Improving mental wellbeing among students, faculty, and staff: A video workshop series on important mental health topics

Sabbatical Leave Report

Misty Kolchakian, Ph.D.

Mt. San Antonio College

2017-2018

Table of Contents

Abstract (for Submission to the Board of Trustees)

This reports details the activities of the sabbatical project conducted by Dr. Misty Kolchakian during the 2017-2018 academic year. For her sabbatical, Dr. Kolchakian created 10 captioned video workshops on important mental health topics that can be utilized by students and employees at Mt. San Antonio College. These videos can be accessed in the Mt. SAC portal by students and staff. Dr. Kolchakian watched many online tutorials and consulted with those proficient in the technologies she used. She included a blend of background information, empirical research, professional and personal examples, video clips, images, and song clips. The video workshops pertain to the topics of gratitude, life purpose, work-life balance, food and the brain, understanding therapy, improving relationships, improving mood, self esteem, memory/study skills, and sleep. The video workshops range from 30 to 60 minutes in length, with an average length of 45 to 50 minutes. The length of the videos parallels the amount of information/content provided in an "in person" workshop on campus. Dr. Kolchakian asserts that students and employees who view these workshops (and devote the time to the reflective exercises contained in the videos) will be less stressed, more productive, and more successful in reaching their academic and professional goals.

Statement of Purpose

The purposes of this sabbatical study are:

1) To increase the mental and emotional health of students and employees at Mt. San Antonio college.

2) To increase productivity in our students and employees by relieving emotional tension due to challenging life stressors.

3) To learn how to conduct video workshops (closed-captioned) via various online tutorials and informal training opportunities.

4) To design and create instructional video workshops for personal utilization by faculty, staff, and students.

5) To design and create instructional video workshops for course utilization by faculty teaching in psychology, sociology, child development, or other mental health areas.

Methods of Investigation

When creating videos, the following steps were involved:

1) research the programs and software to be used

2) research the literature on the topic

3) write the script (including skits and reflective exercises, as appropriate)

4) record the script ((including skits and reflective exercises, as appropriate)

5) edit the script

6) upload the script into the editing program

7) find accompanying sound, music, video clips, and images

8) edit it all together

9) get feedback from psychology professors, therapists, and/or software proficient individuals

10) send video to captioning services

Given the numerous steps, each video was time consuming to create, with more than 40 hours per week spent at various points throughout the project. More details on these steps can be found in the remainder of the sabbatical paper.

Timeline of Study Sabbatical

August 2017

1) Began research on how to conduct video workshops via online tools, blogs, and informal online trainings, including the various methods of delivery.

2) Began research on equipment options.

September 2017

1) Continued research on how to conduct video workshops via online tools, blogs, and informal online trainings.

2) Met with Library and Learning Resources Technician, Hugo Aguilera, to discuss various methods of delivery, equipment needed, and copyright laws.

3) Researched "best practices" related to creating video workshops.

4) Researched copyright laws pertaining to creation of video workshops for student and employee consumption.

5) Researched material for Video #1 (Life Balance).

6) Wrote and recorded script for video as well as skits and reflective exercises.

7) Found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music.

8) Began video editing for Video #1, including further consultation with those proficient with editing.

October 2017

1) Completed majority of video editing for Video #1.

2) Researched material for Video #2 (Food and the Brain).

3) Wrote and recorded script, self-quiz questions, and reflective exerices for video.

4) Found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music.

November 2017

1) Video editing for Video #2, including consultation.

2) Submitted Videos 1 and 2 for feedback on editing and content.

3) Researched material for Video #3 (Improving Your Memory and Study Skills).

4) Wrote and recorded script, skits, and self-quiz questions for video.

5) Found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music.

December 2017

1) Video recording and finalization of Video #3.

2) Researched material for Video #4 (Sleep Better, Be Better).

3) Wrote and recorded script for video.

4) Found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music.

5) Created Powtunes animated video clip.

6) Video recording and finalization of Video #4.

7) Submitted Videos 3 and 4 for feedback on content.

January 2018

1) Researched material for Video #5 (Enhancing Your Relationships).

2) Watched additional instructional videos on Prezi software, as needed.

3) Wrote and recorded script and reflective exercises for video.

4) Found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music.

5) Video recording and finalization of Video #5.

6) Further consulted with Dale Vickers and Hugo Aguilera about copyright laws, as related to the project.

February 2018

1) Researched material for Video #6 (Developing Life Purpose).

2) Wrote and recorded script and reflective exercises for video.

3) Found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music.

4) Video recording and finalization of Video #6.

5) Submitted Videos 5 and 6 for feedback on editing and content.

March 2018

1) Researched material for Video #7 (Improving Your Mood).

2) Wrote and recorded script and reflective exercises for video.

3) Found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music.

4) Video editing for Video #7.

April 2018

1) Researched material for Video #8 (Benefits of Therapy).

2) Wrote and recorded script for video.

3) Consulted with friend who is proficient with computer drawing software.

4) Generated ideas for relevant sound, video clips, images, music.

5) Video editing for Video #8.

6) Submitted Videos 7 and 8 for feedback on editing and content.

May 2018

1) Researched material for Video #9 (Improving Your Self Esteem).

2) Wrote and recorded script and reflective exercises for video.

3) Found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music.

4) Video editing for Video #9.

June 2018

1) Researched material for Video #10 (Gratitude: How to Create a Life of Happiness and Well-being).

2) Wrote and recorded script and reflective exercises for video.

3) Found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music.

4) Video editing for Video #10.

5) Submitted Videos 9 and 10 for feedback on editing and content.

6) Created extra credit worksheets for professor usage.

Narrative Summary of Study Sabbatical

The purpose of this section of the report is to describe experiential aspects of the video workshop creation process during the study sabbatical. This section will include specifics of the timeline, the steps involved, samples of research found on the various topics, and when relevant, thought process and personal reflections related to the process.

August - September, 2017

Technology, Equipment, and Software Program Research

I began the project by researching the term "webinar", as used in the sabbatical proposal. Upon further research, it became apparent that the project described in the sabbatical proposal would be more properly labeled "a video workshop", given that it would not be "live", to avoid any confusion *Note: I subsequently verified with Laura Martinez that the term "video workshop" was acceptable and was not a deviation from the project as previously described.* Therefore, "video workshop" will be the term used for this project going forward.

Next, I began researching methods of delivery. During this timeframe, I met with Hugo Aguilera, the Library and Learning Resources Technician, to discuss equipment needed, copyright laws, and various methods of delivery (and Mt. SAC's ability to financially support the use of various modalities).

No matter which editing program was to be used, Hugo suggested that a high-quality microphone would be necessary. He directed me to a cost-effective but high quality choice on Amazon. We then discussed copyright laws briefly, and he mentioned the "free use" images and sounds and where I could find those.

Given his limited knowledge on video editing, we researched some options together. Some programs had a cost incurred (e.g., Filmora) while other programs had a steep learning curve (e.g., Adobe Premiere Pro, Sony Vegas). Windows MovieMaker would prove to be an

unacceptable option (i.e., its installer is no longer available on Microsoft's website, and the software won't receive any security updates to fix newly discovered vulnerabilities). When I began to ask others what software they used, many stated they used iMovie, and they suggested it was very user-friendly and that it could accomplish the ultimate goals on my project. One colleague, Joshua Knapp, who had created short videos clips as a portion of his sabbatical project, showed me the basics of a program called "GarageBand". Both iMovie and GarageBand require a Mac computer, which I did not have. Thankfully, I was able to borrow one from the college for the duration of my project. Upon researching both of these options further, I discovered that iMovie was much more "user friendly" and would provide everything that I needed. Therefore, that is the program I used for many of my videos. I spent many hours watching YouTube videos on how to use the program; however, even more time was spent reading blogs or posts from Apple about how to handle certain roadblocks that came up during the editing process.

I wanted to learn multiple methods of making videos during my sabbatical time, so I also researched how to make videos using PowerPoint and learned a new program called Prezi. Given the frequency with which I utilize PowerPoints in my courses, I knew that learning how to make videos with PowerPoint and with Prezi would be helpful to me should I decide to attempt the "flip the classroom" method of teaching for my honors course or even for posting "lectures" in my online courses in the future. It became apparent that Prezi was a glorified PowerPoint program, providing a more visually interesting way of progressing through slides containing factual information. Prezi took some time to learn, and it also incurred a cost to remove the watermarks on the slides.

During this time, I also researched video animation software such as Videoscribe and Powtunes. Both incurred a cost, but Powtunes allowed me to do a free trial, so I planned to attempt to create a short video clip in Powtunes in a future video.

I also researched the options for screen recording software (and discussed these with Hugo). Screen-cast-o-matic and Camtasia were discussed (the latter incurring a hefty cost). Therefore, it was decided I would use Screen-cast-o-matic for any screen recording purposes.

Process for Video Creation

Before beginning my first video, I read many articles and watched videos about "best practices" when creating videos. I wanted to make sure my videos were not too dull or dry, while still allowing me to give the viewer plenty of important content. The most important feedback that showed up repeatedly was to avoid being a "talking head" wherein a student would watch my face talking and sharing factual information for the majority of the video. Instead, it was deemed important to include visual images, video clips (of others talking or speaking besides me), intro and outro music, activities/reflective exercises. In other words, just like in the classroom, it would behoove me to "mix it up". Variety is important, especially for our current student population. One article noted that it is important to present small bits of information and then have a practice or reflection opportunity before moving on to the next segment (Rosenshine, 2012). This is one of the reasons why I included activities throughout the videos. This is another reason why I chose to have different methods of creating videos, so that any student who wanted to watch multiple videos could have a different look so that it did not become too repetitive or stale. I also made sure to appeal to the various learning styles (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic). Students were able to watch the video and its images, listen to my voice, and to engage in reflective exercises, self-quizzes, and practice examples.

I also knew that I wanted my videos to be aligned with the Positive Psychology movement, largely pioneered by Dr. Martin Seligman in 1996. When psychology became an independent discipline, the focus was primarily on weaknesses, struggles, and what was NOT functioning properly within the individual. In contrast, positive psychology which has gained popularity in recent decades, focuses on an individual strengths and helps people to use those

strengths to improve their lives. When teaching Psychology 33: Psychology of Effective Living, positive psychology is a huge emphasis in this course. Students often report leaving my course feeling happier, less stressed, and more motivated toward success. I wanted my videos to achieve similar results. After all, each student and employee has important strengths to be honed and has the potential for self-actualization with proper support and when self-limiting barriers are removed. Thus, one will notice the "positive" and uplifting approach taken in my videos.

The first video

After researching the aforementioned areas, it was time to move on to my first video. I chose to begin with the topic of "Life Balance", as I had given an in-person workshop on this previously. I figured it would make sense to tweak and update that workshop, given that it was my first video and would be a slower video editing process since I was new to the process. I was able to receive assistance from my cousin when I had struggles with video editing.

When creating videos, the steps involved were 1) research the information 2) write the script, 3) record the script, 4) edit the script, 5) upload the script into the editing program, 6) find accompanying sound, music, video clips, and images, and 7) edit it all together. I quickly realized that my goal of creating 11 videos was a bit lofty, given how time consuming the video editing process proved to be. Steps 1 through 5 proved to be the less time-consuming, but steps 6 and 7 lead to many sleep deprived nights in order to stay on track. Given that the video would be 45 minutes in length, I wanted to make sure step 6 was thoroughly completed so that there would be enough variety to engage students. I even wrote and created a separate "skit" that my husband, toddler, and cats performed with me in our living room to add some levity and a break from the factual information. This skit was intended to create variety and help engage the viewer. Creating the skit was time-consuming given that I had never done something like that before.

