

## **Sabbatical Leave Proposal**

### **A. Applicant**

Name: Filomena Avila

Department: Counseling

Type of Leave: Independent Study

Leave Dates: Spring 2020, January 2020-May 2020

### **B. Purpose of Leave**

In order to better serve student athletes more effectively at Santa Rosa Junior College and in preparation to compete athletically after transfer, I will conduct an independent study of community colleges with model student athlete success centers. I will research how each of these centers provide the student success steps of orientation, assessment and academic planning. Additionally, I will research how the athletic eligibility requirements are embedded into the academic requirements.

### **C. Leave Objectives**

1. Conduct research pertaining to best practices that incorporate academic and athletic success for students wanting to compete at the 4 year level.
2. Visit at least 3 community colleges with model student athlete success centers
3. Visit at least one NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Division 1, Division 2 and NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) school. These are the specific divisions that offer "athletic" scholarships
4. Complete a mini student success guide for SRJC student athletes
5. Interview 3-5 student athletes who have transferred successfully and incorporate their strategies with SRJC students

### **D. Narrative**

Objective 1: The major purpose of my sabbatical is to have dedicated time to conduct research pertaining to best practices that incorporate academic and athletic success for students wanting to compete athletically at the 4 year level. Being the lead academic counselor for student athletes requires that I be the expert in all matters related to not only academic requirements for transfer but also academic requirements for the NCAA

Divisions and NAIA that offer specific “athletic” scholarships. I belong to CA community college athletic counselor list serv and often find myself dependent on this group to address specific questions related to athletic eligibility requirements. Having dedicated time to research and incorporate best practices will allow for greater success opportunities for student athletes.

Objective 2: There are several model community college athletic programs throughout California that I want to visit. In February, my target community colleges will be: Mt San Antonio College, Santa Barbara City College and American River College. These are community colleges that are known to have strong academic programs, strong athletic programs and strong academic athletic counseling support. These programs have a dedicated academic counselor, in some cases more than one counselor to work individually with student athletes.

My intent is to research how each of these schools working with student athletes from beginning to end. What is the first point of contact with the counselor, what is required versus optional for student athletes, how does each counselor communicate with the athletics department and individual coaches to work toward “academic” and athletic success.

Objective 3: Just about every student athlete expresses a desire to earn an athletic scholarship for transfer. There are various divisions that offer scholarships, NCAA Division I and II and NAIA. In March, I want to visit at least one college in each division and meet with the athletic compliance officer in each division to discuss athletic eligibility and tips for successful athletic eligibility transfer. For NCAA Division I, I intend to visit either UC Berkeley, UC Davis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, or CSU Sacramento. For NCAA Division II, Sonoma State University, CSU Chico or Dominican University. For NAIA, UC Merced, CSU Maritime, Southern Oregon University or Menlo College.

Objective 4: Student athletes not only need to meet admission requirements to wherever they want to attend, they also need to meet athletic eligibility requirements and the two are not necessarily the same. In completing a mini guide (no more than a 2 page, preferably one page handout), the intent is to have a checklist highlighting admission and athletic requirements that can be introduced to the student upon first starting at SRJC and updated as they meet with the athletics counselor.

Objective 5: Student are more likely to listen to the wisdom of their peers. This objective will allow me to interview 3-5 students that have transferred successfully to a 4 year university and incorporate their success strategies into the mini guide. I will focus on this objective in March when I visit the different NCAA and NAIA divisions. It is not uncommon for me to hear from students that have transferred say: “if I had known, I would have done things differently at SRJC.” If time permits, I would like to do video clips of my interviews and link these mini clips to the Athletics Department website.

## **E. Evaluation Summary**

1. How will the objectives of this sabbatical leave enhance my work performance at the college? Athletic academic eligibility is complex, requiring an ability to strategize to meet different transfer requirements for different schools in addition to meeting the NCAA and NAIA athletic eligibility requirements. As a result of visiting model community college programs, compliance officers at transfer institutions and interviewing students that have transferred successfully, I will be able to incorporate these strategies into my everyday work with students.

2. How will the objectives of this sabbatical leave benefit students in my discipline? Students will be better served by having clear information related to academic and athletic requirements.

3. How will the objectives of this sabbatical leave benefit my department? Athletics academic counseling can be considered daunting. Our worst fear is to miss a requirement that results in a student not being able to take advantage of an athletic scholarship upon transfer. The mini guide for students will also serve as a mini guide for my colleagues who can refer to it should they find themselves working with a student athlete.

4. How does your proposed project address the SRJC Strategic Plan and/or your department's educational plan? My entire sabbatical project addresses the first SRJC strategic goal of "supporting student success." The primary focus of my sabbatical is to better myself as an "athletic" academic counselor so that I can more effectively counsel and support student athletes.

#### **F. Abstract for Board Proposal Summary**

During the Spring 2020 semester sabbatical, Filomena Avila will research best practices for student athlete success centers and best practices for successful athletic eligibility preparation for a student athletic scholarship at the 4 year level. Filomena will visit at least three community colleges with model student athlete success centers in addition to success centers at Division I, II and NAIA transfer schools. This information will be incorporated into her work with student athletes at SRJC.

**G. Approval**

Applicant Name  
Department/Program  
Review and Signature

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Department Review

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Signature of Department Chair

Date

Sabbatical Leave Committee Review

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Signature of Committee Chair

Date

Board of Trustees Review

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Action Taken

Date