

Ventura College Sabbatical Leave Proposal
Agriculture Business AS-T to BS Online Pathway
Submitted by Dorothy M Farias
Agriculture, Vet Tech, and Water Sciences Department
October 2023

Instructor's Sabbatical Leave Status

Full-Time Hire Date: August 2018

Previous Leaves: 0

Project Description:

This request is for a sabbatical leave beginning and ending in the Spring 2025 semester to embark on a transformative project that has the potential to significantly enhance the Agricultural Business program here at Ventura College. My proposal aims to establish an online pathway for an Ag Business Associate of Science (AS) degree to be completed at Ventura College, with a partnership agreement to continue forward with the completion of a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Agriculture Business in collaboration with one or more California State University (CSU) campuses. Reaching potential students who are unable to attend in-person classes, as well as those currently employed full time within the agriculture industry is an important aspect of today's post-pandemic education climate. This innovative endeavor to offer online degree completion to students outside our geographical area, as well as those working in industry who unable to participate in traditional in-person courses aligns perfectly with our college's commitment to academic excellence, student success, and the promotion of access and inclusive educational opportunities for the students that the Ventura College Agriculture program serves.

1. Project Goals:

- Create a comprehensive online pathway for Ag Business AS-T at Ventura College and secure partnership agreements with specific CSU Ag Business BS degree programs to allow for VC students to complete both the AS-T and BS degree fully online.
- Forge a partnership with specific CSU campuses to offer a seamless transfer process into an online BS program in either Ag Business or BA program in Business.
- Develop high-quality course content tailored to online delivery for the AS-T program at VC
- Work with faculty at partner CSU campuses to determine course alignments as well as upper division major courses needed to complete the BS in an online format/program.
- Assist with curriculum revisions and recommendations for partner CSU programs to meet the needs of industry with respect to new Ag Business BS graduates.
- Collaborate in the creation of Course Outlines for suggested upper division courses to be offered as part of the CSU Ag Business program in online formats, utilizing best practices, pedagogical standards and methods for effective online instruction to meet learning outcomes.

2. Rationale:

The world of education is evolving rapidly, and the demand for flexible, online learning options continues to grow. By offering an online pathway in Agricultural Business, we can expand our program's reach and cater to a broader, diverse student population, including working adults and those who cannot attend classes on campus.

There exists a possibility to leverage the capabilities of Ventura College to offer a fully online AS-T degree in Agriculture Business, while partnering with one or more CSU campuses currently offering a BS degree in Agriculture Business. Potential CSU campus partners include:

- Cal Poly Pomona
 - Program: BS in Agribusiness and Food Industry Management
- CSU Fresno
 - Program: BS in Agricultural Business
- CSU Chico
 - Program: BS in Agricultural Business
- Cal Poly SLO
 - Program: BS in Agricultural Business

Additionally, there exists an opportunity to partner with a CSU campus offering a BA degree in Business for the attainment of upper division courses. Currently, CSU Chico has just recently launched their fully online BA in Business program, which could be a potential area of collaboration for those students transferring from VC with their AS-T in Agriculture Business. Another potential partner that exists locally would be the BA in Business program currently offered as CSU Channel Islands.

Early Project Developments: Fall 2023

- Conversations have been initiated between the lead faculty (DM Farias) from Ventura College and the following potential partners:
 - Cal Poly Pomona Huntley College of Agriculture
 - Associate Dean: Dr. Peter Kilduff
 - Interim Dean: Dr. Martin Sancho-Madriz
- Initial response from Cal Poly Pomona is strong support for a project to explore the potential to collaborate with VC on an online program transfer pathway.
 - There is high interest on the part of Cal Poly Pomona to increase student enrollment in the Agribusiness and Food Industry Management BS program, as enrollment has declined post-pandemic.
 - Interest in creating online sections for the upper division major courses was seen as more reasonable/achievable than offering all courses in online modalities.
 - This creates a win-win for both the CSU campus and VC, as students can complete the first 2 years of the ADT program online at VC, then transfer to Cal Poly Pomona and complete the last 2 years of major courses and upper division GE courses online.
 - Major Courses to be considered from Cal Poly Pomona Agribusiness and Food Industry Management BS program:
 - **Cal Poly Pomona AS-T Ag Business Roadmap (60 units)**

- ABM 3040: Food and Agribusiness Marketing
- ABM 3060: Retailing and Wholesaling of Agribusiness Products
- ABM 3090: Promotion and Advertising for Agribusiness
- ABM 3110: Applied Economics for Agribusiness
- ABM 3130: Food and Agricultural Policy
- ABM 3260: Financial Analysis for Agribusiness
- ABM 3300: International Agribusiness Marketing and Management
- ABM 3750: Data Management for Agribusiness
- ABM 4020: Agribusiness Personnel Management
- AG 4010: Ethical Issues in Food, Agricultural and Apparel Industries
- AG 4640: Development of Leadership Skills in Agriculture

3. Project Components:

A. Curriculum Development:

- Design and develop AS-T and BS degree programs, taking into account the unique requirements of online education.
- Creating effective online courses requires careful planning, organization, and a deep understanding of the subject matter and target audience.
- Collaboration will involve subject matter experts, instructional designers, multimedia developers, and allied resources. Regular contact, clear communication, and shared access to collaborative tools or platforms for documenting and sharing the course outline and content will be utilized to the full extent.
- Proposed steps include:
 - 1. Identify the Learning Outcomes/Objectives:**
 - Define clear and measurable learning objectives. What should students be able to do or know after completing each course?
 - 2. Analyze the Target Audience:**
 - Understand the demographics, prior knowledge, and goals of the students. This helps in tailoring the content to their needs.
 - 3. Choose the Course Format:**
 - Determine the type of course (e.g., self-paced, instructor-led, hybrid) and the platform (e.g., Learning Management System).
 - 4. Content Outline:**
 - Create an initial outline of the course content. Break it down into modules or units.