In summary, during the month of September, I was able to complete steps 1 through 6 of my first video and to begin step 7.

October – December 2017

I began the month of October with finishing step 7 of the process (video editing). As mentioned previously, this was a very tedious process, and the perfectionist in me was displeased. I resigned to "doing my best" as there were some sound issues from the recording process that could not be edited out without starting over. Luckily, the sound issues were merely slight changes in volume and did not prevent the listener from being able to hear or understand the video (and something I was able to improve upon in future videos).

Once finished with the first video, I shared it with a couple of psychology professionals who stated that it was informative and interesting. This feedback validated that I was on the correct path, and thus I began the second video. I repeated the process, from researching material for Video #2 (Food and the Brain), recording the script, finding and incorporating relevant clips and media.

In November, I completed the video editing for Video #2 (with consultation, as needed). I researched material for Video #3 (Improving Memory), wrote and recorded the script for the video, and I found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music. I also recorded another brief "homemade" skit for this video, as an attempt at levity. For this video, I decided to put my information into PowerPoint since this is a topic that is covered in Introductory psychology courses. This video would not be meant to replace information from this course, but would be a great supplement to the already existing lecture, as this video is focused on helping to improve one's memory. For the first two videos, the scripts were recorded all at once. With PowerPoint, it made more sense to record the script a few slides at a time, as the recordings are linked to each specific slide anyway. This allowed for a smoother process of script recording with fewer "errors" or "edits" needed in the script recording process.

In December, I completed the video recording and finalization of Video #3. I was pleased with the result and decided to use that for my other video topics that would lend themselves best

to this format. Given that I had progressed nicely with the Memory video, I decided to work on the next video in the same program (Video #4 on Improving Sleep). During this month, I researched material for the video and put it into PowerPoint, recorded the script for video, and found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, and music. I further researched Powtunes, an animation software, and I created a short video clip that I inserted into the larger video. Given that I had never used this software previously, this animated video clip creation was time-consuming, but it was also an enjoyable process. I was able to complete the video recording and finalization of Video #4.

Reflections on my project (Fall Semester)

With one semester of my sabbatical now completed, I reflected on my process and what I learned. I had to work more than 40 hours per week to make sure that I stayed on track with what I proposed, as each step of the process was more time consuming than initially anticipated. This was a tough semester for me, as it was all new to me. While I feel that I am able to master in-person workshops, the transition to video workshops was far from seamless. Although I would say the quality of this first two videos was somewhat marginal (from a production perspective), it still had plenty of instructional value. I was pleased with the content and thoroughness of my videos as well as my attempts to be creative and add in moments of levity, when appropriate. I will use these videos and I believe they will be valuable in my classes and to the larger campus population. (See Benefit to Professional Development section for more information).

January- February 2018

January – February was another extremely busy and productive period of the sabbatical. I felt this was a great time to transition to the third method I had planned to use for my project, creating videos in Prezi. I have seen other educators (and sometimes students) create presentations using this software, and I had always found them more engaging than PowerPoint,

so I was eager to learn. I had initially researched it back in September, so I only had to research this program when I hit roadblocks. Unfortunately, I hit more roadblocks than I would have liked, and I quickly learned the limitations of what this program offers, but the benefits of the visually appeal during slide transition outweighed any minor limitations, so I proceeded.

In addition to researching Prezi, highlights from this time period included researching material for Video #5 (Enhancing Relationships) and Video #6 (Developing Life Purpose), writing and recording the scripts for the videos, finding and incorporating relevant sound, video clips, images, and music. Then I finished with the video recording and finalization of Videos #5 and #6. The video recording portion included the utilization of Screen-cast-o-matic, a screen capturing software program that was fairly user-friendly. I had never used this program before, so it did take some time to learn, but it was pretty seamless overall.

I also consulted with Dale Vickers and Hugo Aguilera about copyright laws, which can be difficult to interpret. In our classrooms, we may show video clips from the internet or a movie during class, given that the information is being presented for educational purposes and not for profit. The same goals exist here, even though my videos will ultimately go online somewhere, so I wanted to be extra careful. In my first couple of videos, I was careful to only use images from Pixabay that were "free use"; however, these images were dull and uninspiring, and I feared they may not engage the average viewer. After consulting with Dale and Hugo, the consensus seemed to be that it would be best to place the videos on the portal (as opposed to the world wide web), so that students and employees could access them freely. This would ensure it was clear that the goal was to educate and inform and not for any financial incentive. Fair use is also more likely to be granted when a large portion of the content is not taken but rather a smaller chunk, and when that chunk is not considered a proprietary creative piece. With this feedback, I felt more free proceeding to select images and clips that were interesting and compelling, thereby improving my videos, while still respecting the copyright laws.

Reflections on my Project (Winter intersession)

Despite being busy, this period felt calmer than the Fall semester portion when everything felt brand new. I was able to learn new software (Prezi and Screen-cast-o-matic), and although the former had its struggles, I felt more confident in tackling those issues. I began to feel concerned about having time to create 5 more videos, given how long each video was taking to create. I took my own advice from my various videos and reminded myself to take it one step at a time and not to be so hard on myself or expect perfection.

March 2018

In March, I researched material for Video #7 (Improving Mood). For this video, given the seriousness of the topic and that some viewers who watch may be struggling with depression or other mood disorders, I decided to revert back to PowerPoint for this video, as this program is most conducive to inclusion of plenty of factual material. When I wrote and recorded the script for the video, I wanted to make sure it would represent all students and employees on campus and not just those that struggle with mood disorders. Therefore, I chose to focus on ways ALL people can improve mood. After all, who would not enjoy greater happiness? For this video, I generated my own acronym based on the research to help describe the process for improving mood. I referred to it as the MINDSET method, and it was based on researched done on the the Therapeutic Lifestyle Change method (Ilardi, 2010). In addition, I made certain to include information on seeking psychological services and included a referral for the health center at Mt. SAC. I also referred the listener to my video on "Understanding Therapy" so that he/she could learn more about the different options for therapy as well as information that debunks many of the myths associated with going to therapy. I also found and incorporated relevant sound, video clips, images, music and then engaged in video editing for Video #7, similar to the process for many of the other videos.

April 2018

For this video, I went in a different direction. I still used iMovie for video editing; however, I wanted this video to have more animations. I consulted with a friend who loves creating images via Fire Alpaca, a program designed to draw and paint on the computer! Given my complete lack of ability to draw, I asked her to be the illustrator, and I came up with the graphics and concepts I wanted to see. I gave her the script, and she drew the images. I then edited them together in a similar format to some of my other videos using iMovie. Her illustrations were impressive, but I will not pretend that I created those, as stick figures are beyond the scope of my ability or this project. So she drew, and I did everything else. I liked the end result, and I think the viewer will appreciate this video and the change of pace it offers, visually.

May- June 2018

The last phase of the project was the most hectic but also the most rewarding. I saved two of my favorite topics for the last phase for a variety of reasons. My creative juices started flowing more as time progressed, and I wanted to present the Self Esteem video in a creative manner. I reflected on my favorite film, "the Wizard of Oz", and I started to see some parallels between the characters in the film and aspects of self esteem. For instance, the Scarecrow's negative thinking and lack of self-belief despite evidence to the contrary (i.e., he was the one who came up with a plan when the characters' journey got tough). This parallel was a great springboard to talking about the impact negative thinking can have on us and our sense of self as well as ways to combat that negative thinking using psychological principles. I went through the same processes for this video as the others (research, record script, find relevant media, and then edit it all together). I feel proud that I was able to improve upon the limitations in the first two videos I edited using iMovie. It helped me to see how much I learned over this academic year about all aspects of video creation.

For the final video, Video #10, I chose gratitude. One reason I saved the gratitude topic until the very end is because throughout the year I collected video clips of students and friends/acquaintances sharing at least one thing they were grateful for in their lives. I put together a montage of what they had to say, as I felt it would make the video feel more "real" and "human" to hear from others who focused on gratitude. In essence, I made a video within a video, as it took some time to edit together the clips from the various participants. I followed the same process for video creation and editing, aside from this montage creation. I ended the video with an acronym that I created for Gratitude, one that I hope will inspire viewers.

During this time, I also created an extra credit worksheet for any professors who choose to offer extra credit to their students for watching any of these videos. I wanted to make the lives of my fellow colleagues as easy as possible. I believe in the information I shared in these videos and wanted to make it as accessible as possible.

Captioning Information

Related to accessibility, all 10 videos are closed captioned. I submitted the majority of my videos to captioning during the May-June timeframe, as I wanted to make sure there were not any last minute changes needed prior to captioning. A couple of videos I sent to captioning in April to get a feel for the process and how long it would take. The site I used is 3cmediasolutions.org, as it came highly recommended from a couple of my colleagues who have used it. This captioning process was efficient and well done. This is also where my videos are housed, captions included, and the links for each video (10 links) can easily be distributed appropriately, whether targeted distribution is preferred (e.g., a professor offering extra credit) or mass distributed via the Mt. SAC portal.

Reflections on my Project (Spring semester)

I was thrilled to have completed 10 videos given how time consuming and tedious the process had been. I was glad I saved two of my favorite topics until the end, and I was able to complete the last two videos more quickly due to my increased proficiency with video editing. I improved upon the errors I had made in the first two videos (related to volume regulation), and I felt my creativity and passion thriving. As an interesting parallel to the videos I was creating, my mental health started to improve over the course of my sabbatical year. I will elaborate on this last statement more in another section of this paper.

The Final 10 Video workshop Topics

While I stuck closely to the topics included in the sabbatical proposal, slight modifications were made. These modifications did not affect or significantly change the stated goals of the project. Most topics remained the same; however, I wanted to note a few changes that were made in the service of capturing as much information as possible.

The first change is that I combined relationships and communication into one video. These two topics are highly related, as there is a plethora of research suggesting that they are positively correlated and that improving communication helps to strengthen relationships.

The second change is that I added "Improving Study Skills" to the video on "Improving Memory." Again, these two topics seemed interrelated. In this way, I was able to provide more information and directly target the importance of solid study skills.

The third change is that I changed the title and emphasis of the video I originally titled "Depression" to "Improving Mood". In this way, the focus became more positive and uplifting and would speak to more students. Although not all students can claim to experiencing full-blown depression, many students will agree that they would like to improve their mood. There is less stigma associated with the notion of improving mood as compared to depression, so more students may feel "safer" watching it, especially as an extra credit assignment for a class that their

teacher will be grading. This decision was made after consulting with students who had taken my courses.

The fourth change was that I initially planned to discuss mood and therapy in the same video, but I quickly realized how much information that would involve, and I decided to separate them. The topic of therapy deserved its own video, given that there were so many myths and fears about therapy, based on my discussions with students (and employees, friends, and family!). I did refer the viewer to the Therapy video and provided some resources for help in the Mood video, so that they knew where to go for help even if they chose not to watch the Therapy video.

Lastly, the fifth change was made when I realized that many of my videos had information related to stress, as it is difficult to tease apart stress from other related topics such as life balance, mood, sleep, and memory, to name a few. Stress can negatively impact each of those topics, and thus information about stress was addressed in multiple places in my videos. Having another video on stress felt more repetitive than if I spent my energy moving toward topics like self esteem and gratitude.

