



**EL CAMINO COLLEGE**

Office of the Vice President-Academic Affairs  
Academic Year 2023-2024

**INFORMATION REGARDING APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL  
LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**DIRECTIONS TO APPLICANT:**

Sabbatical leave of absence is accorded to qualified members of the faculty for specified academic pursuits. Its ultimate objectives are the enhancement of service to El Camino College and its students and the intellectual growth of the faculty member. Therefore, applications must be accompanied by a statement of the program which the applicant proposes to follow to meet these objectives. Upon return from sabbatical leave, the faculty member will submit a sabbatical leave report within six (6) weeks after the beginning of the subsequent semester, exclusive of the summer session. The report will be retained in the college files as a record of faculty growth.

Use the Sabbatical Leave Plan sheet appropriate for your type of sabbatical and attach to the application.

**NOTE: SUMMARY OF PROGRAM AND/OR ANY ATTACHMENT TO  
APPLICATION MUST BE TYPEWRITTEN.**

**TEMPLATE ALSO AVAILABLE IN MS WORD FORMAT.**

**ATTACHED FORMS FOR EACH CATEGORY OF  
SABBATICAL LEAVE HAVE BEEN PROVIDED FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE.**

NAME: Lesley Meza

**TYPE OF SABBATICAL REQUESTED:**

- F. A program of independent study in the applicant's teaching field other than formal class work as described in subsection (a). Such program shall be arranged through an educational or research foundation, government agency, or an accredited institution of higher education, or a technical or business entity. It shall be submitted in writing and shall be evaluated on the basis that it is designed to increase the applicant's proficiencies in the applicant's field. (Note: El Camino College can serve as the accredited institution of higher education with an appropriate ECC employee serving as advisor.)

**DESCRIPTION OF STUDY:**

As a Community College Counselor/Faculty, my career field predominantly consists of female professionals; however, there are not many women, especially women of color in leadership roles at the California Community Colleges. The California Community College (CCC) system is known as the largest higher education system in the nation, serving a diverse group of students in its 116 campuses. However, the leadership at CCC does not mirror the diversity of its student population. For example, several studies note the unsupportive environment that women encounter throughout their path to leadership. The journey has been described by some researchers as a “labyrinth” to portray the complex and varying obstacles that women encounter in their path to the presidency. In order to address the ethnic and gender inequities in higher education, it is important to examine through a different lens the types of practices, systems, and policies that may contribute to these inequities.

This is my second year in the doctoral program in Educational Leadership for Social Justice at Loyola Marymount University and I am in the early stages of my dissertation research. For my research, I will examine the lived experiences of women of color (WOC) in educational leadership roles at the CCC, specifically mid-level management. Furthermore, I will focus on

their challenges, as well as the support they have received throughout their career trajectory. In fall 2023, the semester I am requesting for sabbatical, I plan to utilize my time by initially collecting data through interviews that I will be conducting with different women of color that hold leadership positions at various CCC institutions. Then, I will code and analyze the data from the interviews. I plan to complete and defend my dissertation at the end of spring 2024.

**Proposed Research Timeline for fall 2023:**

August 1- August 30: Confirm participants and finalize dates for interviews

September 1- October 31: Interview participants (Collect Data)

November 1- 30: Transcribe interviews and code data to establish themes, patterns, and relationships (Code Data)

December 1-31: Analyze Results (Analyze Data)

**PROJECT TO BE COMPLETED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF:  
(Attach letter of approval/commitment with sponsoring agency)**

**Rebecca Herr Stephenson, Ph.D.**

Academic Program Director  
Ed.D. in Educational Leadership for Social Justice  
Loyola Marymount University

See attachment for letter of approval.

**PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT:**

This qualitative study will examine the career trajectories of women of color who are administrators at the CCC system. The study will focus on their career history, community college experience, sources for support, and challenges that they have encountered in their leadership career journeys by analyzing the following research questions:

- What are the recent trends in the recruitment and retention of WOC in CCC?

- How can perspectives of WOC leaders provide more equitable recruitment and retention policies at the CCC level?

Through this research, I seek to understand the educational history and career paths of the participants from their unique viewpoints by actively listening, learning, and honoring these women's experiences and to provide recommendations on how to improve the diversity of leaders at the CCC.

#### **DESCRIBE HOW IT WILL INCREASE PROFICIENCY IN APPLICANT'S FIELD:**

##### **Benefits for the ECC Community**

This research will increase proficiency in my field in a number of ways. First, it will add to the limited research and literature about the experiences of women of color administrators at the CCC. Their voices can promote more equitable opportunities for other women of color to take on leadership roles. Second, it can help increase the cultural competency of policymakers and El Camino College's administrators, staff, and faculty by educating our community of more inclusive recruitment, hiring, and retention practices. It can also strengthen ECC's mission, vision, and values of *equity* and *diversity*. Key values and goals shared with statewide efforts, such as the Vision for Success and Guided Pathways, grounded on "diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) and anti-racism" work (<https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Vision-for-Success/diversity-equity-inclusion>). These efforts aim to diversify the faculty and staff at CCC to reflect the diverse students and communities they serve. My research can contribute to these equity-centered and anti-racist practices and policies because it focuses on diversifying the leadership pipeline at CCC to increase the representation of role models and mentors for minoritized students and aspiring leaders.

**Professional Development Opportunities**

I plan to share the findings of my research with the ECC campus community by facilitating a professional development session during our fall or spring flex day. I would also like to offer a brown bag workshop after the start of the semester to provide multiple opportunities for administrators, managers, faculty, and staff from different areas on campus to come together to learn about and engage in meaningful discussions centered on equity and diversity.

**COMMENTS:**

Thank you for your time and consideration for sabbatical.