# Sabbatical Share Out With Mt. SAC Faculty Panelists Of Spring Flex Day 2022 Episode 144

# 00:00:00 **Martin**

# We need to be continually reevaluating what we're doing at a really fundamental level based on experience and industry. And if we go away for 30 years and teach, I really feel like we've gotten disconnected, and a sabbatical to me, is a way to do that reset.

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# 00:00:12 **Martin**

# You know, you really question why am I giving these tests? Why are these things important and what types of authentic assessment can I do? And so, I encourage everybody to have that experience and use it to reframe how they're teaching.

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# 00:00:27 **Christina**

# Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

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# 00:00:28 **Sun**

# And I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

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# 00:00:32 **Christina**

# Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak - by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

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# 00:00:49 **Sun**

# We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, from the classroom to completion-

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# 00:00:53 **Speaker 1**

# And I know I'm going to achieve my goals, and I know people here are going to help me to do it

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# 00:00:59 **Speaker 2**

# She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly Pamona! Psychology major, English major ...

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# 00:01:04 **Sun**

# From transforming part-time into full-time.

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# 00:01:07 **Speaker 1**

# I really liked the time that we spend with Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

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# 00:01:14 **Christina**

# Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

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# 00:01:16 **Speaker 2**

# To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

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# 00:01:19 **Christina**

# We want to keep you informed and connected all things Mt. SAC. But most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni, and producer of this podcast.

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# 00:01:31 **Sun**

# And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistance Faculty and Professional Learning Academy Coordinator.

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# 00:01:36 **Christina**

# And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

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# 00:01:40 **Tania**

# Welcome, everyone to our Flex Day faculty panel on the topic of sabbaticals. Our panelists are here to share out about their recent sabbatical experiences. And then we invite all of you to take part in the conversation and get your questions answered that you might have about sabbaticals.

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# 00:01:56 **Tania**

# So, let's start out with what a sabbatical even is. If you look up the dictionary definition, it's a period of paid leave granted to university or college professor or other worker for study or travel. Traditionally, one year for every seven years worked, hence the name sabbatical.

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# 00:02:14 **Tania**

# So, what does that look like here at Mt. SAC? You can request either one or two semesters for your sabbatical. Even if you just take one semester off though, it means that you need to wait another seven years before you can request the next sabbatical. You'll receive 80% of your salary, which can be increased to 100% using bank leave. And that is probably a recommendation that I would already have for you. Plan on trying to bump up to that 100% because it otherwise, will not only affect your income, but also your pension. So, that in a nutshell is a sabbatical.

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# 00:02:48 **Tania**

# The process of applying for a sabbatical at Mt. SAC is to first of all, start looking out for the email announcement that usually comes from Laura Martinez. Then there's an orientation for you to attend. And then your final step is to submit the proposal.

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# 00:03:02 **Tania**

# I'm hoping that our panelists will share a little bit more about this general process and have some tips for success. Our panelists today are Dr. Maya Alvarez-Galvan from the English Department, Dr. Hilary Lackey from Earth Sciences, and Martin Mason from engineering. Thank you all so much for volunteering your time today.

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# 00:03:24 **Tania**

# As I mentioned, we want this to be a fairly casual chat, but I offer the panelists to submit some slides to share. And because Hilary is in the Earth Sciences and the Earth Sciences are such a lovely visual field, she said, "Sure, I'll send some slides your way." So, I'm going to turn it over to Hilary so that she can share out about her sabbatical experience and pictures before we then join in a conversation with everyone. Hilary, please.

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# 00:03:50 **Hilary**

# Okie dok. So, yeah, I'll just tell you a little bit about my sabbatical. I don't want to take up too much time, but I did prepare some slides.

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# 00:03:58 **Hilary**

# So, I did a sabbatical over the 2020/21 academic year, full year. And the title of my project was Applying Paleontological Research in Sedimentary Rocks of Southern California to Creation of Classroom-Based Research Experiences.

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# 00:04:17 **Hilary**

# So, I knew after I had been at Mt. SAC for a while - I was hired in 2010, I knew I wanted to do a sabbatical and I was thinking a lot about what I would want to do. You know, maybe I want to work on a new course. Maybe I wanted to do to do something like Phil did, where he flipped his classroom and recorded videos and so on.

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# 00:04:41 **Hilary**

# And then I thought, well, what am I really, really passionate about? And I'm trained as a paleontologist. And for my graduate work, most of my field sites were in Europe. And I'm not from the West Coast, so when I came out here and started teaching out here, I knew something about the geology and paleontology of California.

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# 00:05:03 **Hilary**

# But there were so many times that I'd be on a field trip with students and we'd see some seashells in the sedimentary rocks or they'd ask me, "Are there fossils around here?" And I'd go, "Oh, I'll have to look that up. I'm not sure which formation this is, I don't know a lot about this."