Sampling of Empirical Research on Each Topic

There is a plethora of research in each video, and the lines between empirical research, theories, and personal opinion/experience are clearly delineated. In this section, I will provide a sampling of some of the empirical studies included in the ten video workshops. Please note that this is just a small sample of what is included in the videos.

Video #1: Life Balance

- In a study, 94% of working professionals reported working more than 50 hours per week. Nearly half said they worked more than 65 hours per week. Lack of balance can hurt health, relationships, and overall happiness (Mental Health America, 2017).

- Research done on the perceptions of stress play a bigger role in our stress and health than the actual stressor (McGonigal, 2016).

- Research shows the importance of the parasympathetic nervous system (which calms us down) balancing out the sympathetic nervous system (which amps us up). Therefore self care is important (Koopman, et al., 2011).

Video #2: Food and the Brain

- A research study found that after eating a high-glycemic meal, blood sugar initially spiked, followed by a sharp crash a few hours later. The fMRI confirmed that this crash in blood glucose intensely activated a brain region involved in addictive behaviors, known as the nucleus accumbens. (Lennerz, et al., 2013).

- In studies of rats who were exposed to cocaine, then given a choice between intravenous cocaine or water infused with saccharin (sugar alternative), 94% chose saccharin (Lenoir, Serre, Cantin, & Ahmed, 2007).

- Breakfast skippers consumed 40 percent more sweets, 55 percent more soft drinks, 45 percent fewer vegetables, and 30 percent less fruit per day than those who eat breakfast (Farshchi, Taylor, & Macdonald, 2005).

Video #3: Improving Memory and Study Skills

- Self-quizzing boosts memory more than studying does (Pastotter & Bauml, 2014).

- In an experiment (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002), students enrolled in a regular college class were given set due dates for three papers, evenly distributed through the semester. Others were told they could submit the papers at any time. Those that submitted all their work at the end of the semester had inferior papers, possibly due to poor planning.

- Playing music AND listening to certain types of music (in general) can enhance memory, grow new neurons and improve reaction time and aid in integrating multisensory input (Landry & Champoux, 2017).

- REM sleep is important for procedural memory—the remembering "how" to do something (for example, riding a bicycle or playing the piano) while Non-REM sleep seems important for declarative memory (factual info) (Ellenbogen, Payne, & Stickgold, 2006).

- Researchers found that regular aerobic exercise boosted the size of the hippocampus, the brain area involved in memory and learning (Godman, 2014).

Video #4: Sleep Better, Be Better

- Lund, Reider, Whiting, and Pritchard (2010) found that more than 1/3 of college students described their sleep as "fair to very bad." Over 60% were categorized as poor-quality sleepers. Students overwhelmingly stated that emotional and academic stress negatively impacted sleep.

- Sleep loss leads to increased negative mood and decreased ability to regulate negative emotion (Gordon, 2013).

- Poor sleep leads to cognitive difficulties and loss of attention which then decrease performance (Marhefka, 2011).

- Those with the highest GPA had earlier bed times and earlier wake times, so TIMING of sleep and wakefulness contributes more to academic performance than total sleep hours. (Eliasson, Lettieri, & Eliasson, 2010).

- Of all the variables studied, (exercise, eating, sleep habits, mood states, perceived stress, time management, social support, spiritual or religious habits, number of hours worked per week), sleep habits, particularly wake-up times, accounted for the largest amount of variance in grade point averages (Trockel, Barnes, & Egget, 2000).

- People who were more sleep deprived did not feel better after an achievement, compared to those with adequate sleep (Zohar, Tzaschinksy, Epstein, & Lavie, 2005).

Video #5: Enhancing Your Relationships

- Not forgiving has been shown in research studies to be correlated with physical health symptoms (Weir, 2017).

- "Emotional disclosure" is associated with better mood, more positive self-perceptions, and better health (Weiten, Dunn, & Hammer, 2012).

- Similarity in humor is important indicator of romantic attraction, as found in a meta-analysis of humor and relationship studies, as long as they did not make their partners the butt of the joke (Hall, 2015).

Video #6: Developing Life Purpose

- Life purpose had a positive correlation with extraversion, emotional stability, happiness ,and life satisfaction (Schulenberg, 2004).

- A positive correlation was found between logotherapy and self-efficacy beliefs (DeWitz, Woolsey, & Walsh, 2009).

- Life purpose also had a negative correlation with depression, anxiety (Schulenberg, 2004) , neuroticism (Halama, 2005) and boredom (Fahlman et al., 2009).

- Having life purpose is positively associated with greater resiliency, which leads to better outcomes after facing a traumatic event (Bonanno, Rennicke, & Dekel, 2005).

Video #7: Improving Your Mood

- Byrne and Byrne (1993) conducted a review of empirical studies and found support for the anti-depressant, anti-anxiety and mood enhancing effects of exercise.

- Blumenthal et al (2007) found that those who had a low dose of exercise (30 min brisk walking 3 times per week) improved just as much as those taking Zoloft. BUT the most interesting finding was that those taking Zoloft were more likely than exercisers to relapse 10 months later.

- The emotional support provided by social connections helps to reduce the damaging effects of stress and can foster a sense of purpose in life (Umberson & Montez, 2010).

- People who feel more connected to others have lower levels of anxiety and depression and also have higher self-esteem, greater empathy for others, are more trusting and cooperative (Seppala, 2016).

- Bright light stimulates brain production of serotonin, which regulates mood (Nall, 2018).

- An experiment showed that those who switched to a healthy, Mediterranean-style diet showed fewer symptoms of depression than the control group after 3 months. In fact, more than a third of them no longer even met the criteria for being depressed (Jacka et al., 2017).

Video #8: Benefits of Therapy

- According to the survey conducted by the University of Phoenix (2013), 27 percent of Americans have received professional counseling. Of those who ever received counseling, almost half had reported feeling depressed.

- Every approach to therapy has been studied experimentally, many of which compare various methods of therapy to one another and also to a placebo, and the results consistently show therapy outperforms a placebo (duh) and outperforms medication alone as well (de Mello, de Jesus, Bacaltchuk, Verdeli, &, Neugebauer, 2005).

- The average levels of negative affect that people experience and how they respond to seemingly minor events in their daily lives have long-term implications for their mental health. Charles, Piazza, Mogle, Sliwinski, & Almeida, 2013).

Video #9: Improving your Self Esteem

- Sleep deprivation increases your odds of feeling overly sensitive, thereby affecting your relationships with others, yourself, and your goals (Roberts, 2014).

- Brain imaging studies reveal why verbalizing our feelings makes our negative feelings less intense (UCLA, 2007).

- Connecting with others has been shown SCIENTIFICALLY to have great impact on our self esteem. And HELPING others does even more to improve our self esteem (Roberts, 2014).

Video #10: Gratitude: How to Create a Life of Happiness and Well-being

- Gratitude can trigger upward spirals that result in greater emotional well-being (Lee, Tong, & Sim, 2015).

- Kaufman (2015) found that the single best predictor of good relationships and positive emotional wellbeing was... gratitude. (This was ahead of both love and kindness!)

- Lanham, Rye, Rinsky, and Weill (2012) found that workplace-specific gratitude predicted less emotional exhaustion and greater job satisfaction after controlling for variables of hope and dispositional gratitude.

- Spending a few minutes daily focused on gratitude helped them avoid "ruts", reduced their anxiety and depression, and increased performance (Davis et al., 2016).

Sampling of Interactive components to enhance engagement

In addition to the research included in the videos, each video also contains a more engaging or interactive component. Although many other engaging components were included (i.e., video clips, images, sound, music, real world examples), I am simply highlighting some examples that I created for each video.

Video #1: Life Balance—homemade skit, reflective exercises

Video #2: Food and the Brain—test yourself questions, reflective exercises

Video #3: Improving Memory and Study Skills—homemade skit, test yourself questions

Video #4: Sleep Better, Be Better—self-created animated video clip

Video #5: Enhancing Your Relationships—practice exercises, vignette

Video #6: Developing Life Purpose—reflective exercises

Video #7: Improving Your Mood—reflective exercises

Video #8: Benefits of Therapy—animation throughout entire video

Video #9: Improving your Self Esteem—reflective exercises

Video #10: Gratitude—reflective exercises; video montage created

Benefits of Study Sabbatical

Benefits to My Professional Development

Truth be told, with this project choice, I did not pick what would be easiest for me. There are plenty of options I could have proposed for a project if I wanted to make my life easier. I have never been one to take the easy road or to cut corners. I picked something that I knew would be a challenge for me. Although I teach online and am comfortable with all the basics, I had never created a video of any type before. The first time I opened iMovie, I was intimidated. And not only did I learn to use one program, but I watched countless videos to learn how to use several different programs. I chose to use more than one program, partly for personal growth so that I would learn as much as possible, and partly because if any student or staff member chooses to watch more than one video, I did not want the videos to feel repetitive in format. During the course of this project, I learned how to make videos with iMovie, Prezi, and PowerPoint, and I learned to use software called Screen-cast-o-matic and PowTunes.

In addition to learning the various technologies, I learned a lot of valuable information on the various topics I selected. The empirical research and literature reviews will help me as an instructor with integrating important information on mental well-being into my lectures. It also helped me on a personal level. Even though I teach students how to improve their well-being does not mean I am immune to the need to improve myself. Throughout the duration of the project, I improved in my mood, sleep habits, gratitude practices, relationship communication, and even started feeding myself brain-healthier foods! I wanted to make sure I was "living and breathing" the information I was teaching.

The most significant change was an improvement in my self efficacy related to the use of technology. As mentioned before, although I am extremely comfortable teaching online courses and utilizing the basic technology needed, I was fearful and reticent to try more advanced technology. Past experiences with even the simplest technology have been frustrating, with

computer viruses, lost data, and printer malfunctions. Similar technological struggles occurred in this project, yet I surmounted all the obstacles without giving up. I was able to solve problems I did not think I could solve. I am now more comfortable with various software programs, and I even voluntarily chose to make an intro video of myself describing myself for the first day of classes (and students said they enjoyed it). It seems once I opened the flood gates of video editing, I could not stop myself! Because of this project, I feel like I can take advantage of any new technology and learn how to successfully employ it in the classroom.

My biggest struggle throughout this project was attempting to make the videos as fun and engaging as I aim to be in the classroom. Students consistently praise my classes for being "fun yet informative". In traditional classes, I am often described as "humorous" or "funny", and yet I found it tougher to achieve the "Fun" part in the videos. I definitely added elements of levity with humorous video clips or images or home videos, but I knew the information I was presenting was very serious and not to be taken too lightly. For instance, with the topic of "Improving mood", I wanted to be sensitive to the fact that students struggling with depression may be watching, and I did not want them to feel I was making a joke of it. In a classroom environment, it is much easier to convey the proper tone, but online/video format has more risk of misinterpretation. Plus, jokes feel much more contrived and premeditated when making a video. I decided that being inspiring and "real" was more important and engaging than an ill-fitted knock knock joke (although I do have one of those too!).

Having said that, I know I did my best to make the videos relevant, interesting, and informative. For purposes of engagement and attention spans, I made sure to include variety in each video in the form of various images, video clips, reflective exercises, quizzes, skits, and real life examples taken from my personal experience as well as my professional work. On a related note, I was challenged with letting go of some perfectionistic tendencies. This project was sometimes "messy", given that I did not always feel confident with what I was achieving, but

perhaps sabbatical is not meant to be "easy" but rather a growth opportunity. In my opinion, we do not grow nearly as much without some discomfort or struggle.

