

## **Sabbatical Leave Proposal – Fall 2025**

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Previous Sabbatical Leave – None

As a dedicated counselor committed to fostering student success, I am applying for a one-semester sabbatical to enhance the Honors Program at Moorpark College. Over the past few years, the Honors Program has become a cornerstone for students seeking an enriched academic experience and aiming to transfer to prestigious universities like UCLA and UC Irvine. However, significant potential exists to elevate the program further and expand its impact.

### **Statement of Purpose:**

As more students apply to the Honors Program at Moorpark College, I am interested in exploring how other local community colleges that already have Honors Programs are operating and administering their programs. I am interested in learning how they enroll and retain diverse students, facilitate their academic performance, and offer engaging co-curricular activities that enhance student's learning and personal development in and out of the classroom. I also would like to strengthen the relationship that we have with UCLA, UCI, and UCSB by increasing collaborative efforts, expanding transfer pathways, and creating more opportunities for our students. This knowledge will be implemented directly into our Honors Program, which will, in turn, benefit the students and the college.

### **Sabbatical Project Overview:**

I have been a full-time counselor for over 12 years, mainly working as a counselor coordinating the Transfer Center. Last year, I had the opportunity to return to general counseling and be the lead counselor for the Honors Program. The Honors Program at Moorpark College is directly linked to UCLA's Transfer Alliance Program (TAP) and UC Irvine Honors to Honors Program (H2H). Students in the Honors Program who apply to UCLA are given priority consideration for admission to majors in the College. In contrast, students who earn a 3.7 GPA are guaranteed admission to UCI. Although not guaranteed, students in the Honors Program who are TAP certified by a counselor have a 78% chance of being accepted to UCLA. Last year, Moorpark College TAP certified 143 students, an increase from the year before (83). As the program continues to grow, it demonstrates the college's commitment to expanding opportunities for students to advance their education and successfully transfer to top universities. This sabbatical aims to help increase the number of students who apply to the Honors Program, especially disproportionately impacted students. Despite the increase of TAP Certifications completed for fall 23 (83) compared to fall 24 (143), there were only 37 students (5 African American, 32 Chicano/Latino) who were TAP certified, of which 12 were admitted to UCLA for fall 24. For many students, UCLA is their dream school; however, many are unaware that the TAP program exists or may be intimidated by the program. To help increase the number of students applying to the Honors Program and improve the onboarding process, I am interested in learning best practices from local community colleges with established Honors Programs. My sabbatical leave to research honors programs aligns closely with the mission of the Ventura County Community College District, as adopted by the Board of

Trustees, to provide high-quality educational opportunities that promote student success and equity. By examining honors programs at other community colleges, I aim to identify strategies that can enhance our program's reach, particularly by increasing the number of students applying and promoting diversity within the program. This research will ultimately support the district's commitment to fostering an inclusive learning environment and offering pathways to academic excellence, ensuring that all students have access to the resources needed to thrive.

### **Components of Sabbatical- Mid August - October**

I plan to visit six community colleges with strong Honors Programs to learn more about how they run them. These institutions have proven that they can effectively promote active Honors Programs. I am especially curious about how they enhance student engagement, organize the program, and improve the efficiency of the TAP certification process.

#### **1. Visit 6 Community Colleges with Established Honors Programs**

- **El Camino College**
- **Irvine Valley College**
- **Los Angeles Pierce College**
- **Pasadena City College**
- **Santa Barbara City College**
- **Santa Monica College**

#### **Meetings with Honors Coordinators/Counselors:**

At each of these colleges, I plan to meet with the Honors Coordinators or Counselors to discuss the specifics of their programs. These meetings will focus on several key areas:

- Learn how they guide students through the TAP process from the time they apply to TAP certification.
- Learn how they ensure students meet TAP requirements (major prep/alternate major, GPA), streamline administrative tasks, and provide personalized support during transfer.
- Discuss how they promote the TAP program to prospective students and use it as a tool to encourage high-achieving students to join their Honors Program.
- Discuss how they track student progress and maintain a high rate of TAP certifications.

By visiting these colleges and learning from their experienced Honors Coordinators and Counselors, I hope to bring back valuable information that will help enhance our own Honors Program. This research will lead to an increase in student enrollment, improve diversity, and ensure a more efficient and supportive onboarding and transfer process.

## **2. Revamp the Honors Program Canvas Shell – October - December**

One of the key components of my sabbatical will be to revamp our Honors Program's Canvas shell. The shell houses important information but can be further optimized to serve our students better. My goals include:

- Redesigning the structure of the Canvas shell to make it more user-friendly and intuitive for students to navigate.
- Updating the orientation videos to provide clearer, more engaging content that explains the Honors Program's requirements, resources, and opportunities. These new videos will highlight the benefits of TAP certification and offer step-by-step guidance on the honors application and onboarding processes.
- Adding interactive elements such as quizzes, discussion forums, and resource links that provide students with a deeper understanding of the program and motivate them to stay engaged.