5. Assessment Strategy:

- Decide how to evaluate students' understanding. This could include quizzes, assignments, projects, or exams.

6. Select Learning Resources:

- Identify textbooks, articles, videos, or other learning materials that will be used in the course.

7. Incorporate Interactivity:

- Plan for engagement through discussion boards, forums, group activities, and multimedia elements.

8. Instructor Presence:

- Determine the level of interaction between instructors and students, such as office hours, feedback, and Q&A sessions.

9. Technology and Tools:

- Select the necessary technology, software, and tools for delivering the course, including any special requirements or software needed by students.

10. Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- Ensure that the course materials are accessible to all students, including those with disabilities, and that they are designed to be inclusive.

11. Legal and Copyright Considerations:

- Ensure that all materials used in the course comply with copyright and intellectual property laws.

12. Quality Assurance:

- Review and test the course materials, including any multimedia, for quality and functionality.

12. Course Maps:

- Create proposed course maps for each course within the VC Ag Business AS-T program, including timelines for assignments, quizzes, and any synchronous sessions.

B. Transfer Articulation:

- Collaborate with partner CSU campuses to ensure seamless credit transfer for VC students in both AD-T transfer agreement, as well as GE requirements in preparation for Cal-GETC
- Create program maps for the VC Ag Business AS-T program, outlining the proposed order of courses, notes on available GE courses offered online, as well as suggested GE courses to complete.
- Collaborate with CSU campuses to create a 2-year transfer roadmap for courses to be taken at the CSU level, including list of current upper division GEs offered online, as well as recommended order of major course completion.

C. Faculty Collaboration:

- Engage in collaborative curriculum development with CSU faculty members for online course design and delivery as outlined in curriculum development steps above.
- Establish mechanisms for collecting feedback from students and instructors to continuously improve the courses within the online pathways at the VC and CSU campuses.
- Collaborate on assessment strategies as well as systems and processes for monitoring student progress and evaluating the effectiveness of the courses within the VC and CSU programs.

D. Marketing and Outreach:

- Promote the program to prospective students and create strong partnerships with local agricultural businesses.
- Develop a strategy for launching the courses at both the VC and CSU campuses, and attracting prospective students.
- Collaborate at both the VC and CSU campuses to determine appropriate student support resources, such as technical assistance, tutoring, and academic advising that can be made available for students within the online degree programs.

4. Timeline:

- Spring Semester 2025:
 - Curriculum development and partnership negotiations.
 - Faculty collaboration and course content creation/alignment to online modality.
 - Submission of VC course revisions to curriculum for approval to launch Fall 2026.
 - Submission of partner CSU course revisions to their respective campus approval processes in time for a Fall 2027 launch.
- Late Fall 2025:
 - Program marketing and outreach.
- Fall 2026
 - Launch of the online pathway program at VC for the AS-T in Ag Business
- Fall 2028
 - First transferring class from VC online AS-T program begins CSU program to complete a BS in Ag Business or related discipline.

5. Expected Outcomes:

- 1) Increased enrollment in the Ventura College AS-T Ag Business program due to the flexibility of online education.
- 2) Enhanced academic collaboration with CSU campuses offering Ag Business BS degrees.
- 3) Improved retention and graduation rates for students pursuing AS-T and BS degrees in Agricultural Business at both the Ventura College and CSU levels.
- 4) Greater opportunities for our students to enter the workforce with advanced knowledge and skills.
- 5) Increased outreach to a broad range of potential students in geographical areas without access to in person Ag degree programs, as well as those currently employed full-time in the agriculture industry and unable to participate in traditional in-person degree programs.

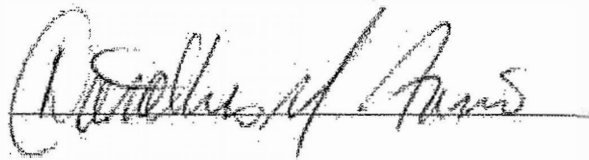
6. Conclusion:

The proposed sabbatical is not only an opportunity for professional growth and development but also a means to strengthen our college's position as the leader in online Agricultural Business education and the AS-T level. Likewise, it provides an opportunity to build a transfer pathway to partner CSU campuses to allow for completion of a full BS degree online. This serves to strengthen the Agriculture Business programs at all participating institutions, offering a win-win for all involved, especially students.

I am committed to dedicating my time, expertise, and energy to this project and am excited about the possibilities it holds for our institution and students. I kindly request your consideration and support for this sabbatical proposal. I look forward to discussing this opportunity further and addressing any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I am eager to contribute to the continued success of our department and College.

Sincerely,



Dorothy Marie Farias, Ed.D
Department Chair/Asst. Professor
Agriculture, Veterinary Technology, and Water Sciences Department
Ventura College
dfarias@vcccd.edu