Summary of Benefit to Professional Development

When perusing the anticipated benefits of my sabbatical study (written in Fall 2016), I can say that I achieved all of them. I gained a deeper understanding of the research literature on some of the most important mental health topics in the field. This knowledge helped and will continue to help me in my teaching. As stated previously, it helped my own personal mental wellbeing also. During this year, I looked deep within and worked on myself as a person and as a professional. I also gained the experience of creating video workshops. This sabbatical gave me time to create meaningful work utilizing technology I had never used and increased my confidence in using technology, in general. And learning something so foreign to me also renewed my appreciation for how vulnerable and overwhelming it can feel to be a student, especially in areas that are not in one's wheelhouse.

I learned to use iMovie for video editing, Prezi for an alternate method of slide and video creation, and also learned to make videos via PowerPoint. In addition, I learned to use Screen-cast-o-matic for screen capture software, and I learned PowTunes as an animation software. I also learned where to send material for captioning, which is very useful information.

Also, this project allowed me to obtain greater life balance (Note: Video #1 explains why life balance is crucial). The project also met my need for variety in my professional work. After teaching for 11 years on campus (including most intersessions), having a respite from the classroom environment (which I do love tremendously) energized me and helped me avoid potential burnout in the future. Although my sabbatical was a blessing, I am eager to return to the classroom.

Benefits to the faculty in the Psychology department

When I shared my proposed project with all faculty in my department, I was met with tremendous support. Many faculty members stated that they would be interested to use my

finished product and are eager to see it when completed. I polled our department's faculty about the topics to create, as I wanted the finished product to be useful. Once my final project and paper is approved by the Sabbatical Committee (fingers crossed), I will send faculty the links for the videos so that they may use them for personal growth or for a class assignment or activity.

Given that I teach a variety of courses for the Psychology Department, I believe it is important to note that my project aligns with the course measurable objectives and student learning outcomes. In this way, the project will be useful to many professors teaching in our department. I will highlight a few of them here. (For a full list of courses and SLOs that align with my project, please see the sabbatical proposal).

Psyc 1a: I applied psychological principles to personal experience in my own life (as real world examples in the videos), and I encouraged viewers to do the same when they watched.

Psyc 33: I explained the role of healthy communication in relationship building and maintenance I shared interpersonal communication skills and conflict resolution techniques. I discussed how attitudes, social perception, and social influence affect views of self and others in a variety of videos. I also discussed stress in many of the videos as well as healthy vs. unhealthy coping mechanisms. I explicitly explained how psychological factors, nutrition, exercise and sleep impacted physical and mental health. I identified how personal factors relate to career planning, job satisfaction, and specifically, life purpose. I encouraged meaningful self-evaluation related to increasing lifelong personal well-being.

Psyc 5: I encouraged the viewer to apply problem solving and decision making skills from a psychological perspective. I identified techniques in self-regulation and encouraged the viewer to apply behavior modification techniques.

Benefits to Faculty in Other Departments

Faculty in non-psychology disciplines often approach psychology professors, including myself, and ask us how we might handle a particular student's emotional situation. There appears

to be a need for faculty to learn better ways to help students (or where to direct them in addition to the health center). Faculty could potentially refer students to these video workshops on an "as needed" basis, either directly when students approach them, or via a referral system embedded into the portal (similar to how we refer students to academic counseling or tutoring). Or they could assign the videos as extra credit in their courses, if they so desired.

In addition to the webinars being a resource for students, I believe the webinars could also be a helpful resource for Mt. SAC employees in their own lives. When conducting workshops in campus, faculty indicate they want to attend but cannot attend due to time constraints. With the video workshops, faculty could "attend" at a time that is convenient. Many staff have also said they are reticent to attend a workshop on a topic which they may not want their colleagues to know is a concern for them (e.g., work-life balance, overcoming addiction, etc). The anonymity and ability to watch from one's own home would also increase the likelihood that employees would "attend" or watch.

Benefit to the college of Mt. SAC

The Mount San Antonio College mission statement is powerful, and I believe my completed project supports this mission. This project supports all students in achieving their educational goals in an environment of academic excellence, promoting lifelong learning through the mastery of basic skills, and enhancing personal well-being, all of which would be accomplished by my proposed sabbatical. As asserted in the sabbatical proposal, assisting students and employees with emotional wellbeing will help them achieve their educational goals and avoid dropout and will help employees enhance their mental wellbeing to prevent burnout. Applying psychological principles to personal life helps promote lifelong learning and enhanced wellbeing. Now that the project is completed, these benefits could be empirically tested.

A core value of Mt. SAC is "community building." I believe this project can also provide direct benefit to the campus Health Center's mental health services. Those who view the webinars

will have more awareness of emotional wellbeing and the factors that increase or decrease it. In the videos, viewers were given information and resources for campus mental health services. As stated in the sabbatical proposal, college counseling services are largely underutilized. I believe that these video workshops can be a stepping stone to greater openness to seeking services. The videos will provide information that can help reduce the stigma associated with seeking help, and one of the videos has this theme as its entire focus!

The topic of benefits to the college was explicitly detailed in the sabbatical proposal, so in the interest of avoiding redundancy, I will refer the reader to the proposal. I will just add that I am happy to be a consultant for any employees who need assistance with either video creation/editing or with one of the mental health topics on which I have presented.

Future Plans and Potential POD Presentation

I plan to implement these videos in my own courses. Initially, I will offer them as extra credit opportunities. Once I receive student feedback, I will make any (reasonable) final changes and include them as part of the lesson plan, when appropriate. I will also send the links to my colleagues so that they may use the video workshops in their courses (or for their personal growth). With approval, I will talk to the IT department to find out the best way to put the videos onto the portal so that all employees and students can benefit.

I also plan to pioneer a movement on campus called "The Happiness Project". This is one of the things I feel most excited about. This project would include focus on many of the topics covered in my videos (Improving Mood, Life Balance, Life Purpose, Healthy Relationships, Gratitude, etc). This would not be a student club, per se, but rather it could be an event, or more likely, an ongoing series of events designed to focus on using positive psychology for the ultimate goal of happiness and mental well-being. Some ideas for the events are group discussions, hands on activities, "pay it forward" opportunities to give selflessly of our time or energy, gratitude-related activities (e.g., gratitude letter distribution day; making a gratitude "tree"), or research

projects on the aforementioned topics. I do not have all the details carefully ironed out, partly because I want student voices and buy-in for this, as it will be a large effort. "The Positive Psychology Center" led by Dr. Seligman (the father of Positive Psychology) at the University of Pennsylvania will be a great resource, as they promote the training, research, and dissemination of positive psychology. I already briefly discussed this future goal with the Associate Dean of Humanities, Jeanne Marie Velickovic, who approved of the idea. I feel, in this way, I could really make a difference!

For a POD presentation, there are a variety of options based on my project. I could choose a particular topic to share with faculty. I could also conduct a Mental Well-being Workshop Series, where I present a different topic each week. I could have a session devoted to the Happiness Project I want to pioneer at Mt. SAC. I could also focus on the technology piece of video creation and editing, wherein I could share snippets of various videos I created. I would be curious as to whether the committee has a preference.

A final note of Gratitude

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Salary and Leaves Committee for the invaluable professional development opportunities given to me through this sabbatical study. I am very honored to have been given this growth opportunity, and it reinvigorated and empowered me in a way that words cannot fully express. Thank you very much for your time and effort.

References

Ariely, D., & Wertenbroch, K. (2002). Procrastination, Deadlines, and Performance: Self Control by Precommitment. *Psychological Science, 13 (3)*, 219-224.

Blumenthal, J. A., et al. (2007). Exercise and Pharmacotherapy in the Treatment of Major Depressive Disorder. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 69*(7), 587–596.

Bonanno, G.A., Rennicke, C., & Dekel, S. (2005). Self-enhancement among high-exposure survivors of the September 11th terrorist attack: resilience or social maladjustment? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 88 (6)*, 984-998.

Byrne, A. & Byrne, D.G. (1993), 'The Effect of Exercise on Depression, Anxiety and Other Mood States: A Review', *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 37*, 565-574.

Charles, S.T., Piazza, J. R., Mogle, J., Sliwinski, M.J., & Almeida, D.M. (2013). The Wear and Tear of Daily Stressors on Mental Health. *Psychological Science*, 24, 733-741.

Davis, D.E., et al. (2016). Thankful for the little things: A meta-analysis of gratitude interventions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 63 (1)*, 20-31.

de Mello, M.F., de Jesus, M.J., Bacaltchuk, J., Verdeli, H. &, Neugebauer, R. A. (2005). A systematic review of research findings on the efficacy of interpersonal therapy for depressive disorders. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience, 255*, 75–82.

Dewitz, J.S., Woolsey, L.M, and Walsh, B.W. (2009). College student retention: An exploration of the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and purpose in life among college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 50, 19-34.

Eliasson, A.H., Lettieri, C.J.,, & Eliasson, A.H.(2010). Early to bed, early to rise! Sleep habits and academic performance in college students. *Sleep and Breathing, 14 (1)*, 71-75.

Ellenbogen, J.M., Payne, J.D., & Stickgold, R.(2006). The role of sleep in declarative memory consolidation: passive, permissive, active or none? *Current Opinions in Neurobiology, 16(6)*, 716-22.

Fahlman, S.A., et al (2009). Does a lack of life meaning cause boredom? Results from psychometric, longitudinal, and experimental analyses. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 28*, 307-340.

Farshchi, H.R., Taylor, M.A., & Macdonald, I.A. (2005). Deleterious effects of omitting breakfast on insulin sensitivity and fasting lipid profiles in healthy lean women. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 81 (2), 388–396.

Godman, H. (2014, Apr). *Regular exercise changes the brain to improve memory, thinking skills.* Harvard Health Publishing. Retrieved from https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/regular-exercise-changes-brain-improve-memory-thinking-skills-201404097110

Gordon, A.M. (2013). Up All Night: The Effects of Sleep Loss on Mood. *Psychology Today,* Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/between-you-and-me/201308/all-night-the-effects-sleep-loss-mood

Halama, P. (2005). Relationship between meaning in life and the Big 5 personality traits in young adults and the elderly. *Studia Psychologia, 47*, 167-178.

Hall, J.A. (2015). Sexual Selection and Humor in Courtship: A Case for Warmth and Extroversion. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 13 (3), 1-10.

Jacka, F.N., et al. (2017). A randomized controlled trial of dietary improvement for adults with major depression (the 'SMILES' trial). *BMC Medicine, 15*, 1-13.

Kaufman, S.B. (2015, Aug 2). *Which character strengths are more predictive of well-being?* Retrieved from https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/beautiful-minds/which-character-strengths-are-most-predictive-of-well-being/.

Koopman, et al. (2011). Restoring the Balance of the Autonomic Nervous System as an Innovative Approach to the Treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis. *Molecular Medicine, 17*(9-10), 937–948.

Landry, S.P., & Champoux, F. (2017). Musicians react faster and are better multisensory integrators. *Brain and Cognition, 111,* 156-162.

Lanham, M., Rye, M., Rinsky, L., & and Weill, S. (2012). How Gratitude Relates to Burnout and Job Satisfaction in Mental Health Professionals. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling: October 2012, 34 (4)*, pp. 341-354.

