

Professional Leave Report Cover Sheet

Name: Mitzi Lowe

Department: Social Work Education

College: CHHS

Leave taken: ☒ Sabbatical ☐ Difference in Pay ☐ Professional Leave without Pay

Time Period: ☒ Fall 2023
☐ Spring
☐ Academic Year
☐ Other

Your report will be sent to your Dean for your PAF and to the Library Archives.

Sabbatical Report

Dr. Mitzi A. Lowe

I requested a sabbatical to provide time towards further development of curriculum and pedagogical approaches to engage our diverse student body. My sabbatical enabled me to further expand my interest in student engagement by learning more online and face to face creative teaching methods. By taking a more inclusive approach to teaching it is hoped that my focus on course redesign and development will impact student retention and opportunities for students.

Reporting on Success of Leave

One of the main goals of my sabbatical was to develop a social work practice in criminal justice settings course. In addition, I proposed completing professional development activities that would result in new and innovative teaching practices. During my sabbatical I was able to meet the following objectives in relation to my original proposal:

- Further developed my knowledge and skills in creative teaching methods by completing Adobe Express Certifications.
- Developed curriculum that is inclusive by creating learning experiences and syllabi informed by my participation in JEDI workshops.
- Created learning projects that include creative storytelling techniques utilizing what I learned from Adobe workshops.
- Developed a new elective course.
- Created an equity minded syllabus that includes a wellness component integrating the Five Phases of Chinese Medicine from knowledge obtained from a week-long immersive institute.
- Developed case studies for the new course.

A description of the modifications, if any, of the original proposal and the circumstances with which necessitated these modifications:

NONE

The goals of the original proposal, that were not accomplished;

NONE

Benefits

This sabbatical contributed to new course development and professional development in the area of scholarly and creative activities. I completed numerous workshops including the CSU Chancellor's Office program on Equity-Minded Pedagogy. I obtained knowledge on how to use institutional data, human centered design and equity mindedness to address equity gaps in student achievement. This course expanded my understanding of structural inequalities and allowed me the opportunity to adapt curriculum and instruction to impact student learning outcomes.

The Equity Minded Pedagogy course I participated in provided me an opportunity to collaborate with educators across the system to amplify our efforts to address equity gaps. I gained skills and knowledge to confront oppression and systemic racism with the goal of increasing equitable learning opportunities for students. This resulted in the development of human-centered and culturally-sustaining experiences in curriculum development.

Furthermore, my background and practice experience is in the area of juvenile justice and higher education. This project improved my knowledge of best practices within criminal justice settings and resulted in innovative teaching methods for student learning.

I have a strong interest in assisting in the creation of innovative programs that will contribute to student retention rates. This project has led to the creation of a topics course on the role of social work in criminal justice settings. I am excited to continue my involvement in expanding this focus within my department and for the opportunity to continue to reach out to community organizations in order to create interdisciplinary learning opportunities for our students that will benefit the incarcerated and in turn benefit our community at large.

In summary, my leave has benefited my department, college and university by further developing curriculum that addresses equity and inclusion in classroom practices and pedagogy.

Original Proposal: Included on next page

Sabbatical Proposal

Dr. Mitzi A. Lowe

I am requesting a sabbatical to provide time towards further development of curriculum and pedagogical approaches to engage our diverse student body. A sabbatical would enable me to further expand my interest in student engagement utilizing online and face to face creative teaching methods. This project will prove not only invaluable to student retention, but would foster both curricular and service opportunities between university students, colleagues, and the community at large.

Project Description

It is my intent to develop and implement a service learning curriculum project that will provide opportunities for students and faculty interested in working in criminal justice settings.

One of the main goals of my sabbatical would be to develop a social work practice in criminal justice settings service learning course. In addition, I would utilize this time to further my knowledge of creative teaching methods including utilizing photo essays to address social justice issues and the development of case studies. This course will include university students from a variety of disciplines such as education, criminology, kinesiology, social work, recreation, humanities, and the arts. A second goal is to further establish an on-site interdisciplinary service learning seminar that will address best practices in criminal justice settings.

This sabbatical will allow me the opportunity to (1) further develop student learning opportunities, (2) document the process for implementing this service learning project, and (3) enhance my teaching skills utilizing creative approaches to learning.

I am proposing that during the Fall semester of 2023 I be allowed to spend the semester developing curriculum, continue my online certification requirements, and take course work on utilizing photo essays to address social justice issues. This will involve setting up meetings with the Center for Faculty Excellence to identify professional development opportunities that will further enhance my ability to teach in a hybrid mode in order to best meet student needs. I will also

work with the Office of Community Services to identify and implement best practices in service learning. The activities described above can not be accomplished in less than the leave time, but will be completed in the time requested. There may be some state-wide travel that will be completed in order to examine creative and effective teaching strategies in social work education.

Benefits

This sabbatical will contribute to my professional development in the area of scholarly and creative activities. My background and practice experience is in the area of juvenile justice and higher education. This project will allow me to further develop my research interests in student engagement and retention which will enable me to continue to submit publications in this area of study.

I have a strong interest in assisting in the creation of innovative programs that will contribute to student retention rates. The following outcomes will be of benefit to me personally and of benefit to the department and the university:

Outcome 1: The development of an interdisciplinary service learning elective course utilizing creative teaching methods and classroom learning activities.

Outcome 2: The further development of community partners.

Outcome 3: Professional development in online teaching and the use of photo essays to impact social justice issues.

Outcome 4: The development of case studies to be utilized in classroom learning assignments.

The above activities and outcomes will enable me to research and study innovative practices in teaching and learning which will lead to new knowledge that will assist me in my work with students and faculty.

This project offers an opportunity for our college students to develop civic responsibility for their community through their active participation in a service learning interdisciplinary course. It provides them with the tools to become valued in that role, and to look toward possible career opportunities in the field of civic leadership, criminal justice, health, social services, arts and humanities and education.

Thank you for your consideration.

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