

# SECTION V. SABBATICAL LEAVE APPLICATION

Carmen McNeil

2/9/2023

Name (Open Print Preview to have your name populate throughout the form)

Date

DVC

Fall 2023

College

Sabbatical leave period requested

Psychology

10

Teaching field(s)

Years of service in CCCC

Have you had previous Sabbaticals? If "yes" give time period(s) and activity (activities).

No

Indicate type of Sabbatical program (see United Faculty Agreement, Section 12.5.6) If program can be categorized by more than one type, check where applicable.

- Institutional study (complete Form A)
- Travel (complete Form B)
- Professional Study and/or Creative Study (complete Form C)

## GENERAL SUMMARY OF SABBATICAL PROGRAM

(GIVE A 100-WORD MAXIMUM STATEMENT)

Project Description: Using Counter Narratives and Digital Storytelling to Help Students Connect with Course Material

This project will use digital storytelling to empower students to counter textbook narratives with accurate narratives of their own realities. It is comprised of four components:

1. Literature Review
2. Oral History Interviews
3. Digital Story
4. Instructional Unit

Using the topic of menarche (the first menstrual cycle), I will review 20 introductory psychology textbooks and examine how this milestone is currently discussed. I will interview 20 individuals of various ages and ethnicities to see how their lived experience compares to the textbook discussion about this human development milestone. I will analyze the interview narratives and create a 10-minute storytelling video highlighting their primary themes. Finally, I will create an example teaching module demonstrating how to incorporate counter narratives and digital storytelling.

## VALUE TO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

*(The Sabbatical Leave Committee will utilize this information as the basis for scoring Rubrics 1, 2, 3 and 4)*

**Describe how the proposed sabbatical will benefit the educational program. In particular:**

1. *How will it benefit students, programs, or staff/colleagues?*

Counter-narrative refers to the lived experiences and narratives that arise from the vantage point of those who have been left out of the dominant discourse. The effect of a counter-narrative is to empower and give agency to those who have been overlooked. By choosing their own words and telling their own stories, students can provide alternative points of view, helping to create narratives which accurately represent their realities. For this project, the various realities about menarche (the first menstrual cycle) will be shared via digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is a multimedia approach for sharing and examining narratives allowing students to combine video; photography; sound text; music; and their own narrative voice to share their stories, observations, and lived experiences in a digital-media format.

### A. Students

Each component of the proposed project is directly beneficial to students. The literature review of psychology textbooks will serve as an example of how to determine the current academic discourse about a particular topic. The oral history interviews will demonstrate how to capture actual lived experiences which may not be represented in textbooks. The digital story benefits students by helping them to see others' perspectives, and compare and contrast these perspectives with the textbook discourse. Students will benefit from the instructional unit by investigating a counter narrative of a topic and creating their own digital story about what they discover.

There are many benefits of the combined approach of digital counter-narrative storytelling which are directly aligned with our District Strategic Plan (2020-2025) and DVC's Educational Master Plan (2018-2023): enhancing student learning and achievement, improving student completion, creating a culture of engagement, and helping students feel nurtured, connected, and valued.

The digital storytelling process directly supports DVC's focus on creating educational environments which foster and enhance student learning and achievement. When students are able to participate in the multiple steps of designing, creating and presenting their digital stories, they increase a full complement of literacy skills, including: research skills, writing skills, organization skills, technology skills, presentation skills, interview skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and assessment skills. The enhancement of these skills helps to operationalize our District's strategic direction of improving student learning and completion.

Counter narratives can help to address some of the student success factors highlighted in the Educational Master Plan, including helping students to feel nurtured, engaged, connected, and valued. This approach is a powerful solution to the pervasive concern of low student engagement by acknowledging that our students bring a wealth of untapped knowledge into the classroom. Encouraging students to share their lived experiences increases student engagement and builds a positive classroom community that validates their identities and values. Learning

about the experiences of others enables us to connect more deeply with them helping to create a culture of engagement (District Strategic Direction)

Highlighting counter narratives and sharing them via digital storytelling enhances student critical consciousness, not only making them better students, but also more compassionate, reflective, and insightful citizens in their communities.

