

Sabbatical Report

Name: Keith Kroll, Department of English

1. Original statement of purpose: See attached "Sabbatical Proposal"
2. Activities performed:
 - a) During the length of the sabbatical, I was engaged in researching and writing essays/chapters for a proposed book, (working) title "The Commercialization of the Community College." At this stage, the working title has changed to "Teaching in the Corporate Community College."
 - b) An additional activity performed, but not explicitly stated in the original proposal, was to research and write a rough draft on the growing role of Early/Middle Colleges in community colleges, specifically the use of high school teachers teaching community college courses, in this case English courses, on a high school campus. This topic does, however, fit within the purview of the book, as an argument can be made that such a model envisions students as commodities (i.e., a "corporate approach to higher education).
3. Objectives accomplished:
 - a) As is always the case with research and writing, one plans to much more than can or is actually accomplished. However, the sabbatical did provide the opportunity and time to engage in daily research and writing (something not possible with a normal teaching load of five courses during a semester).
 - b) As of March 7th, 2017, I have completed four (new) rough draft essays on the topics outlined in the original proposal 3. Specific Objectives. 1. a. The most developed of the essays is a draft on the AACC comparing their two reports on the 21st-century community college. I have substantial notes on the the growing trend of performance-based funding, though I need to continue to research the topic and to decide whether it will be a separate chapter. In addition, I decided to wait until I had a complete rough draft manuscript to write the essay/chapter offering "an alternative model for the 21st-century community college.
 - c) With respect to rewriting my previously published essays, I have completed most of the rewrite of "Let Them Eat Workforce Training" and "The End of the Community College English Profession." At this point, I have decided to combine the two essays on the commercialization of the community college.
 - d) It has also become apparent during my research and writing that an essay/chapter is required on the growing trend of community colleges to offer bachelor degrees and how this fits into the commercialization of the community college.

- e) My final objective is to publish my sabbatical work as a book (or, if need be, as individual essays). Books about community colleges are actually rare in the greater scheme of higher education.

I have had good fortune with my past sabbatical work, as each time it did lead to publication.

At least one publisher, Peter Lang Publishing, as shown interest in the book proposal, so I am hopeful that this new project will lead to publication.

4. Conclusions drawn:

There is nothing in the current climate of higher education to suggest that the commercialization of the community college will subside. In fact, there is every indication under the current presidential administration (2017 -), and with the appointment of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education, that the narrative of the community college as a “job training center” will continue to be the dominate one. In DeVos’s first remarks about community colleges, she praised them for their role in job training.

At the local, state, and national level, the community college continues to transform into an institution focused on job training despite an overwhelming number of its students—research suggests as high as eighty percent—express an intent to transfer; and despite research that suggests the “skills gap” is mostly a myth; and despite research that suggests the job training the community offers does not promote the social and economic mobility that the community college says it does.

In fact, there is a lot of research data that suggests the community college is engaged in promoting and maintaining economic and social stratification.

5. Summary of the manner in which the criteria for sabbatical leave proposal was fulfilled:

The sabbatical allowed me the time and space to engage in academic, scholarly research and to write. It cannot be overstated how important it is for writing teachers to write, to engage in the very activity we ask of our students. Writing is often a humbling activity, and as I was writing I became very aware of what I ask of my writing students. It reminds me not to be overly ambitious in assigning writing tasks; that is, all one has to do is write for several days or weeks to realize that we often demand too many writing assignments from our students. I was also reminded how important rewriting is in the writing process and that in my writing courses, I need to allow my students plenty of time to rewrite.

During the sabbatical, I was able to read, research, and (most importantly) write and rewrite on a daily basis both new and “old” essays on the commercialization of the community college.

6. Plan to use outcomes to benefit the college, students, and colleagues:

1. College: Over the past thirty-one years, I have actively engaged in academic scholarship, particularly focused on the community college. As with my previous sabbaticals, all of which resulted in publication, I hope I have brought a modicum of recognition to the college as an institution that recognizes and values scholarship and the free exchange of ideas—neither of these traits are common to most community colleges.

More importantly, the work I have done during my sabbaticals has directly influenced my involvement in how I hope to influence college policies and practices toward faculty and students.

2. Students: As stated above, I firmly believe that writing teachers must be writers themselves. I can't ask students to engage in the practice of writing without being a writer myself. I also hope that my writing and publication offers students a model for their own work and the potential of that work.
3. Colleagues: I see this term as encompassing not just my KVCC colleagues, but my colleagues who teach English in the community college. I hope the book is one they would want to read as one way of understanding the direction of the 21st-century community college. I also think the book will offer valuable ideas to community college administrators.