

OXNARD COLLEGE REGIONAL FIRE ACADEMY

"Integrity, Teamwork, Attention to Detail, Obedience to Orders"



**Application for Sabbatical, Fall 2023
for Leave in Academic Year 2024-2025**

Oxnard College

Application Deadline:

October 19, 2023 at 5:00 pm.

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TAMARA CRUDO

October 15, 2023

Program: Oxnard College Regional Fire Academy

Division: Oxnard College Public Safety Division

Division Dean: Dr. Steve Hall

I have notified my dean of my intention to apply for a sabbatical for (choose one)

☒ Fall 2024

☐ Spring 2025

☐ Fall and Spring, 2024-25 (check contract for salary details)

On October 10, 2023, I met with Dean Hall and the Public Safety Admin, Samantha Agreda Chavarry, to advise of my formal intent to apply and commit, if approved, to a Sabbatical Leave for the Fall 2024 semester. Face to face conversations took place with Dean Hall at the beginning of this Fall 2023 semester, however, my ability to commit to an approved leave was unknown at that time.

Application for Sabbatical, Academic Year 2024-25

Full name as it appears on your work records:

____TAMARA L. CRUDO____

Number of years of continuous full-time service at VCCCD:

__10__

Number of years of continuous full-time service at OC:

__10__

Have you ever had a sabbatical at VCCCD?

__no__

How many years ago was your last sabbatical?

__n/a__



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PROJECT BACKGROUND/DESCRIPTION

I am a retired Ventura City Fire Captain, transitioning from the City to the Fire Technology Department at Oxnard College in Spring 2012. My position at Fire Technology was the result of the sudden death of Fire Technology full-time Instructor/Department Chair. The Fire Technology Director, CTE Dean and College Vice President fast-tracked my training to prepare me for the Department Chair replacement role. That high volume, early training served as the foundation for my tenured faculty success, giving me the confidence to internally apply for a rapidly approaching new assignment, the Oxnard College Regional Fire Academy Coordinator/Instructor.

During the Fall 2012 semester, Captain Peterson, the active Academy Coordinator/Instructor, announced his retirement date of Spring 2013. Department screening and hiring committees were in full swing to faculty vacancies. Multiple positions were being hired for as another illness took the life of a second faculty member. A Fire Technology part-time faculty member was hired, however, the Fire Academy Coordinator/Instructor hire ended with a failed search. Backed into a corner, the Fire Tech Director and CTE Dean agreed to an internal search for a temporary Academy Coordinator replacement. Once secured, the opening would publicly post for a second round. A summer announcement was issued identifying Captain Tami Crudo as the temporary replacement with a start date of Fall 2013.

Summer 2013 had me buried in reading and study assignments trying to decipher the assignment I willingly accepted. I learned the State was transitioning from an outdated firefighter curriculum and giving accredited fire academies two years to comply. OCRFA was entering the second year of this obligation. The Fire Tech Director voiced my marching orders to do everything necessary to keep the Academy within accreditation compliance. The Fall 2013 semester was merely reconnaissance and significant planning for Spring 2014 changes.

A complete restructuring of the Academy began in Spring 2014. Experts unable to meet new instructional criterion were released and new qualified experts hired. New state curriculum was submitted through the College Curriculum committee. Academy hours extended and instructional load increased. A year of around the clock work to plan and implement new drills brought the Academy within the State's compliance. I was announced as the official Academy Coordinator/Instructor Spring of 2014.

The Academy was run by a single full-time faculty member until Fall 2020. State curriculum demands drove instructional hours to a maximum 1.8 load. The Academy moved like a bullet train every semester. Face to face briefings and pencil drawings of skill station set up happened daily between the Coordinator and Battalion Company Officers. There was no time for formal manual creation.

The Coordinator's unexpected medical leave forced a temporary replacement for the position during Spring 2020 semester. A second full time faculty member was also approved for hire immediately following. During that period, the State implemented its last phase of curriculum and testing changes, requiring academies to add Firefighter II to their existing Firefighter I lessons.

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The Academy Coordinator returned from leave with a plan to expand training. The Fall 2020 semester, amid covid shutdowns, was the first combined training academy to deliver both Firefighter I and II training and certifications. A new full-time Operations Chief was hired to take 1.5 load on Academy grounds while the Coordinator/Instructor assisted with 1.47 load.

The Firefighter I/II Academy has become one of the State's most pristine academies. It was nationally recognized in 2021/2022 receiving the Bellwhether Award for its ability to remain open during covid while simultaneously implementing innovative hybrid Firefighter I/II curriculum. Throughout all the recognition and innovation, the idea of creating a program manual or succession planning has only been a wish. However, the need for such a tool and planning is soon to be reality.

The reason for the Coordinator's leave years ago was from the complete failure of a necessary organ. Transplant lists show availability the 2025/2026 school year, with retirement immediately following to meet post-surgery requirements. The Academy needs a written plan if it is to retain the prominent status it currently holds.

An approved Fall 2024 semester Sabbatical will allow ample time to write a detailed written and graphically depicted manual of academy policy and drills. The manual would be openly available to academy staff, instructors and coaches.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Create an openly available, transparent manual of Firefighter I/II Academy policies and drill ground operations.
2. Ensure the manual is written to be easily understood, showing in detail apparatus placement and drill inventory requirements.
3. Compare the drill lesson plans to confirm each lesson is compliant with State Fire Training curriculum standards.
4. Utilize current apparatus, tools and equipment inventory to graphically depict drill station set ups.
5. Include newly constructed training props within the expanded South Lot Training Ground to show drill placement options for specific training.
6. Create and present the completed manual within the allotted time frames.
7. Place the manual into service during the 2024/2025 school year.
8. Make impromptu updates as required from 1st year use of the manual.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The project will require further analysis of California State Fire Training policy regarding Firefighter I/II training standards. The manual would be available as a hard copy and electronically for inspection during the Firefighter I/II Academy reaccreditation visit scheduled

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for Spring 2025. Graphics within the manual would be personalized to reflect OCRFA FFI/II Academy existing land, structures, training props, apparatus fleet and tools and equipment.

PRODUCT AVAILABILITY

As stated above, the manual would be made available for use in countless future OCRFA academies. If during the State's reaccreditation visit, they request it be made openly available to surrounding academies, then consideration will be given to openly distribute it.

PROJECT WORK PLAN & SCHEDULE

August 2024; Create the templates for manual categories.

September 2024; Write policy and instructions specific to each drill plan.

October 2024; Add graphics specific to each drill plan.

November 2024; Edit and publish training videos for specific drills.

December 2024; Upload training videos to the OCRFA Training Video youtube channel

PROJECT VALUE

Priceless as no such manual exists in the State of California. When covid shut the nation down in 2020, OCRFA submitted an 18-page application containing detailed explanations of every lesson it intended on delivering that semester. Meeting the standards of State Fire Training, the health and safety of cadets and Academy staffing were the highest priority.

State Fire Training and the County of Ventura gave unanimous approval to reopen, citing they have never read such a thoroughly written report. I was the author of that report and have the intent to convert that report into the most comprehensive, graphically depicted Firefighter I/II Academy manual publicly available.

Respectfully,

Captain Tami Crudo

Fire Academy Coordinator, Oxnard College Regional Fire Academy

Tamara_crudo@vcccd.edu;

805-320-1179 cell