened to include multimedia elements that today create easy and instant links to an audience.

The updated training contained in this sabbatical proposal will enhance the news presentation training available to students in the Moorpark College journalism program. They will have the advantage of insight into the most cutting-edge work being done by news organizations. By incorporating new presentation techniques into the classroom, the program will give the students the type of practical experience needed to more easily win internships in the profession.

In terms of curriculum development, this sabbatical proposal will provide an opportunity to review the existing Student News Media courses at Moorpark College in respect to the latest industry trends. Needed adjustments, if found, will be immediately incorporated into classroom teaching, curriculum and program planning.

5. Value to College/District

This project immediately and positively impacts the college through its classroom teaching, curriculum and a more current and interactive student news website . While the role of newspapers has shifted in our community, as seen even by the changes within the programs offered by Moorpark College and the VCCCD, the role of journalism remains vital to our nation's freedoms. Journalists monitor how we govern ourselves and how we treat the weakest and the most powerful among us. The biggest way we have changed is in how we deliver news to our communities.

For Moorpark College, this sabbatical proposal will give us continued and expanded relevance in the delivery of news. Our program has placed journalists at news organizations and in master's programs throughout the state and nation (JOUR Program Plan environmental scans, 2012). A sharpened relevance with attention to the latest news-delivery trends will help the college continue to deliver students ready to fill jobs in the industry. This will help keep our campus at the forefront of the effort to deliver relevant training. In addition, it will help fulfill our college and district mission to provide students with the broad knowledge of campus and community as well as a strong sense of the need for civic engagement.

6. Value to Faculty:

Once we faculty of Career/Technical Programs leave industry work and join the academy, we as CTE faculty must work diligently to not only develop our skills and knowledge of pedagogy so we know how to teach, but we also must continuously refresh our knowledge and skills to anticipate the needs of the changing industry workplace. In the dynamic field of Journalism, which is both a transfer and a CTE program, we must strive to stay current and even in front of the needs of industry and four-year transfer institutions. This Sabbatical Project will enhance, update and advance this faculty's knowledge and skills.

6. Conclusion

Each of the three objectives listed above dovetails with the others to provide a footing to explore relevant and new territories for Moorpark College journalism students. Expanded digital media experience will translate into more vibrant news presentation for the Student Voice website. Advances in digital news production will make students more valuable potential contributors in today's news job market. Both of these will have a chance to blossom on a revamped, online news platform that allows students to merge the traditional skills of news gathering and distillation with the changing world of online presentation.

This sabbatical will improve student outcomes in the Journalism Program at Moorpark College, enhance the college's position as a timely and essential center for journalism training and will expand this faculty member's depth in an expanding area of her expertise.

Attachments:

A. What is the Poynter Institute?

Poynter is a school that exists to ensure that our communities have access to excellent journalism—the kind of journalism that enables us to participate fully and effectively in our democracy.

To that end, we teach those who manage, edit, produce, program, report, write, blog, photograph and design, whether they belong to news organizations or work as independent entrepreneurs. We teach those who teach, as well as students in middle school, high school and college—the journalists of tomorrow. And we teach members of the public, helping them better understand how journalism is produced and how to tell for themselves whether it's credible.

We teach online, allowing those in search of training to choose from hundreds of self-directed courses, online group seminars, Webinars, online chats, podcasts and video tutorials.

We teach management, ethical decision-making and the power of diversity; we teach editing, writing, reporting and new media skills; we teach those in broadcast, print and the Web; we teach those trying to remake their organizations and those trying to remake their journalistic skills set.

Mission Statement

The Poynter Institute is a school dedicated to teaching and inspiring journalists and media leaders. It promotes excellence and integrity in the practice of craft and in the practical leadership of successful businesses. It stands for a journalism that informs citizens and enlightens public discourse. It carries forward Nelson Poynter's belief in the value of independent journalism in the public interest.

B. Multimedia for Breaking News and Projects (B401-13)

Sep 30, 2013 - Oct 02, 2013

Do you struggle with the best way to cover breaking news in multiple formats, or enhance your major projects? As newsrooms have changed and evolved the last few years, the emphasis on multimedia has been lost at the very time when audience demand for audio, video, maps and animation has never been higher. If you're ready to retool your newsroom and dive in to covering spot news and augmenting projects with multimedia, we can help.

Resources are scarce, but that doesn't mean you can't create great multimedia elements that inform, delight and engage your audience. You'll learn how to balance demands of time and effort for results, how to present multimedia in ways that help improve your traffic, and how to use simple tools that help you tell great stories.

We'll talk about what effective video stories can be, when a photo gallery works best, how to cover breaking news stories with engaging elements and how to add depth to the great larger packages and projects. And we'll show you some of the newest tools that can make getting multimedia online easy, even without a huge staff.

This is not a software or how-to-use-equipment seminar. Instead, you'll go home with some good strategies to developing skills to cover breaking news, working quickly, as well as managing multiplatform projects.

Since much of implementation will involve teaching others how to effectively use multimedia, we'll take time to show you ways to share what you've learned in your newsroom and help staff take on new skills.

You'll Learn:

- What kinds of stories make great multimedia
- How to effectively use multimedia to cover breaking news
- Which multimedia is most popular with audiences
- How to find and develop multimedia elements in larger projects
- How to plan and organize stories and projects with multimedia elements
- How to create multimedia that works on multiple platforms
- Tools for making multimedia easier and more efficient

Who Will Benefit:

Journalists and editors who create and organize multimedia stories and projects. editors who manage breaking news coverage, and anyone in the newsroom looking for ways to increase multimedia storytelling. Web editors looking for ways to train and inspire their colleagues. Educators who are looking for ways to help their students, and student publications, use multimedia more efficiently will find lots of takeaways to use immediately in the classroom.

Price: \$895.00

C. Poynter Institute Self-Directed Course

Reporting, Writing for TV and the Web: Aim for the Heart

In a **self-directed course**, you can start and stop whenever you like, progressing entirely at your own pace and going back as many times as you want to review the material.

Great stories hang in the viewer's ear and catch the viewer's eye. Great stories aim straight for the viewer's heart. The best news stories don't just inform; they teach, illuminate, and inspire viewers.

In this course, you'll learn how to connect with viewers by telling powerful stories that aim for their hearts.

What Will I Learn:

- The characteristics of stories that engage viewers
- The essentials of video and video techniques
- How words and images work together
- How to use sound to tell a compelling story
- Storytelling techniques to keep your viewers tuned in

Who should take this course:

This course is for TV and multimedia reporters, photojournalists and producers who want to tell powerful stories that engage viewers.

Course Instructor:

Al Tompkins teaches in seminars at Poynter and teaches at workshops and conferences on the road. He has been a presenter at national conventions for IRE, RTDNA, NABJ, NAHJ, AAJA, Unity, NLGJA, PRNDI and NPPA. Since 1998, he has taught seminars and workshops in 41 states and four countries.

Price: \$59.95

D. Palomar College personal workshop with Kate McLaughlin.

Professor McLaughlin and her colleagues at El Camino College have successfully made the transfer from the restrictive College Publisher site to a more modern Word Press site. Professor McLaughlin has agreed to work with Moorpark College faculty over three days next fall that will include a visit to the El Camino College Union, the student newspaper and site at El Camino.