## B. Psychology Program

Psychology as a field of study promotes a biopsychosocial model which suggests that the intersection of biological processes, psychological factors, and social forces are critical for understanding the human experience. However, the cursory discussion of menarche (the first menstrual cycle) focuses only on the biological aspect and ignores the other two dimensions of the model. This omission is in many ways a disservice to those who do not menstruate because it keeps them in the dark about a natural process that many of the people they interact with are experiencing. In addition, not addressing the social and psychological components of menarche helps to perpetuate the negative stigma of the menstrual cycle and silences the voices of those who menstruate.

The specific topic of menarche has direct implications for the following courses offered by the Psychology Area:

- ~ Psych 101 (Introduction to Psychology)
- ~ Psych 122 (Psychology in Modern Life)
- ~ Psych 160 (Psychology of Women)
- ~ Psych 190 (Psychology of Adolescence)
- ~ Psych 200 (Life Span Development)
- ~ Psych 230 (Abnormal Psychology)

What is exciting is that integrating the counter narratives of all students (the reality is that everyone has direct or indirect experiences with menstruation) helps them to connect with course material and feel valued in their courses, which ultimately increases course success rates. In the Psychology Area's most recent Program Review, we expressed the importance of developing a greater sense of community among students and faculty, as well as the continued need to address racism and issues of inequity. Using counter narratives and digital storytelling is a viable option for addressing these concerns.

In sum, each component of the proposed project benefits the Psychology Program. The literature review will help illuminate the lack of thorough attention on an important aspect of the human experience. The oral history interviews will emphasize the importance of bringing a variety of perspectives into our courses, and the digital story will highlight these various narratives and how they may be different from what is included in the textbooks we are using. Furthermore, the instructional unit will provide an example of how to integrate digital counter-narrative storytelling into the curriculum.

### C. Faculty

The specific topic of this project has the potential to benefit a variety of faculty whose curricula address the experiences of people who menstruate. Some of the courses where it might be useful are:

- ~ History of Women in the United States (HIST 170 & 171)
- ~ Women and Social Change in the United States (SOCSC 120)
- ~ Women in United States Society (SOCSC 220)
- ~ American Popular Culture (SOCSC 123)
- ~ Women's Health (HSCI-170)
- ~ Gender, Culture, and Society (SOCIO-124)
- ~ Advertising and Gender (BUSMK-258)
- ~ Cultural Anthropology (ANTHR-130)

Although this particular project focuses on the topic of menarche, counter-narrative and digital storytelling could not only be implemented to enhance the understanding of many topics in psychology, they can and have been used in a variety of other disciplines as well (e.g., physical and life sciences, humanities, mathematics, business, and various social sciences). Counter-narrative and digital storytelling can be used as analytical approaches to support DVC's focus on fostering innovation and best practices in our disciplines and pedagogy. They do so by engaging a variety of learning styles and helping students connect with course material. Furthermore, when counter-narrative is combined with digital storytelling, sensory elements, such as music and visuals allow students to share intricate and intimate details of their lived experiences that would otherwise not have been possible through writing alone. This approach provides faculty a deeper understanding of their students' experiences.

In addition, many DVC faculty have struggled to address matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their courses. Counter narratives are an essential and necessary component of today's narratives about world affairs. I encourage faculty to embrace this approach as a means to improve our collective understanding and facilitate intercultural dialogue which considers the stories and voices of different communities and societies, especially those which are marginalized. The goal of intercultural dialogue is to reach better levels of mutual understanding by incorporating the viewpoints of populations which are typically ignored.

The sample teaching module I develop as part of this project will provide faculty with a tangible approach through the sometimes choppy waters of DEI. I will propose a way for instructors to welcome a wide range of viewpoints, challenge stereotypical assumptions, and illustrate the diversity and complexity of our world. Leveraging student lived experiences to help teach course content shifts learning from being unilateral to omni-directional. When we view our students as collaborators in creating rich, engaging learning experiences, everyone, including faculty, can grow.