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# 00:05:23 **Hilary**

# And I thought I really want to do something with my expertise that I got my graduate degree in. And wouldn't it be great to spend some time actually really learning about the geology and the paleontology of this region. So, that's what I proposed, was to do my own research so that then, in the classroom, I can think of good projects to do with students or I can at least be more knowledgeable when we're out in the field together. Could I have the next slide please, Tania?

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# 00:05:54 **Hilary**

# Okay. So, I arrange my slideshow so that the end is a little list of like, if you're going to do a sabbatical, here's some ideas of how to go about it. But so my components in my proposal were that I was going to be spending this year doing - this was the 2020/21 year. I was going to be spending this year traveling around Southern California, going to field sites and sort of doing some recon about where I can get good exposure of fossils.

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# 00:06:27 **Hilary**

# Finally having time to do a literature review to actually like go through, do a library search and go through maps and things to really get a big picture of the paleontology of the region. I was going to do a small research project of my own, answering a paleontological question using field sites and museum specimens in order to kind of get an idea of what direction student research could go in.

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# 00:06:58 **Hilary**

# Also, in our classrooms at Mt. SAC, we do have quite a few fossil specimens, but a lot of them weren't labeled very well. I'm not sure where they were from. Sometimes someone has a friend or a relative who retired and they're like, "Oh, my grandpa has this shell collection, I'm going to donate it." And it's like sitting in a box in the corner of our classroom.

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# 00:07:21 **Hilary**

# So, organizing our collections was part of this. And then the sort of the deliverable with some ideas for classroom exercises. So, thank you, Tania.

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# 00:07:33 **Hilary**

# This is our friend Coronavirus. And so, as you know, 2020 got underway and the pandemic was looking worse and worse and the campus was shut down and everything - my scope and the methodology kind of changed for this project. And as many of you know, during the 2020/21 academic year, our children were at home learning from home, online.

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# 00:08:02 **Hilary**

# So, I sort of became the like homeschool principal at my house. My husband's also a college professor, so he and the kids were on Zoom. I couldn't go into my office because the campus was closed. I couldn't get into museums because they were closed to the public. And so, what I ended up doing mostly in the fall is I really got to spend a lot of time going in the field by myself, masked up, putting on gloves at the gas station and getting to know the field area.

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# 00:08:37 **Hilary**

# And I got to spend a lot of time on the review. I read a lot and it was ... I know, I think Chisa is here, librarian. It was so great to be able to do a good library search on topics. So, anyway, I ended up having a research project that got bigger and bigger. And I'm happy to tell you guys about that outside of the scope of this because I don't want to hog the whole time.

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# 00:08:59 **Hilary**

# But this is a map of places that I went and visited for fieldwork. And I did get in touch with museum curators at several museums in the area: the Alf Museum, the Western Sciences, the LA County Museum, San Diego, Natural History Museum.

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# 00:09:15 **Hilary**

# And the LA Museum and the San Diego Museum, they actually made it possible for me to come in and use their collections. And so, I used their collections for my research project and I ended up presenting at a conference this year, and I have some great ideas for projects to continue with students.

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# 00:09:35 **Hilary**

# In terms of the organizing the collections on campus and so on, some of that work, actually I ended up doing over the summer when my sabbatical was over, because it was just so hard to get onto campus. So, things shifted to home. So, here's me working at home with my fossil collections and doing some sample preparation and using my computer to measure some clams and things like that.

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# 00:10:02 **Hilary**

# And then when I did go to museum collections, it was usually just me and a museum curator. And I mostly was by myself in these big warehouses, full of cabinets, full of fossils, and masked up the whole time. But I really appreciated having the museums work with me. And the other thing is I joined a club, the Southern California Paleontological Society and started going to their Zoom meetings. And I actually became the secretary of that club.

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# 00:10:33 **Hilary**

# And they've just in the past few months, started their field trips again. So, I've been able to go on some field trips with some local paleontology enthusiasts, which was good too. There's basically where I was, isolated amongst the dead things at the museums.

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# 00:10:52 **Hilary**

# So, here's the part that you probably came here for. So, if you're applying for a sabbatical, one thing I would suggest is talking to other people who went on sabbatical and got it approved. So, Phil is here. Phil was very generous in talking to me about his process and showing me his materials that he used for his application and report.

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# 00:11:15 **Hilary**

# Betsy Lawlor was also very helpful. Sandy Esslinger from Art History also, like basically showed me all her stuff that she had written for sabbatical. So, I really got a good sense of like what the proposal should look like.

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# 00:11:31 **Hilary**

# I also started talking to my department chairs, my Dean and my colleagues early on, saying, I'm thinking of going on a sabbatical. Our department has not had anyone go on sabbatical, at least, in the 11 years that I've been here. And I don't know before that when the last person was that went on sabbatical. But it was good to have a dialogue especially for things like planning for who's going to cover your courses and things like that.

