

Sabbatical Proposal

Revision of the Moorpark College Counseling “Online Orientation”.

Charles R. Brinkman IV

October 2012

Faculty Background

In my position as full-time Counselor over the past 15 years at Moorpark College, I have been involved in many different areas of responsibility. Currently, I am one of 11 full-time counselors who help advise and guide students toward their educational goal, through new student orientations, counseling appointments, express counseling services and more. Several years ago I was the Chair of the Moorpark College counseling department, where I was responsible for scheduling, evaluations, the Transfer Center, various majors, and other tasks. I was the articulation officer at Moorpark College for 1 year, from 2001-2002. Also,

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Current Status and Perceived Need

As the number of full-time counselors in the counseling department continues to shrink, we need to find ways to work smarter, not harder, while continuing to serve the numbers and variety of students that find their way to Moorpark College. While our "MC Counseling" online email service is a help, it is geared toward quick answers, without needing to do in-depth counseling. Many years ago, we attempted to devise a way to "Orient" new students online, and our first generation of an "online orientation" was created as a way that students could learn how to get the enrollment process started. We tried to incorporate everything they would need to know about enrollment, which classes to take here at Moorpark College, how and when to register, and more. We tried to develop the "online orientation" for students, so they would not need to make a trip to Moorpark College, but instead could do everything from their home computer. While we currently have that first generation online orientation in place, it has not been revised or updated in the past 7+ years, so it is most definitely now in need of change.

Technology changes fairly rapidly, so we now need to update/revise our online orientation to stay current. Our students are very computer literate, and use the computer for pretty much everything these days. While face-to-face contact is very valuable, if we can use technology to help reduce the number of students needing our services during peak times, it will benefit all students.

Recently, the counseling office has been inundated with students seeking appointments this Fall 2012 semester. In semesters past, we were scheduling for appointments a maximum of 10 days prior, and we had many openings available in that 10 day period. This Fall 2012, with the reduced number of counselors available (there were 2 retirements recently), and even more students wanting appointments, we have started scheduling appointments 14 days out – and all these appointments (2 weeks away) are usually filled by 10am in the morning. If a student calls or comes in anytime after 12 noon wanting to schedule a counseling appointment in the future, there are none available. The student is instructed to call or come by EARLY the next day, to make an appointment for 14 days away. Bottom line, we do not have enough counseling faculty available to support all the students who come to our office.

We need to find another way to assist some of the students, as we are currently unable to meet the needs of many of our students.

Proposal

My one semester sabbatical proposal/project will be to revise the Moorpark College "online orientation".

I am requesting a 1-semester sabbatical leave – during the Spring Semester 2014.

I plan to do a serious overhaul of the Moorpark College "online orientation" so that it better meets the current needs of the incoming (and even current) Moorpark College students. This should also help relieve some of the pressure from students who come to the counseling office to speak with a counselor. This orientation revision will allow us to assist some of our students, by using technology to meet their needs. Counseling has created and is responsible for the new student orientations at Moorpark College, so this project fits perfectly in my discipline. I plan to spend a good amount of time to research other colleges online orientations, and “borrow” the best ideas and designs.

Summer and early Fall are the busiest times of the year for the Moorpark College counseling office.... it also happens to be the time of year when we have the fewest counselors on contract, so we try to use part-time hours to assist with the influx of new students. As soon as the fall schedule of classes is posted online, the numbers of students coming in to the counseling office increases dramatically. The students want to know what classes they need to take for the next semester. And while we are working with these continuing students, new students also appear, wanting to know what classes they should be taking at Moorpark College. So we get hit by two large groups of students.

Even though our old “online orientation” is still active (although outdated), we have been providing more "in-person" new student orientations from early May thru mid-August, to assist the new arriving students with course planning. If we can find a way to reduce or channel some/all of these new students to an "online orientation", we can redirect more of our efforts to the continuing students who also need our services.

By expanding the web presence of Moorpark College counseling through a new online orientation, I predict it will benefit students and faculty (especially counselors) alike. Students will be guided to enroll in the correct classes, so we should have a better informed student population.

I would like to update my web design capability, and plan to take a few web refresher classes to further develop my web skills. I am quite proficient using the Omniupdate web system in place here with the college district, and have some general HTML skills. I have found some good computer/website classes through College of the Canyons - -enDC -4.89 -1.15 3-

2 - Retention

Retention has always been a key topic in today's academic arena. The new Student Service Initiative in place at California Community Colleges will require colleges to invest more effort on this topic.

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Who will benefit from this project?

Benefit to the College -

Proposed Sabbatical Timeline

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For Sabbatical - Spring 2014

October - November 2013

Discussion with all members of the counseling department and other departments – gather input as to what should be included in the Moorpark College online orientation revision. Discussion with other departments/service areas at Moorpark College - gather input as to what new students should know, so I can address it in the online orientation revision.

November - December 2013

Review online orientations in place at other colleges. Learn how online orientations currently in place at other colleges are successful. Gather input as to what is good, what is bad, what do they wish was included. There is no sense in re-creating what may already exist elsewhere. I can "borrow" the best ideas in use at other colleges. Explore methods other colleges have found to be successful/useful.

January - February 2014

Initiate contacts at other 2-year & even 4-year colleges with current online orientations by email and phone. Collect ideas, and start to create a template for the new Moorpark College online orientation.

February - March 2014

Review web creation process in use at Moorpark College. Refresh/retrain/update myself with the Omniupdate system used here. Collect necessary passwords needed to start revision of website. Begin web design - start creating/revising our current online orientation.

March - April 2014

Continue web design. Write/create new "online orientation". Share drafts with counseling office. Use feedback to revise and rewrite, aiming for a final version everyone will be comfortable using. Continue update of the Moorpark College online orientation web site.

May - June 2014

Go live. Publish new Moorpark College online orientation, for the start of new student registration for the fall 2014 semester.