Lee, L., Tong, E.M.W., & Sim, D. (2015). The dual upward spirals of gratitude and basic psychological needs. *Motivation Science, 1*(2), 87-97.

Lennerz, et al. (2013). Effects of dietary glycemic index on brain regions related to reward and craving in men. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 98*(3), 641–647.

Lenoir, M., Serre, F., Cantin, L., & Ahmed, S.H. 2007). Intense Sweetness Surpasses Cocaine Reward. PLoS One, 2 (8), e. 698. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0000698

Marhefka, J.K. (2011). Sleep deprivation: consequences for students. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services, 49 (9)*, 20-25.

McGonigal, K. (2016). *The Upside of Stress: Why Stress is Good for You, and How to Get Good at It.* New York: Avery Publishing.

Mental Health America (2018). *Work life balance.* Retrieved from http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/work-life-balance

Nall, R. (2018, May 25). What are the benefits of sunlight? Retrieved from https://www.healthline.com/health/depression/benefits-sunlight

Pastötter, B., & Bäuml, K.-H. T. (2014). Retrieval practi`ce enhances new learning: the forward effect of testing. *Frontiers in Psychology, 5,* 286.

Roberts, M. (2014). How sleep affects your self esteem. *HealthyPlace*. Retrieved from

    https://www.healthyplace.com/blogs/buildingselfesteem/2014/04/how-sleep-impacts-

    your-self-esteem

Rosenshine, B. (2012, Spring). Principles of instruction: Research based strategies that all

    teachers should know. Retrieved from

    https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Rosenshine.pdf

Schulenberg, S. E. (2004). A psychometric investigation of logotherapy measures and the

    Outcome Questionnaire (OQ-45.2). North American Journal of Psychology, 6, 477–492

Seppala, E. (2016). *The Happiness Track: How to Apply the Science of Happiness to Accelerate*

    Your Success. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

Trockel, M.T., Barnes, M.D., & Egget, D.L. (2000). Health-related variables and academic

    performance among first-year college students: implications for sleep and other

    behaviors. Journal of American College Health, 49 (3), 125-131.

Umberson, D., & Montez, J. K. (2010). Social Relationships and Health: A Flashpoint for Health

    Policy. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *51*(Suppl), S54–S66.

University of California - Los Angeles. (2007, June). Putting Feelings Into Words Produces

    Therapeutic Effects In The Brain. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved June 4, 2018 from

    www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/06/070622090727.htm

University of Phoenix News (2013, May). *University of Phoenix survey reveals 38 percent of*

    individuals who seek mental health counseling experience barriers. Retrieved from

    https://www.phoenix.edu/news/releases/2013/05/university-of-phoenix-survey-reveals-

    38-percent-of-individuals-who-seek-mental-health-counseling-experience-barriers.html

Weir, K. (2017). *Forgiveness can improve mental and physical health*, Retrieved

    from http://www.apa.org/monitor/2017/01/ce-corner.aspx

Weiten, Dunn, & Hammer (2012). *Psychology Applied to Modern Life: Adjustment in the 21st Century* (10th edition). Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Zohar, D., Tzaschinksy,O., Epstein, R., & Lavie, P. (2005). The effects of sleep loss on medical residents' emotional reactions to work events: a cognitive-energy model. *Sleep, 28 (1),* 47-54.

Appendix A: Sabbatical Proposal

Sabbatical Project

Misty R. Kolchakian, Ph.D.

Professor of Psychology

Improving mental wellbeing among students, faculty, and staff: A webinar series on

important mental health topics

Project to be completed in the 2017-2018 academic year

Sabbatical Proposal Contents

In this proposal, please find the following documents:

- An abstract

- A statement of purpose

- A detailed rationale and description of the nature of the project (including information on the value of the project for the department and the campus as a whole)

- Listing of webinar topics that will be created

- Information about webinar content

- Literature review and background research supporting this project's value

- Additional information on the anticipated value and benefit of the project for the department, the institution, and for me (not already covered in the rationale)

- Connection to current student learning outcomes and course measurable objectives and the college mission and vision statements

- A thorough timeline

- References for literature review

- Letters of recommendation from colleagues and the department chair (the Dean sent his letter separately prior to the deadline).

Abstract for Proposal

During her graduate coursework in counseling psychology, Dr. Kolchakian learned many skills (both therapeutic and research-based) that enable her to assist others in improving their mental and emotional well-being. For her sabbatical, she will create interesting and informative webinars on important mental health topics that could be utilized by students and employees. She will create 11 closed-captioned webinars on topics of emotional well-being that could be placed on the college's website (or anywhere deemed appropriate by the administration) and accessed by students and faculty on an "as needed" basis. Students and employees could view these when struggling in a particular area of their life (e.g., stress management, work-life or school-life balance, improving relationships, etc.), or faculty and staff could refer students to such resources as the need arises. Dr. Kolchakian asserts that students and employees who view these webinars will be less stressed, more productive, and more successful in reaching their academic and professional goals.

Statement of Purpose

The purposes of this sabbatical study are:

6) To increase mental and emotional health of students and employees at our college.
7) To increase productivity in our students and employees by relieving emotional tension due to challenging life stressors.
8) To learn how to conduct webinars (closed-captioned) via various online tutorials and informal training opportunities.
9) To design and create instructional webinars for personal utilization by faculty, staff, and students.
10) To design and create instructional webinars for course utilization by faculty teaching in psychology, sociology, child development, or other mental health areas.

Rationale and Description of the Nature of the Sabbatical Project

As a psychology department faculty member, mental well-being is always in the forefront of my mind. I have watched many capable and talented students struggle to perform to their fullest academic potential due to challenging life stressors. As a psychology faculty member, students regularly approach me with their life stories and their explanations of what has made it harder to focus in school, submit their work, and ultimately succeed in the course. It is always a tough challenge to find the balance between being a supportive and caring professor who is trained as a therapist and a cautious professor who must be careful to avoid any potential "dual roles" or overstep my bounds. It is not only a delicate line, but it is an impossible line. Although I am always very concerned for the students who approach me with these concerns, I am even more worried about those students who never approach me but struggle in silence. When encouraged to visit the campus health center for psychological assistance, many students gracefully (and some emphatically) decline due to a host of reasons such as nervousness, shyness, embarrassment, fear of what they might learn about themselves, fear of being seen as "weak", fear of being "seen" by others, concern about how others may view them, and lack of awareness of the benefits of such services, to name a few. This resistance for seeking help with their stressors is confirmed by extensive background research as well (see review of the literature section).

Given the fears that students often state they have about seeking help on campus, many often tell me they do google searches to try to help themselves. Through my online research, I have discovered that there is a great mix of information on the world wide web, and much of it is vague and impersonal. Many of the sites they visit have not been created by psychologists with advanced degrees in the field, and they may not be getting the information they need to thrive. Some students do no research at all; they tell me they would not even know where to begin. Overall, it is apparent that students could benefit from increased knowledge and information about mental health issues and how to improve their emotional wellbeing.

Thus, I would like to create webinars that they could utilize in the privacy of their home that would give them practical skills and knowledge on important mental health topics. These webinars would not be intended to replace appropriate therapy and face-to-face assistance, but rather these webinars could be a starting point or springboard to helping themselves overcome their challenges with confidence. In psychology, we refer to this as the "foot-in-the-door phenomemon". It is my hope that the webinars would be a "safe" way for students to become familiar with the topics and ultimately would encourage them to pursue further help. At a minimum, the webinars could provide helpful information on these topics (e.g., managing stress, improving communication and relationships, healthy brain tips, dealing with the loss of a loved one, feeling "safe" in a changing political climate, etc.). I should note that the topics I have chosen have been selected by faculty and students as "most important" during an informal survey I administered. Colleagues and students both conveyed their enthusiasm for my proposed project and seem eager to utilize the materials I would create.

Faculty in non-psychology disciplines often approach psychology professors, including myself, and ask us how we might handle a particular student's emotional situation. A colleague in our department offered a Flex Day Workshop on helping professors identify and learn how to better manage emotional issues in students. Her presentation was well attended but due to time constraints could only cover the basics. There definitely appears to be a need for faculty to learn better ways to help students (or where to direct them in addition to the health center). Faculty could potentially refer students to these web resources on an as needed basis, either directly when students approach them, or via a referral system embedded into the portal (similar to how we refer students to academic counseling or tutoring).

In addition to the webinars being a resource for students, I believe the webinars could also be a helpful resource for Mt. SAC employees in their own lives. As a psychology department faculty member and as the Mental Health representative for the Employee Wellness Committee, I have offered several professional development workshops on various topics of emotional wellbeing such as "Work Life Balance", "Food and the Brain", "Setting and reaching your goals", to name a few. These workshops were well attended and received unanimously positive feedback, but many professors and staff emailed me personally stating that they were disappointed that they could not attend due to the time not fitting their schedule. They requested the powerpoints, which of course I sent them; however, by not being able to attend, I feel that they missed important anecdotes and comments shared during the workshop. This would likely be a perpetual issue because faculty and staff schedules are so varied, and inevitably many people who wish to attend cannot make the time it is offered (even if offered more than once). A webinar would address this issue by allowing each person to "attend" at a time most convenient for him or her. The anonymity and ability to watch from one's own home would also increase the likelihood that employees would "attend" or watch. Many staff have also said they are reticent to attend a workshop on a topic which they may not want their colleagues to know is a concern for them (e.g., work-life balance, overcoming addiction, etc).

My previous outreach experience

Campus outreach has always been a passion of mine. I also believe it is one of my strengths as an educator. At previous universities, I have conducted workshops on topics of improving body image in women, men, and our children, diversity in the workplace, overcoming public speaking anxiety, how to help a friend who is struggling with an eating disorder, how to help a friend who is depressed, self care workshops, surviving a relationship breakup, and grieving the loss of a loved one.

At Mt. SAC I continued my role in creating workshops and outreach programs. I conceptualized and was a member of the triad of female employees on campus who I affectionately named "The Health Heroines". I worked with a nutrition professor, Sandra Weatherilt, and health/fitness supervisor, K.C. Kranz and we conducted a workshop series called "Brain, body, and belly" to help employees work on all aspects of mental and physical health (FYI: I was the "brain" portion ☺). The workshop series was

positively regarded by all attendees but attendance tapered off due to busy schedules of employees. I have also conducted workshops on campus on other important topics such as "Work Life Balance" and "Food and the Brain", as previously stated.

My colleague and I also conducted a 4 week workshop series on "Improving communication" for students. Their anonymous feedback forms at the end of the series often included statements such as, "This was the single most important thing I have done at Mt. SAC", and "I learned so much about myself that I couldn't possibly learn in a classroom." Given that many students could not attend at the particular times offered, I decided it would be useful to create a web-based version of similar information so that I could reach a larger group of students than I could possibly reach in person.
As co-founder of the Mental Health Awareness Club on campus, which is now thriving, it is apparent to me that reducing the stigma against seeking help to improve one's mental health is vitally important. I would like mental health issues to be more openly discussed at our college. These webinars could be a platform from which to have some of these discussions.