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# 00:11:57 **Hilary**

# And then I also met with a couple people from the Salary and Leaves Committee and I told them what I told you, that I'm a paleontologist, but I don't know much about California paleontology. And I don't want my proposal to just sound like a phishing expedition, but here's why I want to go around and learn more in the field and at museums and so on.

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# 00:12:20 **Hilary**

# And the committee was actually very helpful in some ways saying, "Okay, this thing you're proposing is too much, are you really going to be able to finish this?" And then on the other hand, like "This thing you're proposing, could you flesh it out more? We don't have a good idea of what it's going to look like when it's done."

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# 00:12:38 **Hilary**

# And so, that's my suggestion is to really talk to people and get ideas about what's doable and show people your proposal before you turn it in. And now, I feel like I've talked a lot, so I'd like to turn the spotlight over to someone else, but I'm happy to answer questions. Thank you.

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# 00:12:59 **Tania**

# Thank you so much for sharing out also the visuals and the Earth Sciences are such a visual area. I will now also invite our three other panelists to share out a little bit about their sabbatical. And first, I would like everyone to just kind of state again what the topic of your sabbatical was. And you were all in this last round of sabbaticals, I assume because we do have folks who completed more than one sabbatical or maybe prior.

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# 00:13:29 **Tania**

# Well, let's start with that. And then maybe whatever you would like to highlight, right? So, I'm going to spotlight all of our panelists and then we can take it from there. So, Martin, since I'd forgotten to put you on the list, do you want to go first?

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# 00:13:46 **Martin**

# Sure, I'd be happy to. So, my sabbatical really came about 12 years ago, I'd taken a sabbatical, I'd gotten interested in robotics and we started a robotics team on campus, and I really wanted to be able to launch that. And so, that sabbatical was a little different and, again, it was a long time ago.

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# 00:14:01 **Martin**

# I was actually doing a second master's degree in engineering with a focus on robotics, and the outcome of that, going back all that time, is we built a robotics team on campus that I hope everybody's heard of. We're currently second in the world behind Purdue in the rankings this year and they've just done extraordinarily well.

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# 00:14:20 **Martin**

# So, about four years ago, I had a student come to me who was an aerospace engineering major. And he was really interested in rockets and he said, "I'd really like to do a rocket project." And I said, "That's terrific, but you need to find a competition that's appropriate for community college students and do some research on it, submit a proposal."

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# 00:14:39 **Martin**

# And he did all those things, a student that followed through. Wonderful, and that does happen. And that's how we started a rocket team on campus, really. We've done another project several years before in collaboration with another college, but that started and I'd been mentoring them, but I'd very quickly sort of hit a wall with my background.

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# 00:14:56 **Martin**

# And I thought I really would like to take the time to become much more expert in this. So, I started talking to different companies around the LA basin. You're probably aware that aerospace is exploding between and SpaceX and Rocket Labs, all the little startups that are in this area: Virgin in Long Beach.

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# 00:15:15 **Martin**

# I keep hearing from my students, this is where they're going to work. So, I talked to a bunch of companies and I found some places that would bring me on board, as an employee for the year. So, I spent the year working without pay for two companies. One was US Rockets. I was their science and research officer. They're still working. We've actually finished all of our pretesting on a three-stage to orbit, solid fuel rocket for delivering microsatellites.

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# 00:15:43 **Martin**

# And so, I spent a good chunk of the year, last year out in the Mojave Desert at Edwards Air Force base testing rocket motors, and mainly collecting data and doing data reduction. And I also worked for another company called Sugar Shot to Space, which we have a propellant that doesn't use any chlorine. So, it's much more environmental friendly as much as any rocket is ever going to be environmentally friendly.

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# 00:16:07 **Martin**

# And we were trying to develop larger and larger motors scaling up the technology to bigger motors. And we were working on composite motors for about the first two thirds of the year. Then we kept making larger and larger composite motors, had lots of failures. Then eventually, we wrapped up the composite motor program in April. So, I spent again a good chunk of the year working with them.

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# 00:16:32 **Martin**

# So, how did COVID affect all this? I spent a lot of time out in the desert with other rocket people, to be honest. There's a lot of engineers out in the middle of nowhere playing with dangerous chemicals, I have to say. So, I don't think COVID impacted that part of it much.

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# 00:16:47 **Martin**

# Certainly at the beginning, there were a lot of impacts in terms of the clearances and licenses I was working to get. I wasn't able to get some of the licenses during the time span of my sabbatical, because the offices just weren't weren't responding, but I did do a lot of work with the FAA remotely and we kind of all figured it out after long enough doing this.

