Sabbatical Proposal, 2011-2012

Submitted by Mary Pinto-Casillas

1.   Statement of Purpose

My proposal for a year-long sabbatical is to seek specialized training from telecommunications companies such as Verizon Wireless and AT &T and from social network organizations such as Facebook and Twitter to develop in-depth knowledge and skills in the use of social media applications and tools. By mastering the use of smart phones and social networking sites, I plan to develop a course to supplement the CIS and Computer Applications and Office Technologies' (CAOT—Discipline ID that will take effect Fall 2011) programs at Oxnard College. Should the companies mentioned previously not be interested in providing specialized training, then I would research and learn on my own, or enroll in classes, with the same purpose of developing such a course. Additionally, I would take courses such as in Web design and digital photography to further enhance and supplement my technological skills as these courses and the knowledge gleaned would also complement classes taught in my discipline of CAOT.

2.   Rationale

a.   Professional Development

By taking specialized training and courses, I would develop stronger technological skills which are critically essential and in high demand in our society. There is only so much learning that can be accomplished in a regular academic year with the focus being on instruction and on the administrative and participatory role of being an active full-time faculty member on campus. Faculty greatly benefit from sabbaticals to pursue and focus on specific training for professional development.

b.   Value to Students

A well-versed professor in a variety of technological skills translates to better and more comprehensively trained students. Additionally, I would like to explore and research free or reduced cost online software options for students to reduce their textbook expense. One resource to explore is ThinkFree Office.

c.   Value to Department or Discipline

The development of a social media/tools class would greatly enhance and supplement the programs in CIS and CAOT. The department would be

offering an exciting new course reflective of popular new technology. Keeping up with technology and trends is essential for CIS and CAOT.

    d.   **Value to College and/or District**

Our community demographics include many English language learners. My vision of creating a social media course also includes the offering of the course in English, Spanish language to serve the population who has limited technological and English language skills. In doing so, the College and the District would be offering a wide range of options to community members in the choice of courses and delivery mode.

    e.   **Value to Community**

The local community would be provided with a new course option for becoming proficient users of social media sites and technology tools such as smart phones and the wide-range of applications and features they have to offer. Social media sites can be used for personal, social or for business, marketing purposes.

3.   **Implementation**

    a.   **Implementation Procedure**

During the first semester, I would be writing letters to telecommunications companies presenting my proposal and requesting specialized training to become an "official" trainer, per say. Telecommunications companies could, conceivably, refer customers for training of smart phones and related devices to Oxnard College. If my requests are unsuccessful, then I would seek training on my own and enroll in courses such as in Web design and digital photography at other community colleges and/or take courses online to explore that teaching medium further as I have not taught online courses, yet.

The second semester would be devoted to developing a social media/tools course that would be robust and viable and that, possibly, could be offered with no textbook costs to students. Once the course is developed, it would be presented to Curriculum for approval.

    b.   **Projected Results**

The projected results are that I become proficient at using social media sites and at using Smartphones and related devices. My becoming an "expert" would allow me to develop and teach a new course in social media/tools to supplement the CAOT curriculum.

    c.   **Reporting Methods**

The reporting method would include presenting the new course for approval to the CIS and CAOT Departments and to the Curriculum Committee.

d.   Timeline Estimate

- Fall 2011 semester—seek training; begin, and possibly, complete training.
- Spring 2012 semester—complete training, develop course and present to Dept and Curriculum Committee for approval.
- Fall semester 2012—Offer course immediately upon my return from sabbatical.

4.   Past Contributions

a)   Department/Discipline

I'm currently dept chair for BUS/CIS/CRM/LA/TV. I've always been an active participant in meetings and Dept. decisions. I regularly update and modify the Office Occupations Preparation Program in an effort to offer students a comprehensive entry-level office training program.

b)   College/District

In 2009 I served as Academic Senate Secretary. Back in 1995, I served as Classified Senate Secretary. I've co-chaired a hiring committee and participated as a regular member in other hiring committees. I serve in a couple tenure review committees now. I've been a member of a variety of shared governance committees throughout my career at Oxnard College and I help out as I can. Recent activities include: presenting speaker at the Lecture's Series, being a judge for the Speech Tournament, volunteering for the Youth Conference. Whenever there have been District in-service activities and trainings, I've participated as my teaching schedule has allowed.
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c)   Community

I regularly represent Oxnard College at community events. Just this semester, I've attended the Latino Business Expo, the Latino Music Festival, and Oxnard College's 35th Anniversary Tardeada. These have all been opportunities to network with the community and to identify college supporters and prospective Oxnard College students. Additionally, for the past two years, I have served as an organizing member of the Rebozo

Festival, a group of community leaders who fundraise to provide funds to worthy community organizations in need of financial support.