Webinar topics and faculty/student input

Although the possibilities are endless for webinar topics I could create, I have selected certain topics based on student and faculty need. As mentioned previously, I have given psychology students and faculty informal surveys and compiled their data. Also, I am drawing from data gleaned from surveys taken by employees via the Employee Wellness survey, and a thorough literature review on the empirical studies conducted in the psychology field. Recently, students and faculty alike have discussed the negative impact the recent election had on many of our students. Students regularly used words like "Scared", "worried", "unsafe" and "disillusioned" to describe how they felt, and students in my courses were unable to focus on the course material being presented. This is a clear example to me that more work is needed in helping students feel safe in a changing political climate. This is just one example of a topic that would be relevant to students and employees.

Below is the list of topics I included on the survey to faculty and staff in our department. They were asked to respond with 3 things: A) their top 5 they would want to watch to help with their own mental health? B) top 5 they think students could benefit from the most (what are the biggest mental health issues students in your classes seem to be having?) C) Any other topics they think I missed? The goal of the survey was to help me develop a clear focus of the most important areas of emotional wellbeing so that I could narrow down to a "top 10" list (actually, top 11).

Stress reduction
Life balance
How to thrive and feel "safe" in an unfamiliar and uncertain political climate
Bullying and its effects on others
Improving your relationships
Improving your communication
How to overcome a relationship ending

Grief (coping with the loss of a loved one)
Public speaking anxiety
Gratitude and its importance to your mental health
Goal setting using psychological principles
Study skills (using psychological tools and research on memory)
Improving memory and concentration
Food and the brain (how to improve your mood and brainpower by altering your diet)
Body image for women and men
Improving body image in our children
Developing your life purpose
Depression: Am I depressed? How can I feel better?
How to help a friend or loved one when you notice signs of depression
Addiction- recognizing signs and getting help
Building confidence and self-esteem
Improving sleep habits
Parenting tips (and single parenting)
Acculturation (adjusting to living in a new culture)

Results:
It was interesting to see the overlap of faculty and students and what areas both groups felt most essential to improve. After tallying the responses, I discovered that faculty and students both selected stress, life balance, improving relationships, improving communication, food and brain health, and life purpose as most important. In addition, students selected depression, memory, sleep, and self esteem as priorities, while faculty selected gratitude as a priority. Thus, my 11 chosen webinar topics will be:

1. Stress reduction
2. Life balance
3. Improving relationships
4. Improving communication
5. Food and the brain: How to improve your mental and emotional wellbeing through your dietary choices
6. Developing your life purpose
7. Depression: how to determine if you are depressed, how to help yourself and how to help others you are concerned about
8. Improving sleep habits
9. Building confidence and self esteem
10. Gratitude and its importance for your mental wellbeing
11. Psychological tips for improving memory

Webinar quantity and content

Although I am aiming for 11 webinars given my proposed timeline in the pages that follow, I am aiming for quality and not simply quantity. Admittedly, I have never conducted a webinar and want to ensure that I learn the technology and options thoroughly. Thus, it is difficult to pinpoint how long it will take to conduct each webinar. I have estimated the time based on literature I found online; however, I believe it is wise to create a range instead, seeking to complete as many high-caliber webinars as possible. The range I suggest is 8-15, with a realistic specific target of 11. In the interest of not overstating what can be accomplished and allowing myself thorough time for training, I believe the range is a proper decision, but I will defer to what the committee deems appropriate.

When researching webinars on mental health topics on the internet, it was somewhat discouraging to see that there are limited numbers of them, and more importantly, that the ones in existence are only tailored to practitioners. There is a dearth of webinar-related information for consumers or those needing assistance. There appears to be a need for more webinars geared toward consumers seeking to improve mental wellbeing.

After reading tips and suggestions by experienced creators of webinars, the most common suggestion is that the webinars need to be engaging for consumers to want to utilize them. The majority of web information on this topic cautions against only using powerpoint slides with little visual intrigue. The webinars will include varied methods of engaging the audience, including interactive features. Thus, I would include many visual images, engaging slides, video clips, quizzes, and polls. I would include some questions at the beginning and end of the presentation to see what they have learned. In general, I want to make sure to tap into all learning styles (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic).

Closed captioning would be essential to make sure the material is accessible to all students and employees, and I could utilize the captioning program "Camtasia" to assist me in captioning the webinars. Webinars would be approximately 30-60 minutes in length, per the suggestions and tips I read from multiple websites about providing a proper amount of information without overwhelming the viewer.

Literature Review and Background Research Supporting Value of Proposed Project

Mental Health Crisis

There is a mental health crisis facing college students today, and the levels of stress and psychopathology is greatly increasing (Henriques, 2014). The number of students afflicted with mental illness is increasing exponentially. This assertion is not an exaggeration nor is it alarmist, as the data supports this claim. According to the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors survey of counseling center directors, 95 percent of college counseling center directors surveyed said the number of students with significant psychological problems is a growing concern in their

center or on campus (as cited in Henriques, 2014). Seventy percent of directors believe that the number of students with severe psychological problems on their campus has increased in the past year. Similarly, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (2012), one-third of students reported periods of prolonged depression. One in 4 students reported suicidal thoughts. An alarming 30 percent of college students reported problems with school work due to mental health issues. And 50 percent of students reported having little to no education on mental health issues prior to college. Furthermore, they found that 30 percent of college freshmen report feeling frequently overwhelmed, and the survey results also found the fewest numbers of freshmen describing themselves as emotionally healthy.

In the survey results from National Alliance on Mental Illness (2012), one student wrote that "A depressive episode made it impossible for me to go to classes and I did not get help until it was too late and I was withdrawn and I could never afford the cost to go back because I lost my scholarship for being withdrawn." This student is not alone. An overwhelming majority of survey respondents who said they are no longer in college (attendance stopped within the past five years) are not attending college because of a mental health related reason.

Counseling center data was examined from 24 community colleges where 1,964 students completed surveys on mental health and academic challenges. Results showed that alertness/attention challenges were associated with mood disorders, whereas memory/executive function problems were linked to anxiety disorders (Holmes & Silvestri, 2016).

One must look to certain lifestyle habits (e.g., sleep, eating, sexual activity, alcohol use) and patterns in helping understand the mental health crisis. More specifically, college students are notorious for poor sleep patterns, and it appears to not be taken seriously by many students. However, greater awareness of the link between sleep deprivation and mental health problems is important, as this issue should not be taken lightly.

Research has also examined specific subpopulations of students and how mental wellbeing and academic performance were related for these students. One specific population of concern is Hispanic students. Research showed that Hispanic females were at particular risk for dropping out of school due to family issues and needing to go home to take care of a family member. They also found that Hispanic students were more likely to struggle with eating disorders (Pidcock, Fischer, & Munsch, 2001). To improve college retention rates, they suggested that social policy should focus on Hispanic students' vulnerabilities and strengths in making important developmental transitions. Given that several of my suggested topics pertain to relationships (family and romantic) and to food/food addiction/healthy choices, it seems particularly meaningful for the population at Mt. San Antonio College which has a large Hispanic population.

Taken together, all of these findings should be alarming to any educator, and there is clearly a great (extensive) need for more work in emotional wellbeing. More opportunities are needed for support for college student's emotional wellbeing, using

multiple modalities. Many times, a mental health topic is not discussed until the aftermath of a significant event in history (e.g., bombing, presidential election, act of terrorism, bullying, violence, etc) or a difficult event on campus (rape, suicide, bomb threat, etc), and by that point, certain damage has been done. As a strong advocate of preventative mental health care, more (varied) resources for students and employees alike is not only important but is also vital.

Underutilization of services

Given the aforementioned need for mental health care, one would surmise that students would be lining up to receive psychological services. Sadly, statistics show that only many students who report needing help do not seek it, including those who are aware that services exist. Backels and Wheeler's (2001) study found that faculty often do not think to refer students for non-crisis mental health issues, and they are more likely to refer for what they consider an emergency. However, many students with more chronic stressors of lower intensity may not get a referral. This group has just as large of a risk of dropout as those facing a crisis. Thus, many students struggling with mental health issues might not receive the help they deserve (Backels & Wheeler, 2001).

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (2012) found that some of the reasons students do not seek help is a lack of thorough information about the services offered on the college's website or how to access them, not providing information on the typical mental health issues students experience in college, fears of being seen by their peers or professors, fears about how they will be perceived, and the session limit imposed at most college counseling centers. Survey respondents identified mental health issues as a major reason for their dropping out of college. Fifty percent of them did not access mental health services and supports. Living off campus, identifying as male, and having fewer years in college were related to less knowledge of campus mental health services. Since retention is at stake, providing adequate college mental health services appears to be a good investment of resources. With the high prevalence rates and severity of mental health problems, university mental health providers must continue to make strategic efforts to disseminate knowledge about mental health as well as respective mental health services to students (Yorgason, Linville, & Zitzman, 2001).

Certain populations are even less likely to seek mental health services. Asian students, for example, are very underrepresented in college counseling centers. Studies have found that acculturation, cultural barriers, and stigma attached to mental health problems are common factors that significantly contribute to Asian American college students' low mental-health-seeking behaviors (Han & Pong, 2015). Asian students often feel that sharing their personal problems brings disrespect and shame to their family if they share too much, and thus they do not seek services to protect their family unit. Also, international students are less likely to use counseling services than are domestic students. One reason that international students may not use counseling services is the lack of awareness of their needs for mental health services. Instead, international students seek help for the physical manifestations of emotional problems, such as fatigue or

inability to sleep, and present at their primary care provider for mental health issues Hyun, Quinn, Madon, Temina, &Lustig, 2007).

What is the solution to the crisis and underutilization?

Considering the aforementioned research, perhaps a novel and less threatening way of receiving mental wellbeing information (such as webinars) would make these populations more amenable to seeking help. Perhaps it would feel less "threatening" to watch a webinar than to talk to a "stranger" about one's mental wellbeing for all college students, but especially for the Asian or international subpopulations. This would help avoid their fears of being seen entering the counseling center or fear of being judged by others. Once they watch these webinars, they would be given specific information about the wellbeing topic and the resources available on campus and may become more comfortable with the idea of seeking the services.

Respondents in the survey given by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (2012) stated that having thorough information for students unaware of mental health issues, including practice tips on how to improve an area of mental wellbeing would encourage them to seek assistance. As can be seen from this author, more online assistance is important as well as information in general. Overall, educators must inform the entire campus community about mental health issues to eliminate the myths and stereotypes that make students uncomfortable with seeking help. Educators must also be informed about the effect of mental health issues on academic functioning in college students. Through the development and implementation of seminars and outreach on mental health topics, educators can teach other faculty to help students who are struggling
with mental health issues. Participation in the webinars offered for topics such as depression, stress, and healthy sleep and eating offers the opportunity for campus wide education on these mental health topics.

Research on the specific topics proposed for the webinars

Background research supporting the importance of helping students and employees with the chosen topics is listed below. Please note that the research on the links between the topics and job or academic performance is ample and too lengthy to include every study. Thus, I will only highlight 1 to 2 studies for each topic.

Stress and its effects on academic performance and productivity

During a typical college semester, high levels of stress have been reported for 52% of college students (Huddet al. 2000). Those who are experiencing psychological problems such as stress and depression, may face problems managing their academic performance (Yasin &Dzulkifli, 2011). In college students, stress can affect academic performance (e.g., students may withdraw from or fail a course), and consequently this contributes to a perceived inability to manage stress (i.e., reduced resilience). For professionals, chronic stress was found to be the highest predictor of job burnout (Cordes

& Daughterty, 1993). Burnout has been shown to be particularly prevalent in the education industry, and therefore, learning how to better manage stress seems essential.