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# 00:17:04 **Martin**

# So, that was another big part of my responsibilities with Sugar Shot, was doing all the FAA clearances. And I think kind of in terms of the outcomes for me personally, and for the students this semester, I got funded to have five students doing ... they're being funded to do research. Cal Poly has done - as has Cal State Fullerton has done research programs for our students, but they usually insist that the students come onto their campus to do it.

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# 00:17:27 **Martin**

# And we were able to convince them to have students do research with Mt. SAC faculty on campus. So, we have five students that are funded this spring. They're getting a research stipend and we're getting some money for supplies for doing ... I'm doing rocket-related projects. And I was able to recruit another person that I worked with to come and do projects with five other students on solid fuel rockets.

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# 00:17:49 **Martin**

# And I think it's really trying to ... when our students do transfer, which is engineering is a transfer program - we want them to have had experiences that let them really launch themselves as they transfer in as juniors and are not kind of ... they come in and everybody else has been doing this for a couple years and they're way behind. So, that was one big part of my sabbatical, working in an aerospace environment, making lots of contacts, getting lots of real experience.

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# 00:18:14 **Martin**

# And the other part was I went to engineering school. My undergrad courses were 30 years ago and things have changed a lot. So, we've been asked by our advisory board to develop an FPGA course. Now, FPGAs are field-programmable gate arrays. These are devices that are kind of in everything. You think, oh, there's computers and everything. There's micro controls and everything - actually FPGAs are the most common microcircuits that's out there.

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# 00:18:43 **Martin**

# The install base is about a 4:1 ratio with computers and microcontrollers in devices, things you use every day. And so, there's a tremendous demand for these, but they really weren't around very much 30 years ago. So, I wanted to take some time to get caught up to the state of the art so I could have the expertise to develop that for our program, and develop a new course, new lab, that sort of thing.

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# 00:19:06 **Martin**

# And I wasn't really so much focusing on the curriculum development, it's just skills development for myself for something that just had changed so much in a 30-year period.

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# 00:19:13 **Martin**

# In terms of the application process, again, I'd done it - it certainly had changed a lot over a decade since I'd done it previously. I'd looked at what Phil had done, and I think I also talked to the sabbatical committee. I think that was probably my useful thing. They had some orientations, I encourage you guys to go to those, ask your questions, they'll answer them, and then kind of expect that you're going to do a little bit of back and forth for clarification.

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# 00:19:37 **Tania**

# Thank you so much, Martin, for sharing out. That sounds like also a very exciting time for you. I would now like to invite Maya to share out about her sabbatical. Thank you, Maya.

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# 00:19:50 **Maya**

# Okay. So, I did my sabbatical in 2019/2020, and that was actually my second sabbatical. And what I will say is that the most challenging part for me was getting the inspiration for the topic. I could have gone on the sabbatical sooner, I just didn't know what I wanted to do. And it took me going to another country and visiting an exhibit that really inspired me. And once I saw that exhibit, within 10 minutes, I had my entire sabbatical project planned out in my head.

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# 00:20:21 **Maya**

# So, sometimes, you need to use your environment for the inspiration. And what I did, my sabbatical was called The Pen is Mightier than the Sword; using writing (I'm looking at my proposal right now) as a weapon against social injustice. So, I read four authors. I read Angela Davis, Che Guevara, Ruben Salazar, and Malala Yousafzai.

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# 00:20:48 **Maya**

# And I looked at the characteristics that they had in common that made them effective social protest writers. And as part of that, I created teaching modules, I created PowerPoint presentations, because I was going to do three workshops in the writing center to help students with their writing. And for me, the most exciting part was I created a visual exhibit that is supposed to be in the library.

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# 00:21:12 **Maya**

# It was scheduled for the fall of 2020. And obviously, that did not happen. But that was the most exciting part because I was inspired by a museum exhibit. And so, I wanted to bring a museum exhibit to Mt. SAC. And I got to work with Studio13 and they assigned a student to me and she and I created this visual exhibit. And when I say she and I, I really mean she did all the graphic stuff.

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# 00:21:39 **Maya**

# I just said "Change this, this is misspelled." You know, I did all the editing and I kind of gave her the overall vision. But it was a very great experience for me to work with the student. And I think the student also had a good experience because she got a chance to develop a full-blown exhibit. And Monico Orozco in Studio13 told me his students don't usually get that kind of opportunity. They usually work on like a one-page flyer.

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# 00:22:05 **Maya**

# So, for her to be able to conceptualize this entire exhibit was a really good opportunity for her. So, because of the pandemic, I was not able to give my presentations to the school. The school shut down the week I was supposed to give my first presentation, and I also had to delay the exhibit. So, I delayed it by a year, which would have been this past fall. And I have now delayed it indefinitely until we figure out when we're really going to be back on campus.

