SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
SABBATICAL REPORT FORM

Submit your completed Sabbatical Report as an email attachment (*.doc file, only), within 60 days of your return to duty. Send your report to the Vice Chancellor of Human Resources & Employer/Employee Relations, David Bugay (dbugay@socccd.edu) with a copy to his assistant Beverly Johnson (bjohnson@socccd.edu).

The first page of this document is the first page of your report.

Submission of a final Sabbatical Report is a component of the sabbatical process. (See SOCCCD 2001-2014 Academic Employee Master Agreement, Article XXVI, Section K-1, “Upon completion of the sabbatical and within sixty (60) days of the faculty member’s return to duty, a narrative report shall be submitted to the Sabbatical Committee for Review and acceptance (or non-acceptance).”

COMPLETE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

Name: Elizabeth Chambers

College: Irvine Valley College

Division/School: Sociology/Social & Behavioral Sciences

Period for which your sabbatical was granted:

Fall 2013  Spring______  Both______

Date and location of required presentation:

Spring 2014. The newly created ten assignments will be assigned as homework for all my Sociology I students (course #64415, 64420, and 64450). A demonstration of how to use the Berkeley SDA Website with their statistical analysis software (http://sda.berkeley.edu) will occur during the second week of class. A comparable presentation will be given every semester to Introduction to Sociology students.

Description and location of materials produced for college/district use (if applicable):

Ten lab/Internet connection assignments with data sets (GSS) guide students to explore and analyze specific websites based on core introductory sociology topics, including culture, socialization, groups and formal organizations, deviance and crime, stratification, gender, race, and marriage and family. The interactive exercises are posted on IVC’s course management system – Blackboard.

Narrative Report

1a. Describe in detail the activities conducted during the sabbatical:
I began the sabbatical reviewing introductory textbooks to form a topic guide of subjects covered in texts. After forming the comprehensive subject list, I explored sociology workbooks seeking free statistical software and data sources using that software. I found three workbooks that could be used as a model to create ten interactive exercises. These texts were “The Practice of Social Research” by Earl Babbie, “Doing Sociology: A Global Perspective: Using MicroCase Explorlt” by Rodney Stark and “Hands-On Sociology” by William Feigelman and Yih-Jin Young.

A goal of the project is to offer the opportunity for students to use their computers as learning tools and for acquiring data management and data analysis skills. I had to find a fast and easy-to-use web-based statistical software platform—offered freely on the web—to provide students a wide variety of professional quality archival data sets. In “Hands-On Sociology”, I found the Survey Documentation and Analysis (SDA) statistical software platform at its UC Berkeley website. Once students have learned a number of statistical analysis procedures, they can investigate more than 150 archival data sets based on this analysis platform at the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Michigan; Princeton University; the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C.; and many other sites. The SDA statistical software platform and datasets available there offered the resources needed to complete my project. In the past, sociologists emphasizing quantitative mastery would need to install statistical software, acquire the necessary data files and then make sure they correctly mesh before embarking on any data analysis tasks. The SDA platform at its UC Berkeley website provides all the necessary resources for students carry out a wide variety of investigations.

The next step was to explore archival data resources. I selected the General Social Survey; a national survey conducted every year or two by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. The General Social Survey (GSS) conducts basic scientific research on the structure and development of American society. The GSS is widely regarded as the single best source of data on societal trends. The 1972-2012 GSS has 5,545 variables, time-trends for 2,072 variables, and 268 trends having 20+ data points. The GSS contains a standard ‘core’ of demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal questions, plus topics of special interest that all relate to sociology. The GSS takes the pulse of America, and is a unique and valuable resource. It has tracked the opinions of Americans over the last four decades.

Since I wanted to draw students so far into the research process that they can begin to do some of their own research, I had to provide students the opportunity to practice interpreting sociological data. I developed introductory exercises to introduce students to hypothesis testing by showing them how to read tables and make interpretations of statistical test results. The initial interactive exercises highlighted univariate analyses. Gradually, the emphasis led to crosstabular analyses. I decided not to introduce the rudiments of multivariate regression analysis in an introductory sociology class. My emphasis was to enhance student empowerment, to enable my students to experience the thrill and excitement of making their own scientific discoveries. The goal was to lead students along a path toward acquiring mastery of data analysis fundamentals and help them overcome their anxieties about dealing with quantitative data. I wanted to create exercises that lead students to confirm many of the things they read in their general sociology texts and to test their own ideas on socialization, crime, formal organizations, family life and a whole host of other subjects.

I created a series of interactive exercises. Each exercise deals with a standard topic found in typical sociology introductory texts. Each activity illustrates key issues and social relationships related to that topic. A worksheet section is provided where students do their own data analysis. This section contains questions that will have students explore sociological issues. The SDA software is used to answer the questions.
The most difficult part of the project was finding variables that matched my hypotheses. An incredible amount of time was spent searching multiple GSS datasets to find appropriate variables. Recoding of original data categories were required to facilitate analyses. I had to create the recodes. In the exercises, I’ve instructed students to copy and paste the relevant recodes into the row, column or control variable boxes found at the SDA website.

b. Explain how these activities achieved the goals

The goal of the sabbatical was to create ten computer lab assignments using free web-based statistical analysis tools and archival survey data. I successfully created ten interactive Internet activities that will teach students how to access the Survey Documentation and Analysis (SDA) statistical software platform at UC Berkeley. Students will learn how to navigate the General Social Survey, which is one of the most widely used databases by social scientists.

