

2019 Sabbatical Report

Emily Acosta Lewis
Associate Professor
Communication and Media Studies
Sonoma State University

During my Spring 2019 sabbatical leave, I worked on my research project involving service-learning. In January 2019, I attended the Hawaii International Conference on Education to present the findings of my research entitled "Service-learning courses: Enjoyment, engagement, and entitlement in emerging adults." In doing so, I was able to make connections with other service-learning researchers and solicit feedback from them on the research that I was undertaking. By attending this conference, discussing service-learning with researchers from around the country and world, I learned more about this line of research and how the idea and extent of service-learning varies greatly by area and country. In March of 2019, I attended the Continuums of Service Conference in San Diego to present with Sonoma State University colleagues on "When the firestorm transforms: Becoming the community partner." This presentation was about how Sonoma State became the community partner after the October 2017 fires, rather than helping to support community partners. Additionally, this conference included many presentations related to service-learning, which was directly relevant to my research project and teaching.

My research project on service-learning involved doing a significant amount of secondary research to curate articles related to service-learning. It took me a significant amount of time to gather these articles given their publication in service-learning and teaching journal as well as discipline-specific journals. I also spent time combining electronic data with data from hard copies of surveys that needed to be entered manually. Given my background is in quantitative analyses, in order to take a more qualitative approach to the data, particularly for the open-ended questions, I had to do more research on this type of analysis. I have done some of the open-ended analyses related to this research project, but there is still a lot of data that I would like to explore. I did prepare and submit a manuscript related to service-learning to the Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education.

I also had the opportunity to work on other research projects while on sabbatical. I had a paper accepted at the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Annual Conference, which was accepted for presentation in October. This paper entitled "Communicating and promoting sustainability on campus: A public relations case study," is related to a service-learning course that I teach on campus. In this course, we worked to promote sustainability efforts on campus with the Director of Sustainability and were funded by a Campus as Living Lab (CALL) grant from the California State University's Chancellor's Office.

During my sabbatical, the Communication and Media Studies Department was in the middle of a tenure-track search, therefore, I participated in the on-campus visits of those candidates. Additionally, I continued some ongoing work for the Center for Community Engagement by consulting with Vince Harper, the Director for Community Engagement at Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County, on potential community problems that SSU can help address through service-learning courses. This tied directly into my research project on service-learning.

Additionally, I was able to participate in the Sonoma State University's Faculty Center's Online and Blended Teaching Excellence Learning Community. Doing so allowed me the opportunity to learn more about teaching fully online as well as learn about tools that are available to me to help facilitate the learning process. Given that Sonoma State University currently does not have any fully online courses through CSU Online and that there has been more support for doing so, it seemed like a great use of my time during my sabbatical. Additionally, it gave me the tools, support, and time to move a course of mine fully online, which is a significant undertaking.

My sabbatical was productive in terms of my primary research project as well as other research projects and professional development. I am grateful for the opportunity to have a sabbatical and appreciative that it has allowed me to grow and develop in so many areas of my research and teaching.