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Visual and Performing Arts
Department Liberal Studies Division
Fall and Spring, 2023-24

Project Description:

This sabbatical will focus on creating a plan to teach more students about the Communication major and the broad career path that can be built with a degree in Communication. When I realized I wanted to become a Communication major, I was learning more than just public speaking- I was learning about the influence of message interpretation in interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, argumentation and rhetorical analysis. I felt empowered with my new skills. Today, I am teaching students how to develop a clear and powerful voice in speaking and communication during a time when they may feel powerless, uncertain, and anxious. This has become very meaningful work for me.

In 2022, with the recent promotion of Dr. Amy Edwards former Chair of the VPA Department and former Communication Discipline lead, I am now the discipline lead and am responsible for growing our majors and expanding our department. Pre-quarantine, we met with the CSU Channel Islands Communication Department to close gaps and create a pathway for major students to transfer. In the last 6 years at Oxnard College, we have discussed how to brand our college. We have worked to build our relationships in the community, we have created clear pathways and relaunched our websites. I think the next level will be department and discipline specific in working to educate our students about our majors. In 2024, our funding formula at California Community colleges will rely more heavily on the number of majors and transfers. This is the perfect time to bridge communication, empowerment, and transfer success.

Concurrently, I am the incoming Chair of the Community College Interest Group for our regional professional organization, the Western States Communication Association (WSCA) which meets every February. In this position, I can hold space for this conversation at our convention with faculty from nearby states to identify specific strategies used to grow and support our majors at community colleges. I am also a member of the Publications Committee for WSCA which has close ties to our national organization, the National Communication Association (NCA) which meets every November. In leadership positions at both of these conventions, I will have access to Communication faculty at 4-year and 2-year institutions at a time when we are evaluating how to reengage students. Through roundtable discussions at these conventions, and interviews with faculty, I will investigate how other communication departments increase and support their communication majors through graduation. Then I will use this data to create a plan for the Communication Studies Discipline at Oxnard College to use to increase our majors. Hopefully this can be a plan that can be modeled by other small disciplines at Oxnard College.

Your background as it relates to the project and to your role at Oxnard College:

I was hired by Oxnard College full-time in the Spring of 2017. In the last 5 years I have participated in many campus groups including:

- Participatory Governance,
- Writing Program Review,
- Senate Executive Committee,

With the recent promotion of Dr. Amy Edwards, I am now the discipline lead responsible for:

- the arrangement of our course offerings,
- supporting 5 adjunct faculty members,
- writing program review, and
- growing our communication majors.

I have also been active in professional organizations including the Western States Communication Association (WSCA) and the National Communication Association (NCA) which both meet yearly.

In WSCA, I am active in the Community College Interest Group:

- presenting at conventions,
- elected to Communications Director
- elected Vice Chair, and
- elected incoming Chair

Also in WSCA, I am on the Publications Committee where we:

- Recruit for an editor for the family of journals including the Western Journal of Communication and Communication Reports and
- Build relationships with National Communication Association (NCA)

Project Objectives:

To create a plan to increase our Communication major transfers in the Communication Studies Discipline at Oxnard College by collecting roundtable discussion data and interview data with Communication faculty from colleges in the state and local region.

Project Methodology:

- Attend national and regional discipline conventions (November and February).
- Submit and facilitate roundtable discussions about increasing communication majors at both conventions.
- Conduct in-person and zoom interviews with communication faculty.
- Use zoom closed-captioning to create transcripts from zoom interviews, and record and transcribe for in-person interviews
- Write a report merging themes from roundtable discussion data and interview data and using that data, create a plan for our discipline at Oxnard College.

Product of the sabbatical (a paper, a film, an exhibit, etc):

A report that includes a plan for growing Communication major transfers in the Communication Studies Discipline at Oxnard College.

How do you plan to share your sabbatical results at Oxnard College?

Yes, I will present the findings to the Communication faculty, the Visual and Performing Arts Department, and Oxnard College.

Work plan and schedule:

I plan to facilitate roundtable discussions at both conventions. I also plan to interview communication faculty in-person and by zoom. I have 20 faculty members outlined below and conventions may provide more contacts. I hope to interview 20. If these individuals outlined below are not available, or do not use robust strategies, I will interview contacts from both conventions.

Fall 2023

September

- Submit proposals to national and regional conventions meeting in November and February to facilitate roundtable discussion about increasing Communication Majors
- Begin by interviewing 6 faculty from southern California in-person:

Yeprem	Victoria	Michael	Chris	Kim	Ben
Davoodian	Leonard	Brydges	Wells	Perigo	Bates
Pierce College	College of the Canyons	Cypress College	El Camino College	Grossmont College	Fullerton College
California	California	California	California	California	California

October

- Type interview transcripts and look for emerging trends.
- Continue California interviews, conduct 6 interviews via zoom:

Daniel	Brenda	Patty	Nick	Star
DeVere	Ahntholz	O'Keefe	Chivers	Steers
CSU Sacramento	Ohlone College	College of Marin	Foothill-De Anza College	Los Medanos College
California	California	California	California	California

November

- Organize transcripts from zoom, compare data to 1st round of interviews.
- Attend National Communication Association (NCA) convention in National Harbor, Maryland
- Have a roundtable discussion based on interview data, collect new roundtable conversation data.
- Conduct 5 in-person interviews with faculty at convention:

Kristen	Heather	Ashley	Robert	Kerk
Stout	Smith	Givens	Leonard	Kee
Crowder College	George Mason University	Salt Lake Community College	Sinclair Community College	Texas Tech University
Missouri	Virginia	Utah	Ohio	Texas

December

- Type interview transcripts and identify fill-in interviews, if needed.
- Finish 4 interviews via zoom:

Andi	Debra	Colleen	Joanne
Zamora	Waddell	Dean	Babin
Bellingham Technical College	Cascadia College	Whatcom Community College	City College of San Francisco
Washington	Washington	Washington	California

Spring 2024

January

- Finish organizing transcripts and identify trends
- Analyze and interpret data trends and identify strategies fitting our college
- Prepare roundtable at 2nd convention, collect strategy data from regional faculty, discuss trends and strategies found in interview data.

February

- Finalize roundtable presentation
- Attend Western States Communication Association (WSCA) convention in Reno, Nevada
- Have a roundtable discussion to facilitate discussion and present preliminary trends and strategies from data collection.
- Solicit feedback, and collect last data.

March

- Merge interview data, strategy data, and roundtable discussion data into report.
- Focus strategies for a specific plan tailored to Oxnard College Communication Discipline

April/May

- Finalize a report including a plan for growing Communication major transfers in the Communication Studies Discipline at Oxnard College.
- Create presentation to give to discipline, department, and college.

Value of Project

Now and in the next few years, our departments and colleges will be facing the realities of a changing funding formula, and return from quarantine. We are quickly working to identify the gaps and provide support for our students. In this sabbatical, I hope to identify the steps other faculty are taking to grow communication majors despite the great hurdles in front of us. I hope students can feel the thrill of empowerment like I did when I realized I wanted to become a Communication major. This is meaningful work for me, and at the same time I'm in a position professionally to collect data that Oxnard College may be able to use to retain, support, and increase transfer students.