5.   Scholarly Achievements

My initial hire at Oxnard College was in 1992 as classified staff in the counseling Department. In 1995 I was hired as a full-time tenure track faculty member to teach in the Office Occupations Preparation Program in the Career and Technical Education Division. When I started working at Oxnard College, I was also an enrolled student at this college, but since then, I have not only completed an A.S. and B.S., but also a Master's in Business Organizational Management. Although faculty in occupational disciplines do not require a bachelor's nor master's degree, I felt compelled to reach the master's level to better represent Oxnard College faculty and to be a role model to the students I serve.

6.   Length of Service & Past Sabbaticals Awarded, if any

My service at Oxnard College includes 18 years--since 1992 as classified staff, since 1995 as full-time faculty. I was awarded a sabbatical in 2001-2002 to complete classes for the master's degree.

Addendum to Mary Pinto-Casillas' Sabbatical Proposal

General Comments:

Well-written; complete; follows the outline provided

Thank you to the committee members.

Will this project take a whole year, or can it be accomplished in one semester?

The project may require a full year if I'm successful at securing specialized training from Facebook, Verizon Wireless, and/or training from other sources. I expect training to take place during the first semester, and development of course and approval of course during second semester of sabbatical.

Suggestions:

Rationale Section:

Value to the Community:

Can you also assess whether such new technologies might possibly become obsolete soon and/or might be easy enough for a student to learn on his/her own without the need for a class?

Technologies are constantly changing, but what is current and popular now are the social media sites and the use of smart phones. Courses are meant to be reviewed and updated regularly, anyway, to reflect current trends. Many students learn technology on their own, especially the younger ones. However, many people are intimidated by social media sites and technology tools because of lack of knowledge on their use. I believe that a Social Media and/or a Smart Phone Tools and Applications short-term course would be well- received by a significant number of members of our community.

Implementation Section:

Can you check with companies beforehand to make sure that such programs exist? Can you check with the school/District policy to make sure that all arrangements with private companies are followed appropriately?

The process of checking with companies and checking with the District can take time. My request for a sabbatical is to dedicate the time to do precisely this. Letters and phone calls must be made, with follow-ups and, possibly, traveling to meet key individuals to present my project. Currently, my instructional and dept chair duties limit my availability to do this. The first part of my sabbatical leave would be to

focus on securing the training and secure approval by District, if required, then, immediately proceed with the training and development of my skills.

If the requests for training are unsuccessful, can you identify which specific courses you will take, when, and how they will specifically impact the proposed project and eventually benefit students, dept., college, etc.? (Will those courses be open and available in these economic times?)

If the specialized training with Facebook, Verizon Wireless and/or other companies is not possibly, I would still consider learning all there is to know about these companies and their products on my own to create a short-term course. OR my back-up plan, which is also very important to me, would be to dedicate the time to take a series of courses to enhance my technology related skills and, subsequently, supplement the material in my courses to improve the Office Occupations Preparation Program.

The courses that I would take would be in the area of desktop publishing and Web page design and publishing (Publisher, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Flash). I would take a minimum of two courses per semester for a total of four courses for the year. Additionally, I would study to take the Microsoft certification for Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. I've never taught Access, and have not had the opportunity to use it, so I would take a course or learn it on my own to also attempt the Microsoft certification.

Can you identify any groups/individuals that you might need to work with on our campus in order to bring this project to its successful fruition? Ex. Distance Education Committee; Technology Committee; Instructional Resources Specialist (and support people on campus); Curriculum Committee (Ex. Distance Education Appendix) Possibly arrange a meeting with our campus/District IT personnel to help integrate your work with the D2L online platform currently in use in the District.

If granted the sabbatical, yes, I would discuss my project with Bola King, our instructional technologist to explore ways to bring this project to its successful fruition. The Curriculum Committee would, of course, have to approve the course I design.

Projected Results Section:
Can you be more specific about how this project will benefit students, department, and college?

The benefits to students would be the availability of a new, innovative course relevant to today's digital era, of particular interest to those with no or limited technology skills. I would want to offer the course in bilingual mode: English/Spanish as well. The department would benefit in that we would have a course with the potential of attracting onto our campus the limited English speakers and the older, more mature individuals of our community.

Can you be more specific about the type of curriculum that might be developed? Number-of-unit sections (1/2—unit? 3 units?)? Number of students affected? Certain majors affected more than others? Meeting a need on this campus?

I would develop a short-term course worth ½ to 1 unit. It could be offered through Community Services if OC's budget does not allow for an additional course in the CIS department. The material could also be presented as a workshop for the OC's Lecture Series.

General Comments:

Will this project take an entire year? If so, is there a way to add even more specifics to it? Ex. Share techniques with other faculty?; Explore the new Learning Resources Center (under construction) to help students take better advantage of the course and resources available on campus?, etc.

Yes, the project can take the entire year. I prefer a year sabbatical to focus on the project and learn the course content well and to dedicated adequate time to the development of a course; however, I would accept a semester sabbatical and could make it work.

Number the pages on the proposal.

Done.