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# 00:22:35 **Maya**

# It was a lot of work and I will have to spend quite a bit of money to get it printed, and I don't want that to be exhibited and have nobody see it. So, we're on a holding pattern right now until I'll be back on campus. What I would recommend for you is, as you are writing your proposal - I gave my proposal to several people and have had them critique it.

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# 00:22:59 **Maya**

# And the comment that consistently came back to me is you really have two sabbatical projects here. You have this monster project, scale it back, cut things out. And I refused because I said this is the project that's meaningful to me. If I take any one of these elements out, then I'm not really doing what I want to do.

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# 00:23:20 **Maya**

# The other thing that I would recommend is plan for a pandemic because I had not planned for that. So, I found myself counseling all these things, which made me feel really bad. But at some point, I had to just give it up to the universe and say, okay, I can't control this. So, I had to learn that you really only want to put in your proposal the things that you can control.

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# 00:23:42 **Maya**

# I had one element that I did take out early on because it involved creating a book of student writing. And I knew I could not guarantee getting enough samples to put in the book. So, I took that part out before I submitted the proposal. And I'm glad that I did because I realized had we not had a pandemic, I don't know that I could have delivered on that. So, make sure whatever you put in your proposal, you can actually deliver on it.

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# 00:24:07 **Maya**

# And then for me, the sabbatical was just a chance to engage at an academic level, with literature I've been wanting to read for years and just haven't had a chance to do. So, it reminded me of when I worked at my dissertation and I just blocked the whole world out and just engaged with ideas. It was really fulfilling for me in that regard.

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# 00:24:31 **Tania**

# Yes, thank you so much for sharing out. We're already seeing a pattern here, right? The pandemic, I don't know if any of us could envision that that's something we have to plan for, but that's part of our job, right? We always have to be flexible in all aspects of our work and you guys have shown that you've prevailed.

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# 00:24:50 **Tania**

# Thank you all of our panelists for sharing out about your projects and sharing already some of your advice. I'd like to now give our audience an opportunity to ask questions. Maybe I'll kick us off here while others are gathering their thoughts.

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# 00:25:08 **Tania**

# I'm just curious how your time away from campus maybe has changed you. And during these stressful times, we also all really need to be taking care of ourselves. And so, I'm kind of curious, like how the time away from campus has maybe changed you. Has it allowed you to recharge your batteries a bit or were you overstressed because Karen said, "I'm overcommitting." So, maybe you would like to share out.

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# 00:25:36 **Maya**

# I actually spent five semesters away from the campus because prior to my sabbatical, I was selected to do the study abroad program. So, we went to go live in Spain for three months. I came back and I did two semesters of the sabbatical. And then we did two semesters of like hardcore pandemic, online stuff.

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# 00:25:55 **Maya**

# So, for me, it's been like two and a half years since I set foot on campus. And it did recharge me, but it's a different kind of stress as well, because you're trying to juggle multiple components of your sabbatical, and people in your life see you working from home and they think, oh, you're not working.

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# 00:26:14 **Maya**

# So, during that time, I helped my parents sell their house, move to a new house, buy a house, go on medical appointments with them. And all the time in the back of my mind, I'm thinking I have a sabbatical project to write. So, that added a different kind of stress.

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# 00:26:28 **Maya**

# At the end, my final report, what I turned into the school was over 600 pages. Now, that's just me. And it was because of the kind of project that I proposed and I'm in English. I like to write. So, the writing comes more naturally to me. That's certainly not normal, but turning out 600 pages took a lot of time. And so, it was stressful, but I cannot emphasize enough how satisfying it was to just engage with these ideas. It was great.

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# 00:26:57 **Tania**

# Thank you, Maya.

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# 00:26:59 **Martin**

# I think I'll jump in. For me, I've been department chair for quite a few years and I think the sabbatical was also a way for me to sort of change my role in the department. And we were really fortunate other people stepped in to be department co-chairs.

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# 00:27:17 **Martin**

# I won't say we're a small department, but we're a smaller department and it's really not being there, let me do a big reset in terms of my relationship to the administration and to the campus - I think mentally more than anything, I guess, I really missed the opportunity to recruit new students into projects that I do. I know we had to really restart the robotics team and that was a huge effort because we didn't have any alumni coming in, everything like that. So, I think there's pluses and minuses.

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# 00:27:43 **Martin**

# I will say this last fall was wonderful. Students were so happy to be back on campus. I know at least physics engineering, we're pretty much a hundred percent in person. And so, that's just been all the joy we've gotten from students to be there and how happy they are and how hard they're willing to work to make this work. So, I didn't recharge as much as I hoped, but it was a great experience.