2. *How will it enhance and/or improve your background and professional competence?*

Each component of the proposed sabbatical project will help me to teach more effectively. The literature review will provide a comprehensive view of how menarche (the first menstrual cycle) is addressed in introductory psychology textbooks. The oral history interviews will help me to identify actual lived experiences which are not addressed in many textbooks, providing me with more comprehensive material for my courses.

For the digital story component, I intend to incorporate and build upon the experience and work I completed during a 6-week digital storytelling workshop facilitated by the StoryCenter in Spring of 2022. Please use the following link to view the 3-minute digital story I produced as part of this workshop - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sft3T7m2J\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sft3T7m2J_g). In addition to getting more practice with the WeVideo editing platform, I am excited about the possibility of having the time to use my creativity to enhance my curriculum so that it includes a new way of creating learning environments for both student safety and bravery, helping students to highlight their evolving understanding of a given experience, incorporating writing prompts so students can practice telling their stories, using the story circle group process so students can support each other as they develop their narratives, and to integrate the Four C's of Narrative Structure (e.g., Connect, Context, Change, Closure).

This project will allow me to contribute to knowledge and conversation in my field by inviting, analyzing, and synthesizing lived experiences which are not included in the introductory textbooks students are reading. I believe that by centering student voices, students will feel that I value who they are which will help to enhance my relationships with them. In addition, I sense that this opportunity will help shed light on my own blindspots concerning the topic of menarche and other topics which I use counter- narrative and digital storytelling approaches for in the future.

I am looking forward to the professional benefits of sabbatical leave which will allow me to learn new teaching modalities and ways to engage students.

3. *How will it relate to your ongoing professional assignment?*

Some of the Psychology Area expectations for faculty (as outlined in our most recent generalist job description) are:

1. Experience teaching psychology to students with different backgrounds and levels of preparation using diverse teaching methods.
2. Committed to continued improvement of teaching and pedagogy.
3. Committed to engaging with students, in and out of the classroom, as active agents with strengths, skills, and expertise to be cultivated and explored.
4. Committed to addressing issues of equity and inclusion both in and out of the classroom.
5. Experience and enthusiasm for helping students to apply psychological principles to better understand and improve their lives.

Each component of the proposed sabbatical project directly addresses these expectations regarding my professional assignment. The literature review of psychology textbooks will provide students an example of how to determine the discourse on a particular topic. The oral history interviews will help students see how they can acknowledge a variety of perspectives of the human

experience. Since counter narratives and digital storytelling can help to foster student success factors such as helping students to feel nurtured, engaged, connected, and valued, these pedagogical approaches can play an integral role in educational equity. Providing a variegated sense of lived experiences to complement what students are reading in textbooks, this project offers a powerful solution to the pervasive concern of low student engagement by acknowledging that our students bring a wealth of untapped knowledge into the classroom. The instructional unit will encourage students to share their lived experiences, increasing their engagement in our courses and building a positive classroom community that validates their identities and values. Learning about the experiences of others enables us to connect more deeply with them, helping to create a culture of engagement.

4. *How are the breadth and depth of the project appropriate for the sabbatical leave rather than the regular teaching year?*

This innovative project requires the support of a sabbatical leave. It includes an extensive literature review of 20 textbooks to explore how menstruation is addressed; conducting 20 interviews to capture lived experiences; analyzing, synthesizing, and extrapolating the common themes from the interviews; producing a digital story of the counter narratives which emerge from the interviews; and creating a sample teaching module using the counter-narrative and digital storytelling approaches. This project will build upon the work completed during the 6-week StoryCenter digital storytelling training I completed during the Spring 2022 term where I was only able to barely scratch the surface of the dominant stigmatized view of menarche and menstruation. That small project by itself required 6 weeks with 24 hours of combined instruction and individual work and included the recording, transcribing, and editing of just one interview to produce a 3 minute digital story. Copy and paste the following web address to see the video I created during that training - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sft3T7m2J\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sft3T7m2J_g). The proposed project will include 20 interviews and a 10 minute digital story.