With these interactive exercises, students will learn how to more proficiently use the Internet to gather sociological information and to use statistical software to correctly interpret sociological survey data. While working on the interactive exercises, I realized that the work is a work in progress. The GSS is conducted every year or two, which means that assignments will require maintenance. The data sets and interactive exercises will require updating with the most current data to keep the students excited and engaged in exploring trends and constants in attitudes, behaviors, and attributes of Americans.

c. Timeline or calendar showing when these activities were carried out

During the month of January, I reviewed introductory sociology textbooks to find the major topics covered. The goal was wherever the archival data resources permitted, to follow up on themes that appear in introductory texts, giving students opportunities to test for themselves whether textbook theories and prior research are supported by the actual data. I searched for resources to find free open access databases and statistical resources for entry-level sociology students. I chose the SDA software and had to learn how to use it.

During February, March, April and May I completed ten interactive exercises. The following activities were completed: 1) detailed instructions on how to best use the software platform and the GSS datasets; 2) introduction of frequency distributions, cross tabulation and hypothesis testing; 3) explanation of how to interpret tabular outputs into analytically meaningful results; and 4) coverage of a variety of subjects – culture, socialization, groups and organizations, deviance, crime and social control, social stratification, race and ethnicity, gender and gender inequality, sexuality, and the family. Hypotheses were created to be tested by students. Variables had to be found in the GSS data to test the hypotheses. Since GSS has thousands of variables, this task was extremely time consuming. Variables were too complex for introductory students; thus, recoding was required to make variables more understandable for simple cross-tabs. Interactive worksheets were created, that contained questions that require students to do their own data analysis and explore issues.

d. Provide evidence of these activities

Ten interactive computer assignments were created. Please see the attached files.

Internet Connection #1: Suicide and Culture
Internet Connection #2: Sex and Sampling
2. **Impact of these activities**

**a. On teaching and learning**

The creation of interactive activities offers an attractive alternative for teaching entry-level sociology students. Many more of our students enter our classes with a much greater level of computer familiarity than they had a decade ago. Students come to our classes without that fear and trembling that was so often seen in earlier groups of students. Today, more than ever before, we are beginning to find many students who welcome the prospect of using their computers for applications other than word processing, e-mail and web browsing. These interactive exercises provide the opportunity for students to use their computers as learning tools. Most important of all, students acquire critical thinking and data analysis skills. With this supplement, students learn how to more proficiently use the Internet to gather sociological information and to use statistical software to correctly interpret sociological survey data. The exercises also provide an environment for further sociological explorations based on students’ questions and interests.

**b. On faculty member’s professional development**

During this process, I gained knowledge and familiarity with the single best source of data on societal trends; i.e., General Social Survey. Furthermore, I learned how to navigate SDA (Survey Documentation and Analysis) statistical software platform at UC Berkeley website. I explored 150 archival data sets based on this analysis platform at the University of California, Berkeley. Through this website, I can carry out a wide variety of my own investigations on population patterns, family life, crime, aging, education, and a whole host of other subjects that will be shared with my students.

**c. Benefit of these activities to students and the district**

Students and the district benefit from interacting with an easy-to-use web-based statistical software platform and variety of professional quality archival data sets. The supplement is intended to complement sociology textbooks and to increase students’ competence in doing sociological analysis. These exercises are relevant to those pursuing practically any field where numbers are important for establishing knowledge – whether it be business, journalism, law, health careers, or countless others. Furthermore, students benefit by exploring, reinforcing, and extending their knowledge of U.S. society and the social issues that trouble our times.

The District benefits by offering students diversity in selection of sociology courses, knowing that critical thinking skills are emphasized through data analysis, and finding a solution to high priced textbooks.
3. Products of the sabbatical

a. List all products of the sabbatical

Internet connection #1: Suicide and Culture. This exercise guides students on how to use the UC Berkeley SDA statistical software platform and the GSS datasets. Univariate frequency distributions are introduced to explore attitudes about suicide, and demographic and attitudinal characteristics of the U.S. population.

Interconnection #2: Sex and Sampling. Students are shown how to interpret the tabular SDA outputs into analytically meaningful results. The methodological overview covers the following subjects: bivariate analysis, hypothesis testing in social science, applying the scientific method to human behavior, doing survey research, employing descriptive statistics and tests of statistical significance, tests of statistical significance, and the use of the chi-square statistic.

Internet connection #3: Socialization. A dominant sociological subject area is introduced: socialization. Conducting of social science research is continued by introducing Gamma values. Internet connections #4 – 10 deal with a variety of subjects: groups and formal organizations, sexuality in the United States, deviance and crime, social stratification, gender and gender inequality, race and ethnicity and minority relations, and marriage and family. In these exercises, cross-tabulation elements discussed in Internet Connection 2 and 3 are applied. A control variable is the last concept presented to explore three-way cross-tabulations.

b. Location and accessibility of these products.

The ten interactive Internet assignments are currently posted on Blackboard for all Introduction to Sociology Courses. The spring courses are listed as 64415, 64420 and 64450. Internet Connections will be assigned for future Soc. 1 courses. The activities will be up-dated as newer GSS data is collected.

4. Dissemination of results

a. Demonstrate that you have followed the dissemination plan indicated in your proposal

My original sabbatical proposal planned on creating ten interactive exercises ranging from culture to the work and the economy. While creating the exercises, I realized that I was over zealous in the introduction of too many critical and complex concepts in one exercise. Originally I had planned on introducing how to interpret the tabular SDA outputs into analytically meaningful results, using tests of statistical significance, the use of the chi-square statistic and concluding with the finer point of cross-tabulation -- the use of gamma values to summarize the association between two variables. I realized that this would be overwhelming to students. The introduction needed to be broken up into two exercises. Thus, Sex and Sampling was created to highlight interpreting tabular SDA outputs without introducing gamma. In the following exercise, socialization, gamma values were introduced.

The ten interactive exercises have been posted on Blackboard. All Sociology 1 students will complete the activities in the spring of 2014 and in future semesters.