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# 00:28:06 **Tania**

# Thank you, Martin. Hilary, did you want to add something?

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# 00:28:10 **Hilary**

# Yeah. I kind of wanted to piggyback on Maya a little bit, in that when I was on sabbatical, definitely, and it was a pandemic year as well - like I have aging parents nearby and it was good in some ways that I was available to help them with things around the house or take them to an appointment or something.

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# 00:28:31 **Hilary**

# But also, I did feel like my boundaries weren't always respected - "Oh, you're off work this whole year?" And that would be a different kind of leave that I would take to do that full-time.

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# 00:28:43 **Hilary**

# And then also, one of the things that's been just a little hard coming out of the pandemic is part of my project kind of like Martin, was making connections and trying to find opportunities for students to engage with local resources.

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# 00:29:00 **Hilary**

# And I feel like I have a better sense of what's there for our students and our graduates, but a lot of societies and museums and agencies are like, "Well, we're still not quite doing things in person yet," or "Oh, we have this internship, but we haven't brought it back online yet since the pandemic."

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# 00:29:20 **Hilary**

# And so, it's been a little frustrating to not be able to just jump right back into normal academic life after the sabbatical. But I think even people who weren't on sabbatical, everything's different this year. But in terms of recharging the batteries, I feel like I got a little smarter over the sabbatical.

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# 00:29:44 **Hilary**

# And in the comments, I said something about being able to focus on your topic without the distraction or burden of teaching, and I realized I didn't mean it to sound like that - but to kind of discover the joy of being a student again during your sabbatical is a big takeaway.

# 

# 00:30:04 **Tania**

# And you shared earlier also, just to have the time to read some of the books that we get so many amazing books and it really is hard to find the time to do that. So, I want to turn to some of the questions coming in the chat. And so, one question was curious how we use bank leave and who at the college to contact about that.

# 

# 00:30:27 **Tania**

# So, in the chat, it's kind of been going back and forth already and answering that - since 80% is covered by the college, you basically need three LAG to make up to get to a hundred percent load. And Maya was kind enough to already add that that's part of the application process that you fill out a form to-

# 

# 00:30:49 **Maya**

# Tania, it's six units. It's three per semester.

# 

# 00:30:54 **Tania**

# Yes, thank you for that correction. Yes, so six units. So, you have to plan for that if you want to make sure you have 100% of your salary. And again, that also affects your pension. So, it's something certainly to plan for. So, thank you for that. Would somebody like to ask a question or otherwise, add into the chat?

# 

# 00:31:17 **Maya**

# Yeah, I will say there aren't that many jobs that will pay you 80% to go and do something that you are passionate about or interested in doing. And so, we're very fortunate as faculty to have that opportunity in our contract, and I encourage all of you to consider it. Normally, from what I understand, the Sabbatical Committee does not get a ton of applications. And so, your chances are pretty decent that you would get it as long as you submit a rigorous worthwhile proposal.

# 

# 00:31:49 **Maya**

# So, there's a lot of support out there for you in the proposal writing process so that people can tell you, yes, you're going in the right direction or no, this is really not the kind of thing we cover - so that you will submit a successful proposal. It just takes a little bit of leg work, but it is totally doable.

# 

# 00:32:07 **Tania**

# Yes, thank you for sharing. Would anyone else like to chime in?

# 

# 00:32:12 **Martin**

# I wanted to jump in on Zoom's question. Going back to the classroom, after a sabbatical, to me - probably, for all of us, there is this idea of a reset, but there's also kind of really, you want to have an experience that's going to make you reevaluate what you're doing in the classroom. And if you teach the same 13 classes, you kind of can get stale and something to reenergize you, give you new ideas.

# 

# 00:32:34 **Martin**

# And for me, going and working in industry - I'd last worked in industry in the mid-nineties. Here it is, 20 some years later and you really fundamentally question, why are we doing the things we're doing? Why are we making students take the courses? Why do we have these student learning outcomes? And particularly, if there's been an emphasis on certificates and associates degrees to make students workforce ready, we've had huge efforts and a strong workforce.

# 

# 00:33:00 **Martin**

# We've written and received strong workforce grants and ATE grants to do these things. We need to be continually reevaluating what we're doing at a really fundamental level based on experience and industry. And if we go away for 30 years and teach, I really feel like we've gotten disconnected. The sabbatical to me is a way to do that reset.

# 

# 00:33:19 **Martin**

# You really question, why am I giving these tests? Why are these things important and what types of authentic assessment can I do? So, I think again, a sabbatical - everybody's field is different. For me, I have a pretty good sense of what industry expects from technicians coming out, having worked with some that were fantastic and some that were terrible. And so, I encourage everybody to have that experience and use it to reframe how they're teaching.

# 

# 00:33:45 **Tania**

# I love how you said that because that's so true. For many of us, who've been teaching for many, many years, we start feeling like, "Wow, am I even still up to the times?" Right. And so, I can totally see how your sabbatical was incredibly beneficial for that, especially in the field that you work in where 20, 30 years, it's like it's a lifetime of changes for engineering.