There is no way that I could complete this scope of work while teaching a full load and effectively addressing the various other responsibilities of my professional assignment. My role at DVC outside the classroom has included serving as a workshop facilitator for the Racial Justice Task Force's Safe Spaces Spring 2022 Gathering celebrating cultural diversity and self-exploration in a safe and welcoming environment; facilitating flex workshops including "Ease on Down Your Yellow Bick Road" and "Student Voice + Faculty Self-Analysis = Student Success" (along with co-facilitator Dr. Janylle Carter); taking the initiative to ensure that the Psychology Area participated in the Fall 2020 USC Pedagogy Workgroup as a team; participating as a panel speaker in the Spring 2017 Sexual Assault Awareness Month event hosted by the Student Life Office; representing the Psychology Area along with my colleagues Bill Oye and Chris Capozzo during the Fall 2017 Guided Pathways Curriculum Mapping Session; and also serving in various capacities in the Umoja program. Given the scope of my involvement at DVC, I would not have the time to complete the work of the proposed sabbatical project while teaching.

I am looking forward to having the time and bandwidth to practice and reflect upon what I learned and experienced in the StoryCenter digital storytelling workshop, and to strategize ways to effectively bring this into my teaching. This sabbatical project is not merely keeping up with my field. In fact, it involves making a contribution to both the field of psychology as well as the profession of teaching.



Name

## PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION

(The Sabbatical Leave Committee will utilize this information as the basis for scoring Rubrics 5 and 6). Note that Rubric 6 regarding the "Proposed Evidence of Completion" is weighted twice that of all other rubrics.

Identify specific objectives and describe in detail the evidence that will accompany your report, which indicates that you have met each objective. The product of your approved sabbatical leave program will be subject to review by the Sabbatical Leave Committee at the time of making your final report. Examples follow:

### **Institutional study**

**Objective:** 9 units of graduate level history courses as indicated on Form A will be taken at ... University.

**Evidence:** (Here you would describe the transcripts, class notes, exams, class projects, etc., you would submit as evidence of completing these units.)

### **Travel**

**Objective:** Travel to archeological zones in Central America.

**Evidence:** (Here you would describe exactly what you plan to submit to document your sabbatical leave travel. You should specify the kinds of things you will present, like journals, artifacts, and slides, and you should give the committee an idea of the extent of the evidence by specifying the minimum number of slides, pages in a journal, number of museums, etc. If you so state, you must provide tangible evidence in your final sabbatical leave report that you have, in fact, written the minimum number of pages you proposed, visited the minimum number of archaeological zones you proposed, etc.)

### **Professional study and/or creative study**

**Objective:** Compose a musical score or write a textbook.

**Evidence:** (Here you would clearly indicate the scope of the project, including the minimum number of pages you plan to write, approximate length, an outline of the contents, description of the complexity, etc.)

The Committee will rely on the information you provide in the evidence section to determine if you have met the contractual obligation of the leave.

**Objective #1 - Literature Review of Psychology Textbooks to capture how menarche and menstruation are addressed.**

The purpose of this objective is to establish the dominant narrative about menarche and menstruation and will include a review of 20 introductory psychology textbooks:

**Evidence of Completion #1 - Annotated bibliography of 20 textbooks identifying how menarche is addressed**

**Objective #2 - Oral History Interviews - Interview 20 people of various ages and ethnicities**

The purpose of this objective is to identify the lived experiences and counter narratives which add to the dominant psychology textbook narrative about menarche.

**Evidence of Completion #2 - 100 word minimum summary of each interview and links to the audio file of each interview**

**Objective #3 - Digital Story - Showcase the Primary Counter Narratives from the Interviews**

Evidence of Completion #3 - 10 minute Digital Storytelling Video including intro and outro scripts, transitions, music, and images

Objective #4 - Instructional Unit - Develop Sample Canvas Teaching Module

The purpose of this objective is to provide an example of how instructors could incorporate counter-narrative and digital storytelling into the curriculum

Evidence of Completion #4 - Teaching Module posted to the Canvas Commons including the following 4 pages:

1. introduction describing what will be covered in the module
2. learning objectives
3. core content with reading, video(s), and detailed description of activities
4. learning assessment



Name

**INSTITUTIONAL STUDY  
Form A**

Name of Institution

Place of Institution

Period of Attendance

**UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL**

- Semester units to be attempted\*
- Quarter Units to be attempted

\*(Minimum 12 semester units)  
\*(Minimum 18 quarter units)

