

## Professional Leave Report Cover Sheet

Name: Va Nee Van Vleck

Department: Economics

College: Craig School of Business

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

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

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Re: Post-Sabbatical Leave Report, Fall semester, AY2019-20

From: Va Nee L. Van Vleck, Associate Professor of Economics

Date: 6 May 2020

As directed by APM360, I am submitting my post-sabbatical report.

## 1 SUMMARY

During my sabbatical leave in Fall 2019, I worked to complete preparation of a fully-online Econ40 *Principles of Microeconomics* course-package for eventual CSU-system QLT (Quality Learning & Teaching) evaluation. (Actual submission for QLT approval requires the course to have been taught in the proposed form at least once which has yet to be scheduled.) I completed several online-teaching workshops; three completion awards were received and a fourth is being completed using one of my current Fresno State courses as a capstone demonstration. A conference presentation was scheduled but due to the COVID19 situation it has been deferred to next year.

I am deeply appreciative of the support I received from the Department of Economics, the Craig School of Business, and the Fresno State University. I believe that my efforts, technical experiences and skills gained, and my reinvigorated sense of purpose will be beneficial to colleagues and students at Fresno State.

### 1.1 Accomplishment of the sabbatical goals.

*Principles of Microeconomics* “Mini-Lecture” Videos (Revised & New) and Closed-captioning

- Videos (mini-lectures & “*Crash Course*”). New videos were created primarily using PowerPoint for organization, digital tablet & pen mark-up, Excel-generated visuals, and Camtasia (recording & editing); and my previous videos were extensively revised/edited (or reworked entirely). I did not use publisher-produced materials. There are 46 videos total for the *Principles of Micro course*. There are 37 core “mini-lecture” videos (avg. length 9:48; min 3:59; max 19:05). The additional 9 videos are what I have called “*Dr. V’s Crash Course in Microeconomics*” (avg. length 8:02; min 2:57; max 14:15). I also use the *Crash Course* videos in upper-division courses as an introduction/refresher for particular approaches I use (e.g. “dissecting market equilibrium” or “the leaky bucket metaphor”).
- Closed-captioning revised/edited. All videos were first automatically captioned using the YouTube integrated-AI and subsequently checked/corrected by me and saved/replaced as the default captioning files for the videos.
- Transition to Canvas from Blackboard. I was fortunate to have more time to make a gradual Canvas transition and thoughtfully develop my course structure. Based on the templates developed by CFE, I have organized the course based on semester-weeks. I also experienced different Canvas-courses during the online-teaching trainings I completed (below); it was very useful to have to work from within the “student side” of Canvas.

#### Further Online-Teaching Training/Professional Development:

- September 9-15, 2019 “Fundamentals: Engaging Learners in Online Discussion”, OLC Online Learning Consortium (completion award earned)
- October 7-13, 2019 “Designing Courses with a Multimodal Approach”, OLC Online Learning Consortium (completion award earned)
- November 4-15, 2019 “VoiceThread Certified Educator” workshop, Cohort#41, VoiceThread.com (completion & course project evaluation in-progress, George Haines, Instructional Designer VT, ghaines@voicethread.com)
- December 9-11, 2019 “Fundamentals: Increasing Interaction & Engagement”, OLC Online Learning Consortium (completion award earned)

#### Related Pedagogical Research

- *“Broccoli Assignments and Student Performance: A Casual Post-Mortem of Necessary Prerequisites (“Hurdles”) in Principles of Microeconomics”*. Paper accepted at the annual meeting of the *Western Social Science Association (WSSA)*, Portland, OR, April 1-3, 2020 (canceled due to COVID19 mandates; deferral to 2021 conference optioned). (Unfortunately, it was not accepted for the American Economic Association’s annual *Conference on Teaching & Research in Economic Education (CTREE)* [subsequently also canceled].)

## 2 Modifications

There were no significant modifications to the original proposal.

There were additional personal-interest activities that were especially fulfilling and may be of (eventual) benefit to my continued role within the faculty:

- September 26, 2019. Community Landfill Tour#3. Knott Landfill/Deschutes Recycling Center, Bend, OR. Hosted by The Environmental Center and the Rethink Waste Project.
  - “A behind-the-scenes tour of what happens to your trash after it leaves the curb. See Knott Landfill's trash pit, check out Deschutes Recycling, tour the transfer station, and understand the composting facility. Seeing where our waste goes will impact your decisions in the future and help you think twice about purchases. This is a unique opportunity; the landfill isn't always open to the public for tours.”
  - Approximately 3 hours. ~15 participants.
  - Solid waste facilities & processes; composting; and recycling.
- October 15, 2019. Prescribed burn public education tour, Shevlin Park, Bend, OR. Deschutes County Project Wildfire/FireFree, Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project.
  - Restoring dry, fire-adapted forests in Central Oregon is a multi-step process carried out over many years and requiring collaboration among a diverse team of forest scientists, fire experts, loggers, community leaders, and volunteers. Prescribed fire, also known as

prescribed or controlled burning, is the final step in the forest restoration process, and a crucial tool to help improve the health of our forest, reduce the risk of extreme wildfires, and increase community and firefighter safety when wildfires do occur. But before a prescribed burn is conducted, there are several important steps that prepare the forest for the safe and controlled use of fire, including multiple years of analysis and planning that guide careful logging, small tree thinning, and removal of flammable underbrush. U.S. Forest Service foresters, wildlife biologists, hydrologists, soil scientists, archaeologists, botanists, and other experts work together with the public to prioritize where and what kind of restoration work should occur in the forest to improve wildlife habitat, create healthier forests and streams, and reduce wildfire risk, while minimizing potential negative impacts to recreation, wildlife, land or water (Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project, <http://deschutescollaborativeforest.org/forest-restoration/planning-prescribed-fire/>)

- About 2 ½ - 3 hours. ~ 20 participants.
  - On-site observation of active prescribed burn.
- I have revived (& extended) my German language proficiency using the Duolingo platform. I had four-years of high-school German and have a baccalaureate minor as well, but had not used it for many years. To date, I have 243 consecutive days of German reading, listening-comprehension, and “speaking” practice.

### 3 Unmet proposal objectives

The conference presentation that was to take place in April 2020 has been optioned to be deferred to the 2021 conference.

### 4 Expected near-term benefits to be realized

- The unfortunate COVID19 pandemic has forced use of online technologies on many faculty who were largely unprepared for the shock. I have been able already to offer on-going support and problem-solving with faculty colleagues. Prior to COVID19, I had shared information on Canvas, FlipGrid, and Hypothes.is (LMS-integrations), VoiceThread (a collaborative annotation tool) and online/blended teaching ideas/resources with department colleagues—which may have helped during the abrupt changeover.
- My experience developing and shepherding a course toward the CSU-online QLT evaluation will be valuable as online/non-traditional delivery becomes more essential to Fresno State.
- And I am now pursuing a renewed research avenue in Economics teaching-pedagogy derived from my experiences with digital/blended instruction.