# 

# 00:34:09 **Tania**

# There are a couple of more questions that have come up in the chat. One was about developing a textbook. And I appreciate everybody chiming in there that maybe there's copyright issues, but then also that there may be support for developing open educational resources. So, it's certainly something to look into and ask beforehand before you may want to do that.

# 

# 00:34:34 **Tania**

# So, want to see if there's other questions. Maya said, "Here's also how a proposal is worded." And I think that where again, the offer by the folks who have completed sabbatical is crucial to talk to people who were successful in submitting their proposals and making sure that all the boxes are checked and all the things that need to be addressed.

# 

# 00:34:57 **Faculty**

# Tania, I just wanted to ask if folks could speak to their report for a little bit.

# 

# 00:35:03 **Tania**

# Yes, of course.

# 

# 00:35:04 **Maya**

# I'll speak to that really quickly. You have to submit a report at the end of the sabbatical project. In the orientation packet that the committee gives you, they have a list of questions that they want you to address in that report. So, what I did is I copied those questions and I put them in a Word document. And I believe the report is supposed to be no more than 10 pages, the actual report.

# 

# 00:35:27 **Maya**

# So, in theory, that's all you really have to turn into them. Now, like in my proposal, I said I was going to do workshops. So, I included my PowerPoint slides. I said I was going to do teaching modules. So, I included my teaching modules as attachments or appendices.

# 

# 00:35:45 **Maya**

# My actual report is 10-pages long, but the whole binder I put together was 600 pages because of all of the appendices that I included. 40 pages of that was the proposal that I originally wrote. So, the final report, 10 pages, but then it grows depending on what you proposed you were going to do for your sabbatical. And those questions are in the orientation packet.

# 

# 00:36:12 **Tania**

# 600 pages, wow.

# 

# 00:36:13 **Hilary**

# Yeah, my report had a lot of appendices. So, a couple things that you need to do for the sabbatical in the proposal, you actually have to propose like the timeline of what you're going to be doing for your whole sabbatical, which is a little daunting at first: "This week I'm going to be reading this, this week, I'm going to be creating modules."

# 

# 00:36:36 **Hilary**

# But I got so much advice from people who had written proposals and from the Salary and Leaves Committee themselves, of sort of how detailed you have to be about this proposed schedule of what you're going to do. Then of course, when the pandemic happened, the schedule changed anyway.

# 

# 00:36:53 **Hilary**

# And then for the report, if you go to the Salary and Leaves website - I haven't looked at it this semester, but there was only one sample report out there. I think it was Betsy McCormack's from English, but people I talked to showed me their report. So, I see Mark's question, "Will you have a repository of people who have done a sabbatical?" I think Salary and Leaves intends to have sort of here's some sample report, here's some sample proposals. I don't know if they're all up on the website.

# 

# 00:37:27 **Faculty**

# Those used to live in Laura Martinez's office on a shelf.

# 

# 00:37:30 **Hilary**

# Okay, so they're physically printed, not electronic? Okay, yeah. So, that's a great idea because it is transparent. They say, "Take a look at other people's sabbatical proposals, talk to other people." The language in the contract is something about the sabbatical report is due the first Monday of the first week of instruction or something like that. It comes up really fast.

# 

# 00:37:54 **Hilary**

# It was like September 1st this year. And I will say I turned it all in and I got the response that it was received. I have heard no feedback on the report. I don't know others who did a sabbatical, did you get any feedback on your sabbatical report?

# 

# 00:38:16 **Maya**

# They do meet - the committee does meet and they read the reports, but then they discuss it internally to decide if it's accepted or not. So, if you didn't hear back from them, that means that they accepted it. In a sense, you don't want to hear back because that means that there was a problem and you have to fix it.

# 

# 00:38:33 **Hilary**

# Yeah. It's a little nerve-wracking though, because it's like I assume. I kept looking at the board of trustees minutes to see if there was acceptance of sabbatical reports or something, but I kind of went into a black hole.

# 

# 00:38:49 **Tania**

# Yeah, you know what? I have brought this up as the faculty professional development coordinator. I said we need to have a place for these sabbatical projects. Last year for the power of our data, I held a sabbatical session as well. And people were reporting out and everybody was like, wow, all the things that are being done, someone had created videos.

# 

# 00:39:08 **Tania**

# And it's like, well, if we don't share these, how can we know that this is a resource that's there for everyone. But because it is with Salaries and Leaves, I kind of need to take that to them rather than housing it on POD or something like that.