Depression

(The following information is duplicate information that was included in the "Mental Health Crisis" section of this proposal).

Rates of anxiety and depression have similarly sky-rocketed in the last few decades. American College Health Association (2013) conducted a survey of college students and found that 57 percent of women and 40 percent of men reported experiencing episodes of "overwhelming anxiety" in the past year, and 33 percent of women and 27 percent of men reported a period in the last year of feeling so depressed it was difficult to function. Twenge (2007) found five times as many students surpassed clinical cutoffs in one or more mental health categories, compared with those who took the survey several decades ago.

According to the American College Health Association (ACHA) the suicide rate among young adults, ages 15-24, has tripled since the 1950s and suicide is currently the second most common cause of death among college students. That study also found 9.4 percent of students reported seriously considering attempted suicide at least once in a 12 month period, a marked increase from several decades ago.

Sleep habits

Research has found a link between sleep habits and academic and work performance. One study found that those with the highest GPA had earlier bed times and earlier wake times (Eliasson, Lettieri, & Eliasson, 2010). College students may be surprised to know that studies have shown that the timing of sleep and wakefulness contributes more to academic performance than total sleep hours. Another research team found that poor sleep leads to cognitive difficulties and loss of attention which then decrease performance (Marhefka, 2011). In general, most college students report not getting enough sleep at all, and many students procrastinate and thus pull "all nighters", all of which affect their academic performance. Marhefka claimed that monitoring students for sleep insufficiency is imperative to improving both academic and emotional wellbeing.

Trockel, Barnes, & Egget (2000) analyzed the effect of several health behaviors and health-related variables on grade point averages of a random sample of 200 students living in on-campus residence halls at a large private university. The set of variables included exercise, eating, and sleep habits; mood states; perceived stress; time management; social support; spiritual or religious habits; number of hours worked per week; gender; and age. Of all the variables considered, sleep habits, particularly wake-up times, accounted for the largest amount of variance in grade point averages.

Food and Effects on the Brain and Wellbeing

A study by Deliens, Clarys, and Deforche (2014) examined first year college students' dietary choices and overall physical health profiles and found a negative correlation between increases in weight/body mass index and GPA. Overall, the study found that academic performance was associated with a wide range of weight and health related behaviors. The authors suggested that more interventions should exist to help college students make healthier choices in order to improve their academic performance.

Similarly, Hoyland, Dye, and Lawton (2009) found evidence suggesting a positive association between healthy eating habits (e.g., frequency and quality of breakfast consumption, fruit and vegetable consumption, etc) and academic achievement. Studies have shown that certain foods affect our brains in the same way as alcohol, nicotine, heroin and cocaine (Brownell & Gold, 2012). Certain foods release endorphins and 'feel-good' neurotransmitters that can temporarily relieve emotional discomfort, anxiety and depression.

Disordered eating has also been documented to be on the rise. Studies in the 1980s indicated that 4 percent to 5 percent of college students have eating disorders, but a 2006 survey by the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) found that nearly 20 percent of the more than 1,000 college students surveyed – both male and female – said they had or previously had eating disorders. As noted previously, the Hispanic population has been found to be at greater risk than the Anglo population for eating disorders. Thus, helping students at Mt.SAC (the greatest majority of which are Hispanic) with their body image and developing a healthy relationship with food seems valuable.

Life balance

The compounding stress from the lengthy workday is damaging. It can hurt relationships, health and overall happiness. Researchers have found a negative correlation between life balance and job turnover (Asiedu-Appiah, Meymood, & Bamfo, 2015). They also found a positive correlation between life balance and performance. Overall, it appears that the more balance workers have in their lives, the better they will be able to thrive in their jobs. The same pattern is likely true for students in their scholastic roles.

Improving Relationships and Communication

One study found a positive correlation between satisfaction with family relationships and emotional wellbeing (de Mamani & Askari, 2013). They also found that students who reported greater parental conflict and communication issues were more depressed and stressed and had lower self esteem. This same pattern is true for romantic relationships. Research found a negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and depression (Cramer, 2004). Overall, better relationships and communication is important for happiness and ultimately success.

Life purpose

Life purpose was found to have a positive correlation with extraversion, emotional stability, happiness, life satisfaction and a negative correlation with depression and anxiety (Schulenberg, 2004). Since the link between depression and stress and

performance is well documented, it stands to reason that developing a greater sense of life purpose can contribute positively to students' academic success and employee performance and job satisfaction. This notion of life purpose fits neatly with the college mission of "lifelong learning". When one realizes the larger picture of what one's purpose is in the universe, there is greater attachment to one's goals and education.

Self esteem

Self esteem was found to have significant positive correlation with academic performance in college students (Duari, 2012). Self esteem also had an inverse relationship with perceived stress. It appears that self esteem acts as a buffer for dealing with stress. Another study found that self esteem leads to more positive attitudes toward employees' work and more productivity at work, suggesting that high self esteem will help promote employee satisfaction, well-being, and job success (Baumeister et al., 2003). Thus, self esteem enhancement could prove beneficial for both students and employees.

Gratitude

Research has shown that gratitude can trigger upward spirals that result in greater emotional well-being (Lee, Tong, & Sim, 2015). Furthermore, gratitude motivates us to help others more and strengthen social relationships, both of which are important for faculty and staff who regularly work with students. Also, a study by Lanham, Rye, Rinsky, and Weill (2012) found that workplace-specific gratitude predicted less emotional exhaustion and greater job satisfaction after controlling for variables of hope and dispositional gratitude (Lanham, Rye, Rinsky, & Weill, 2012). Advocates of gratitude have found that spending a few minutes daily focused on gratitude helped them avoid "ruts", reduced their anxiety and depression, and increased performance (Davis et al., 2016).

Anticipated Value and Benefit to the Psychology Department, the Mt. San Antonio College community, and to my own personal and professional development

In my rationale section, I delved deeply into how and why my project would benefit the psychology department, the campus community, and me. In an effort to not be completely redundant, I will not copy and paste here. Instead, I will add additional thoughts and information that further supports the value of my proposed project.

Anticipated Value and Benefit to the Psychology Department

I have shared my proposed project with all faculty in my department, both full-time and adjunct. I have been met with tremendous support. Many professors have said "This is a great idea! Thanks for being willing to create something practical that can help students and faculty with emotional wellbeing." Based on the feedback, many faculty have shared that they would be interested to use my finished product and are eager to see it when

completed. Given that I polled our department's faculty about the topics to create, I have even greater buy-in. They know that their ideas and needs were critical to this process.

In addition to faculty feedback which was very positive, I believe it is important to directly link my project to existing course measurable objectives and student learning outcomes. In this way, one can see how the proposed project will be useful to many professors teaching the below courses.

<u>Sampling of Course Measurable Objectives that are related to my sabbatical project:</u>

Below is a list of course measurable objectives that tie into my project based on the chosen topics for the webinars. The webinars could be included in the courses listed below as an additional tool for learning. This list is not exhaustive but should cover the most relevant objectives and outcomes.

Psyc 1a:
-Apply psychological principles to personal experience.

Psyc 33:
-Explain various types of love, communication, and sexual behaviors in relationships.
-Analyze how attitudes, social perception, and social influence affect views of self and others.
-Describe sources and moderators of stress in one's own life and evaluate healthy and unhealthy coping mechanisms.
-Explain how psychological factors, nutrition, exercise, sleep and drug use influence physical and mental health.
-Demonstrate interpersonal communication skills and conflict resolution techniques.
-Identify various aspects of interpersonal attraction such as the meaning of friendship, definitions of love, loneliness, and predictors of marital and relationship success.
-Identify personal issues that relate to career planning and job satisfaction.
-Demonstrate meaningful self-evaluation related to increasing lifelong personal well-being.

Psyc 5:
-Apply problem solving and decision making skills from a psychological perspective.
-Identify techniques in self-regulation and apply behavior modification techniques.

Psyc 19:
-Explain the criteria for defining abnormal behavior.
-Identify symptoms of disorders, including adjustment, anxiety, depressive, bipolar, somatic symptom, psychotic, personality, dissociative, eating, sleeping, gender, sexual dysfunction, paraphilic and substance-related disorders.

Psyc 1b:
-Evaluate the research evidence concerning the role that different brain areas play in the following behaviors and/or functions: perception, biological rhythms, motivation and

emotion, sexual behaviors, response to stress, learning and memory, lateralization and languages.

Psyc 25:
-Describe gender differences in verbal and nonverbal communication patterns and how language treatment differs between genders.
-Explain how ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic factors impact women's experience in the workplace.

Psyc 14:
-Analyze the developmental changes that take place during the prenatal, infancy, early and middle childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood stages, and later adulthood, and death.
-Evaluate the implication of cultural processes on the psychological development of the individual.

Sampling of SLO's that are related to my sabbatical project:

- Psyc 1a:
    - SLO #3: Application of Psychological Principles. Apply psychological principles to personal experiences.
    - SLO #4: relationship between social and behavior. Students will analyze the relationship between social institutions and human behavior.
- Psyc 33:
    - SLO #1: Stress and Coping. Explain stressors in your own life and generate a list of effective and ineffective ways of coping.
    - SLO #2: Physical Health. Understand the processes by which psychological factors influence physical health.
    - SLO #3: Lifelong learning. Students will demonstrate meaningful self-evaluation related to increasing their lifelong personal well-being.

- SLO #3: GEO Area E. Students will demonstrate meaningful self-evaluation related to increasing their lifelong personal well-being.
- SLO #4: GEO Area D. Students will analyze the relationship between social institutions and human behavior.

One additional benefit of my proposed project for the psychology department is to help bridge relationships with other campus entities such as the health center. It is my belief that we need to strengthen our bond and build a positive relationship between our departments as we each offer the other entity something very important. I intend to consult with the health center director, Marti Whitford on this project and make sure the center is "in the loop" and can have the opportunity to provide feedback on my sabbatical project.

Anticipated Value and Benefit to the college of Mt. SAC

The Mount San Antonio College mission statement is powerful, and I believe my project supports and provides another way to carry out this mission. This mission refers to supporting all students in achieving their educational goals in an environment of academic excellence, promoting lifelong learning through the mastery of basic skills, and enhancing personal well-being, all of which would be accomplished by my proposed sabbatical. As asserted and backed up by empirical research presented in previous sections of this proposal, assisting students and employees with emotional wellbeing better ensures the students' ability to achieve their educational goals and avoid dropout and faculty's enhancement of mental wellbeing to help prevent burnout. Applying psychological principles to their personal lives helps promote lifelong learning and enhanced wellbeing.

The Mt. SAC vision statement is also important. It essentially claims that we strive to be leaders and pioneers in our community. Having visited other college websites, I have not found many webinars offered on emotional wellbeing topics. Perhaps if we integrated these webinars, other campuses could utilize our materials and potentially follow suit.

A core value of Mt. SAC is "community building." I believe this project can also provide direct benefit to the campus Health Center's mental health services. Those who view the webinars will have more awareness of emotional wellbeing and the factors that increase or decrease it. They will be given information and resources for campus mental health services in each and every webinar. As stated previously, college counseling services are largely underutilized. It is my hope and belief that these webinars can be a stepping stone to greater openness to seeking services. Each webinar will provide information that can help reduce the stigma associated with seeking help.

I also believe this project fulfills many of the other core values our college espouses, but given that I have already discussed how this project would support the other core values in various other sections of the proposal, I will not belabor the point here. Mt. SAC is an institution of the highest honor, and therefore I would be honored to be selected for this sabbatical. I would love to contribute to the college's mission, values, and vision.

