

Ventura College Sabbatical Leave Proposal
Project Increase Enrollment: IDS V01 & Skills Development
Fall 2025
Submitted by Dr. Rocío D. Hernández
CalWORKs Program/Counseling
October 2024

Instructor's Sabbatical Leave Status

Full-time hire date: July 2017

Previous Sabbaticals: 0

Background of Sabbatical Project:

CalWORKs is California's welfare reform program designed to help head of households become self-sufficient through a variety of educational and work-related activities, including attendance at Ventura College. [At Ventura College](#), our CalWORKs program provides individualized counseling for students who are referred by the [Human Services Agency](#) Welfare to Work program.

There is often misunderstanding in the functionality of the College CalWORKs program in comparison to the County's CalWORKs program. College CalWORKs is dependent on the referrals received by the county. The final head count for College CalWORKs can only include students who follow through on enrollment each semester, this applies statewide. While we continuously serve participants who are referred by the county, or who come by our office to learn about CalWORKs services, our program can only include these students as part of the final head count if they are in the county's CalWORKs welfare to work program, verified as receiving cash aid for themselves, and are enrolled in our VC courses. We can count visits to our office as general program contacts but not towards our final head count for state reporting purposes. A student who is seen by our program is not automatically counted towards state reporting. Our final head count for the state is different from the total count of students served.

In order to increase the total verified head count of students being served by the college CalWORKs program (per state reporting guidelines), the number of referrals of eligible participants needs to increase from the Human services agency. While we receive referrals throughout the year, not every student decides to pursue education as part of their county participation activities. When in welfare to work, participants have the ability to complete their participation requirements through other programs. Attending Ventura college is only one of several options for the participants. Often the county employment specialists will refer their clients to us to explore the possibility of enrolling in career education programs.

Re-activating IDS V01 CalWORKs Orientation, will offer an avenue to enroll students who are exploring attending Ventura College to provide them with more information on how Ventura College's CalWORKs program collaborates with the Ventura County Human Services agency in

assisting them with their career goals. By enrolling students in this course, they then become part of our college program, so long as they continue to be verified as welfare to work participants. This will then help in increasing our verified head count and will expose more prospective students to the educational opportunities they have at Ventura College.

In addition, this course can be the difference in a student's engagement and motivation in enrolling at VC. In my experience with college CalWORKs, participants often hesitate enrolling due to low self-efficacy or unfamiliarity with the college environment. Psychologist Albert Bandura defines self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave," (Bandura, 1994, p.1).

This course can serve as an introduction to the CalWORKs program, the college process, and at the same time provide an opportunity for engagement with other participants. This supports the VCCCD's recognition of "the importance of educational access and degree attainment in providing services and assistance aimed at creating more opportunities to address the impending needs of the communities faced with lower educational attainment," ([2021-27 Strategic Plan](#)). The purpose of the Welfare-to-Work program is to support participants as they prepare for work and find a job so they can support themselves and their family. On average, two people in a [CalWORKs](#) household, receive about \$688 in monthly cash aid. Our college program supports the county by providing an education to help improve employment prospects.

This project aligns with the [mission of the Ventura County Community College District](#) and its' commitment to "excellence in serving the diverse needs of its educational institutions, constituent groups, and communities." This additionally aligns with the [Ventura College mission statement](#) in ensuring workforce preparation opportunities.

Purpose of Sabbatical Project:

The purpose of my project is to: (1) Research CalWORKs orientation courses at comparable institutions in the process of development, (2) Develop and update the IDS V01 course, including objectives and content, (3) skills development and training to assist in the teaching and facilitation of the course and to improve counseling skills.

Components of Sabbatical Project:

- (1) Research CalWORKs orientation courses at comparable institutions
 - Look at courses at 2-3 comparable colleges
 - Interview program coordinators & instructors for best practices
- (2) Develop and update course:
 - Update course objectives and content
 - Update and develop course assignments

- Work with curriculum co-chair
 - Develop canvas shell
 - Create distance education friendly course
- (3) Skills Development
- Complete needed training & update any needed certification for distance education.
 - Continued education for certification of emotional intelligence
 - Complete strengths coaching certification and/or cultural responsiveness training through Escala education. Completion of & update with certifications will additionally assist in adding to my tools for use in counseling sessions with students.

Value of Sabbatical Project to VCCCD and Ventura College:

Reactivating the IDS V01 course is critical to the success of the College CalWORKs program. CalWORKs employment specialists refer participants to our colleges to help parents develop and achieve their career goals. Participation in college additionally allows the county to assist our students with referrals to county Child Development Resources (child care) so that parents can attend their classes. Our students will graduate, enter the workforce and contribute to our economy. As noted in our [VCCCD Strategic Plan 2021-2027](#), “educational attainment plays a very important role in the social and economic well-being of Ventura County and its residents. The proportion of the county's population with less than an associate degree influences the ability to access greater job opportunities, better access to health care benefits, and many other advantages to improve lives and living conditions,” (p.6). CalWORKs helps in reducing the wage and achievement gap. Our student’s children additionally attend our county schools and eventually may also attend college. CalWORKs helps students gain confidence in becoming self-sufficient.

Furthermore, this project aligns with the [VCCCD Strategic Goals 2021-2027](#), specifically goals 3 and 4 (pg. 4).

- (3) Support the closing of academic achievement and support services equity gaps across all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and gender groups.
- (4) Actively support equitable workforce and economic development in Ventura County through partnerships and relevant programs and pathways leading from education to careers.

The reactivation of this course can serve as a model for the other colleges within our district who also have college CalWORKs programs.

Value of Sabbatical Project to Ventura College Students:

The IDS V01 course will provide an opportunity for participants to gain knowledge on the college CalWORKs program and help them understand the difference between college and county requirements. Students will learn about their degree options and the opportunity to pursue

a degree while also meeting their county requirements and engaging with their peers. Updating and gaining new certification will equip me, as the faculty, with new skills for this course and will additionally help strengthen my role as a counselor which will help positively impact students. Updating and gaining new certification will provide me with tools to better assist students with academic, career, and personal counseling.

Value of Sabbatical Project to the Instructor:

As a faculty counselor overseeing the College CalWORKs program, I am invested in serving our students and in the continued collaboration with the Ventura County Human Services Agency. The success of our students impacts their children and is an investment in our community. The completion of this project will strengthen our referral process with our county partners, improve enrollment in our program and thereby our college. The skills development opportunities will additionally strengthen my counseling skills and add to my strategies tool box as a faculty.

Thank you for your time in the review of my project proposal for sabbatical and for your consideration of the projects impact on our college, the district, and our community.

Respectfully,

Rocio Hernandez

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