A revamped Canvas shell will serve as a more effective communication and support tool for honors students, ensuring they have access to all the necessary information in a clear, accessible format.

## **3. Familiarize Myself with All Published Materials for TAP – October - December**

To fully understand the TAP certification process and ensure that our students receive the most accurate and up-to-date information, I will review all published materials related to TAP. This includes:

- Brochures, flyers, and handbooks that outline the TAP requirements and benefits.
- Online resources and transfer guides provided by universities that participate in TAP.
- Any changes in policies or new opportunities within the TAP framework that may be beneficial for our students.

By thoroughly familiarizing myself with these materials, I will be able to streamline our advising process and ensure our students are well-prepared to take full advantage of TAP opportunities.

## **4. Meet with UCLA, UCI, and UCSB – October - December**

Meet with the admissions team of all three campuses to strengthen relationships with Moorpark College. In these meetings, I plan to discuss ways to streamline the transfer process and explore joint initiatives like transfer workshops, campus tours, and informational sessions specifically tailored for Moorpark College students. Building these stronger connections will ultimately create more seamless transfer pathways and increase student awareness of opportunities at each institution.

## **5. Create a PowerPoint to Present Several Times a Semester to Prospective Honors Students – October - December**

To increase awareness and engagement with our Honors Program, I will develop a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation to be delivered multiple times each semester. This presentation will be designed to:

- Highlight the benefits of joining the Honors Program, including academic enrichment, leadership opportunities, and enhanced transfer prospects through TAP certification.
- Provide an overview of the program's requirements, the application process, and the support available to students.
- Feature testimonials from current honors students and alumni who have successfully transferred to top universities, emphasizing the program's impact on their academic and career journeys.
- Include clear, step-by-step instructions on applying for the Honors Program and what students can expect throughout their time there.

This presentation will be a key recruitment tool, helping to inform prospective students and increase the number of applicants to our Honors Program. Additionally, it will provide a consistent message across recruitment efforts, ensuring that all students understand the value of participating in the Honors Program.

Each component of this sabbatical project is designed to enhance our Honors Program's visibility, efficiency, and effectiveness in supporting student success. By visiting top community colleges and UCs, meeting with honors coordinators, revamping our Canvas shell, and creating new recruitment materials, I aim to create a more dynamic, inclusive, and student-centered Honors Program that will attract more students and better serve their academic and transfer goals.

### **Value to the District:**

At the district level, my research will provide insights that can potentially be shared across other community colleges within the district. The goal of fostering diversity and academic excellence aligns with broader educational goals, and the lessons learned from this sabbatical can have a district-wide impact, enhancing Honors Programs beyond our own college. As we strengthen our program, it can serve as a model for other colleges in the district, contributing to a culture of innovation, inclusion, and academic distinction throughout the system.

### **Value to Moorpark College:**

For the college, this sabbatical represents an opportunity to enhance the prestige and effectiveness of its Honors Program. By improving how we recruit and support students, we can increase the overall quality of academic achievement and engagement within the college. A stronger Honors Program can also serve as a cornerstone for academic distinction, attracting prospective students to the college and contributing to its reputation as a place that nurtures

excellence. Furthermore, an inclusive and dynamic Honors Program will better reflect the college's mission of serving the diverse needs of the community.

**Value to Moorpark College Students:**

The primary beneficiaries of this sabbatical will be the students. By studying the best practices of other successful Honors Programs, I can better understand how to increase accessibility and inclusivity in our own program. This research will help us attract a more diverse student body and ensure that those who may not have previously considered themselves eligible or capable of pursuing honors can see a path forward. I will bring back strategies for enhancing support services, mentorship, and opportunities for leadership development—elements that will empower students to reach their full potential and succeed both academically and personally.

**Value to My Professional Competence:**

For me personally, this sabbatical represents an opportunity for professional development. As the honors counselor, staying at the forefront of best practices in honors education will significantly enhance my competence and ability to serve our students effectively. This experience will allow me to grow as a counselor, leader, and advocate for academic excellence, ensuring that I am equipped to guide our students toward success in transfer!

In summary, the sabbatical will strengthen my ability to serve students more effectively, enhance the Honors Program's impact on the college and district, and expand my professional skills as the honors counselor. This research is an invaluable opportunity to elevate the program to new heights, benefitting everyone involved. If approved, I am confident there will be ample coverage during my absence as all counselors have been trained to help honors students.