Anticipated Value and Benefit to My Professional Development

The benefits to my own professional development overlap with many of the benefits to the Psychology Department and Mt. San Antonio College.

1) I will gain a deeper understanding of the research literature on some of the most important mental health topics in the field. This knowledge will help me in my teaching, and it will help my own personal mental wellbeing also.

2) I will gain the experience of creating webinars. Truth be told, I have never created a webinar. I am comfortable with technology but certainly not an expert. I strive to be on the cutting edge of technology but rarely find the time to learn a new method. This

sabbatical would give me time to create meaningful work utilizing technology new to me.

3) At some point I hope to grow the webinars and outreach beyond the college to the community. Given my interest in life coaching and the increase in virtual counseling/helping, I would like to have multiple modalities in which to administer important lectures and workshops.

4) Given one of the topics I'm proposing (life balance), I believe it is important to "walk the walk", and one method to obtain greater life balance is to have variety in my professional work. After teaching for 11 years on campus (including most intersessions), I believe having a respite from the classroom environment (which I do love tremendously) will energize me and help avoid potential burnout in the future.

5) I am regularly told by my students in their class feedback that my course helped them gain a greater understanding of themselves and challenged them to look deep inside themselves in a way no other class has done. I do believe this is one of my greatest strengths as a professor. I would love the opportunity to be able to encourage even more students (and employees) to introspect and challenge themselves to reach their fullest potentials. I do not believe I went "searching" for a sabbatical topic. I believe the topic found me, and that I can offer something unique, and I would love the opportunity to challenge myself and to grow.

TIMELINE

Below is a detailed timeline of what will be accomplished each week. To avoid repetition, please be aware that "research on topic of XXX" will include research of online literature, empirical studies, developing an outline, finding appropriate graphics, creating scripts, creating interactive components, self-quizzes, video clips, etc.

August 2017: (one week)
3) Begin research on how to conduct webinars via online tools, blogs, and informal online trainings.
4) Research equipment options and purchase chosen equipment and supplies.

September 2017:

Week 1: Research tutorials on how to conduct webinars
Week 2: Research tutorials on how to conduct webinars (cont'd)
Week 3: Research on topic of stress reduction
Week 4: Create and record webinar

October 2017:
Week 1: Edit webinar
Week 2: Research on topic of life balance
Week 3: Create and record webinar

Week 4: Edit webinar

November 2017:
Week 1: Research on topic of improving relationships
Week 2: Create and record webinar
Week 3: Edit webinar
Week 4: Research on topic of improving communication

December 2017:
Week 1: Create and record webinar
Week 2: Edit webinar
(weeks 3 and 4 are holiday break)
By the end of Fall semester, I anticipate I will have learned how to conduct webinars, and I will have created 4 webinars.

January 2018:
Week 1: Research on topic of gratitude
Week 2: Create and record webinar
Week 3: Edit webinar
Week 4: Research on topic of self esteem

February 2018:
Week 1: Create and record webinar
Week 2: Edit webinar   *NOTE: During Winter intersession, I will create 2 webinars.*
Week 3: Research on topic of depression
Week 4: Create and record webinar

March 2018:
Week 1: Edit webinar
Week 2: Research on topic of food and the brain and emotional wellbeing
Week 3: Create and record webinar
Week 4: Edit webinar

April 2018:
Week 1: Research on topic of healthy sleep
Week 2: Create and record webinar
Week 3: Edit webinar
Week 4: Research on topic of psychological tips for improving memory

May 2018:
Week 1: Create and record webinar
Week 2: Edit webinar
Week 3: Research on topic of life purpose
Week 4: Create and record webinar

<u>June 2018:</u>
Week 1: Edit webinar
Week 2: Prepare sabbatical report and a POD or Flex Day presentation on the work done during sabbatical (showing employees a sampling and discussing their usefulness to them)

For Spring semester, I will have conducted 5 webinars.

For the full sabbatical year, I will have created 4 Fall + 2 Winter + 5 Spring = **11 webinars!!**

References for Literature Review

Ahmed, Z & Julius, S H. (2015). Academic performance, resilience, depression, anxiety and stress among women college students. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology* 6.4, 367-370.

Backles, K., & Wheeler, I. (2001). Faculty perceptions of mental health issues among college students. *Journal of College Student Development,* 42.2, 173-177.

Baumeister, R.F., Campbell J.D., Krueger J.I., & Vohs K.D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4, 1-44.

Baumgardner, S.R. & Crothers, M.K. (2009) *Positive psychology*, Chapter xxi,. Prentice Hall/Pearson Education.

Brownell, K.D., Gold, M.S. 2012 *Food and Addiction: A Comprehensive Handbook* (Hardcover) Oxford University Press.

Cordes, C.L & Dougherty, T .W. (Oct 1993) A review and an integration of research on job burnout. *The Academy of Management Review* 18.4 621-657.

Cramer, D. (2004) Emotional Support, Conflict, Depression, and Relationship Satisfaction in a Romantic Partner. *The Journal of Psychology,* 138.6 532-42.

Davis, D E., Choe, E., Meyers, J., Wade, N., & Varjas, K. (2016) Thankful for the little things: A meta-analysis of gratitude interventions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology,* 63.*1* 20-31.

De Mamani, A.W., Askari, S.W. (2013) Expressed Emotion and Quality of Parental Relationships as Predictors of Emotional Well-Being in College Students. *International Journal of Psychology Research*. 8.2 75-84.

Deliens, T., Clarys P., De Bourdeaudhuij I, Deforche, B., Asiedu-Appiah, F., Mehmood, A & Bamfo, B. A. (2015) Work Life Balance Practices, Job performance and turnover intentions. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences* 8.4, 379-404.

Duari, P. (2012). Importance of self-esteem among students in academic performance and coping with stress. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology* 3.4: 474-477.

Eliasson, A.H., Lettieri, C.J., &Eliasson, A. H. (2010). Early to bed, early to rise! Sleep habits and academic performance in college students. *Sleep and Breathing,* 14.1 71-75.

Ferris, D.L., Lian, H., Brown, D.J., Pang, F.X.J.,& Keeping, L M. (2010). Self-esteem and job performance: the moderating role of self-esteem contingencies *Personnel Psychology* 63.3 561-593.

Han, M. & Pong, H. (2015) Mental health help-seeking behaviors among Asian American community college Students: The Effect of Stigma, Cultural Barriers, and Acculturation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56.1, **1-14.**

Henriques, G. (2014). What is causing the college student mental health crisis? *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers.

Holmes, A.,& **Silvestri, R. (2016)** Rates of Mental Illness and Associated Academic Impacts in Ontario's College Students. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 31.1, **27-46.**

Hyun, J., Quinn, B., Madon, T., **&** Lustig, S. (2007) Mental Health Need, Awareness, and Use of Counseling Services Among International Graduate Students. *Journal of American College Health*, 56.2, **109-18.**

Lanham, M.E., Rye, M.S., Rimsky,L.S., & Weill, S.R. (2012) How Gratitude Relates to Burnout and Job Satisfaction in Mental Health Professionals. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 34.4 341-354.

Lee, L., Tong, E M., & Sim, D. (2015). The dual upward spirals of gratitude and basic psychological needs. *Motivation Science* 1.2, 87-97.

Marhefka, J.K. (2011). Sleep Deprivation: Consequences for Students. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services*, 49, 20-25.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (2012). College students speak: A survey report on mental health. NAMI.

Pidcock, B.W., Fischer, J.L., & Munsch, J. (2001) Family, personality, and social risk factors impacting the retention rates of first-year Hispanic and Anglo college students. *Adolescence*, 36.144, **803-818.**

Schulenberg, S. E. (2004). A psychometric investigation of logo therapy measures and the outcome questionnaire (OQ-45.2). *North American Journal of Psychology*, 6(3), 477-492.

Trockel, M.T., Barnes, M.D., & **Egget, D.L.** (2000). Health-related variables and academic performance among first-year college students: Implications for sleep and other behaviors. *Journal of American College Health*, 49.3, **125-31.**

Yasin, M., & Dzulkifli, M. A. (2011). Differences in depression, anxiety and stress between low-and high-achieving students. *Journal of Sustainability Science and Management*, 6 (1), 169-178.

Yorgason, J.B., Linville, D., & Zitzman, B. (2008) Mental Health Among College Students: Do Those Who Need Services Know About and Use Them? *Journal of American College Health*, 57.2 173-81.

Departmental and Division Support for Proposed Sabbatical Project

James Jenkins, Dean, Humanities & Social Sciences Division (see letter of recommendation sent directly to the committee)

Stacy Bacigalupi, Department Chair, Psychology Department, Psychology Professor (see attached letter of recommendation)

Joshua Knapp, Ph.D., Psychology Professor (see attached letter of recommendation)

Chara Powell, M.S., Psychology Professor (see attached letter of recommendation)

Charis Louie, Ph.D., Psychology Professor

Michael Dowdle, M.S. Psychology Professor

Gene Ano, Ph.D., Psychology Professor

Shiloh Blacksher, M.A., Psychology Professor

Kathleen Laub, M.F.T., Psychology Adjunct Professor

Edward Berbiar, M.A., Psychology Adjunct Professor

Rebecca Hatch, Ph.D., Sociology Professor

Linda Rillorta, Ph.D., Sociology Professor

Marlene Gallarde, M.A., , Department Chair , Sociology Department, Sociology Professor

Heidi Lockhart, Director, Honors Program

** Additional letters of recommendation are available upon request. Each of the individuals on this list stated that they are happy to write a letter of recommendation if the committee would like more evidence of support for my project. (I was not sure how many letters of recommendation were desired).

To the Sabbatical and Leaves Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my proposed sabbatical project. I am grateful for the opportunity to submit my ideas and apply for this educational opportunity, and I would be greatly honored if I were to be selected for a sabbatical this year. Please let me know if there are any additional questions or clarifications needed. I would be happy to submit an additional statement, as needed.

Sincerely,

Misty Kolchakian

Appendix B: Links to Videos Created

Video #1: Life Balance

https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/privid/102707?key=7eb0c73b2479818a0bcca10113d957226bcdadfe

Video #2: Food and the Brain

https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/privid/101851?key=1ba06e1717675b5f95b0a001431c263f9ac87a94

Video #3: Improving Memory and Study Skills

https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/privid/103106?key=1a9a2f13ed5b61b8243f2b0bc85b844342090c33

Video #4: Sleep Better, Be Better

https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/privid/103706?key=841e184f321a003a4c3fcf628434180f5b7860b5

Video #5: Enhancing Your Relationships

https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/privid/100351?key=3b2b34b71bccee717697d3da56c428109ff137fc

Video #6: Developing Life Purpose

https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/privid/107445?key=e486a1a35b0c408898e4506e96b437374c8a9291

Video #7: Improving Your Mood

https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/privid/109019?key=a3a2eefc736d255780c2704a16ed3e03216890bd

Video #8: Understanding Therapy

https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/privid/106491?key=ce5782cf55253b93ea548aeba1616855a0c1d1a1

Video #9: Improving your Self Esteem

https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/privid/109989?key=ea90973be078e3de8eadadc2aa2d6546d63e1373

Video #10: Gratitude

https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/privid/109981?key=1df057da4e02adf5f59c581e636be56ed3f421c3