# 

# 00:39:23 **Maya**

# I wanted to add something. One thing that I did early on that in the end proved helpful is I created a work log, a week-by-week work log. And so, I just kind of created these little boxes and I put week one, week two, week three, and then I just did little bullets, like read three books or went to this museum or wrote this module, whatever I did that week.

# 

# 00:39:47 **Maya**

# And at the end of the week, I'd go in and I'd type it. And then I'd forget about it till the following week. At the end, when I turned it in, the person I turned my report to, saw that, and said, "Wow, not a lot of people do that. And this is really helpful for the committee to see how much time you ..." I didn't put the hours, but just the activities.

# 

# 00:40:11 **Maya**

# So, I would recommend doing that early on for away that you can hold yourself accountable and prove to the committee that you did 80% of your workload on the sabbatical.

# 

# 00:40:24 **Tania**

# That's a wonderful advice, yeah. There was another question in the chat: is creating a course an acceptable proposal? I've created quite a few while also teaching. So, I wasn't sure if it's considered acceptable." And one response that already came, that this might fall under curriculum and that that would not be considered sabbatical worthy.

# 

# 00:40:43 **Tania**

# Then another additional comment on that topic is that courses get approved are not through EDC and CNI. And yeah, you don't want your sabbatical to depend on others if it's going to be approved or not. So, thank you for already answering those in the chat. Martin, did you want to add something?

# 

# 00:41:05 **Martin**

# I just was going to add sort of in general. Yeah, I think I had a misconception when I was preparing for my first sabbatical about creating courses, creating lab manuals, writing books. Those are curricular activities. And I guess it does depend on your department. But things we normally do as part of our faculty job are part of our job. We have hours to do those things.

# 

# 00:41:24 **Martin**

# Sabbatical is for something that you couldn't do. If you need to go to Peru and study something, if you need to go work - and just something you couldn't do as part of your regular assignment. Even though you might say, "Oh, I don't have time to do that, I don't have time to write a textbook" - people do write textbooks.

# 

# 00:41:38 **Martin**

# And so, keeping that separation; curriculum is not ... and again, I did some skills development as part of my sabbatical. I think that's appropriate and gets approved. A lot of sabbaticals are associated with additional graduate education, but kind of keeping your brain separate, I'm not developing a course as a sabbatical. And I've been told by previous VPs, and honestly, I think it depends on who the VP is at any given time. So, that can always change.

# 

# 00:42:06 **Maya**

# It sounds like we all did an independent research project, but one of the easiest sabbaticals to do is to just take graduate-level courses and you get those courses approved by the committee. The problem is if those ... you can't get into those courses or they get canceled, but that is definitely the easiest route to take.

# 

# 00:42:23 **Tania**

# And just before I turn it to Hilary, just to tag onto what Maya just said: some folks are working towards moving from one salary column to the next and that's where the graduate work can help with that as well. Hilary?

# 

# 00:42:38 **Hilary**

# Oh, I was going to say, actually, I had some good discussions with Phil when I was working on my proposal and sort of the "Here's what you're supposed to be doing for the college, here's what's part of your contract. How can you get the committee to understand that what you're doing is this other thing?" And so, I would say like, for instance, to Amy, so maybe there's a course you've been wanting to develop, but maybe it's in a topic that you don't know a lot about, or you're rusty in the skills needed for it or something.

# 

# 00:43:10 **Hilary**

# I would say propose a sabbatical where you're going to learn. And then as somebody said, maybe the outcome isn't going to be, "I will get this course approved because maybe that will or won't happen." But that the things you need to learn and work on in order to later fulfill the course proposal as part of your regular contract would be perfectly acceptable.

# 

# 00:43:34 **Hilary**

# And I had discussions, I think I talked to Jennifer Galbraith. I went and met with her. And there were some things that I thought, "Ooh, would that be okay for a sabbatical?" She's like, "Yeah, that would be a great thing to do for a sabbatical." And then there were other things I thought, oh, well of course, writing a new lab manual would be a sabbatical.

# 

# 00:43:52 **Hilary**

# But no, actually, if you're going to do that, there's all these other things that you need to demonstrate that you're going to do. So, having conversations with Salary and Leaves is definitely beneficial. And somebody said it changes - different Dean, different committee changes year to year.

# 

# 00:44:10 **Tania**

# So, is it fair to say that the four of you are more than happy to receive emails from faculty should they have more questions? Is that fair to say? And I know that others have completed sabbaticals as well. So, I appreciate that. You also contributed to this conversation as a member of the Flex Day Planning Committee, I appreciate all you guys' engagement.

# 

# 00:44:33 **Tania**

# You know, a lot of work goes into preparing Flex days and it's really, really nice to see you here. So, thank you again, everyone. Thank you to our panelists and it was good to see everyone. Thank you, guys. Take care.

# 

# 00:44:51 **Christina**

# Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast, and don't forget to share your favorite episodes.

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