*\*Neither continuing education units (CEUs) nor courses taken from unaccredited institutions will be considered as Institutional Study. Please see Professional Study Form C.*

**GRADUATE LEVEL**

- Semester units to be attempted\*
- Quarter units to be attempted

\*(Minimum 9 semester units)  
\*(Minimum 13.5 quarter units)

*\*Neither continuing education units (CEUs) nor courses taken from unaccredited institutions will be considered as Institutional Study. Please see Professional Study Form C.*

**Accepted for Admission:**

- Yes
- No
- Other

If "Yes," attach evidence of admission.

If "Other," explain:

List courses and unit value from the institution's catalogue. In case your choice of courses is not available, please indicate substitutions. (The Sabbatical Leave Committee will utilize this information as the basis for scoring Rubric 7. Be sure that the scope of your studies is clearly defined.)

*\* A full load is considered to be 12 semester units of undergraduate work or 18 undergraduate quarter units, or 9 semester units of graduate work or 13.5 quarter units at an accredited college/university.*

Name

**TRAVEL  
Form B**

**Plan: Itinerary** *(The Sabbatical Leave Committee will utilize this information as the basis for scoring Rubric 7. Be sure that the purpose, duration, and schedule of your travel are clearly delineated.)*

Place	Duration of Visit	Purpose

## PROFESSIONAL STUDY AND/OR CREATIVE STUDY Form C

*(The Sabbatical Leave Committee will utilize this information as the basis for scoring Rubric 7. Units completed at any unaccredited and/or international institutions will not be considered. Be sure the kind and scope of your study methods, resources, and activities are clearly delineated. Include an estimate of the time that will be spent engaged in various activities.)*

### ~ Review of Psychology Textbooks

Week 1 - Review 5 Introduction to Psychology texts

Week 2 - Review 5 Psychology of Gender texts

Week 3 - Review 5 Psychology of Adjustment and Growth texts

Week 4 - Review 5 Psychology of Adolescence texts

Week 5 - Prepare annotated bibliography of 20 textbooks identifying how menarche is addressed

### ~ Oral History Interviews

Week 6 - Set up interview schedule, develop interview questions, develop interview consent form, obtain interview consent

Week 7 - Complete 5 interviews - transcribe, review, and analyze (label and organize the data) each interview

Week 8 - Complete 5 interviews - transcribe, review and analyze (label and organize the data) each interview

Week 9 - Complete 5 interviews - transcribe, review and analyze (label and organize the data) each interview

Week 10 - Complete 5 interviews - transcribe, review and analyze (label and organize the data) each interview

Week 11 - Conduct second review of all 20 interviews, extrapolate common themes, and extract specific pieces for the digital story

### ~ Digital Storytelling Video

Week 12 - Review notes, instruction, and feedback from Spring 2022 StoryCenter digital storytelling training, complete WeVideo Academy tutorial series to refamiliarize myself with the video editing platform

Week 13 - Develop Storyboard/Plan, Gather/Create images, music

Week 14 - Write and edit script, Record script, Video editing, Post on YouTube, Create/Edit closed captions

~ Instruction Unit

Week 15 - Create sample counter-narrative/digital storytelling teaching module including introduction, learning objectives, core content, and learning assessment

~ Wrap Up

Week 16 - Post Sabbatical Reflection/Report Writing

Dear Members of the Sabbatical Review Committee,

We are thrilled to write this letter in strong support of Dr. Carmen McNeil's proposal for a sabbatical for Fall 2023. As described below, Dr. McNeil's proposed project provides direct benefit to both students and the college, and addresses multiple gaps in the content and pedagogy of our Area. Furthermore, we believe that Dr. McNeil is an incredibly deserving candidate for a sabbatical who will use her time to successfully complete this ambitious yet achievable project, and share her knowledge and skills with other faculty and students.

Dr. McNeil's proposal benefits students (and the college) in several ways. First, by developing a template and framework for creating digital narratives, Dr. McNeil will bring new technological and pedagogical skills to the Psychology Area. Creating digital narratives represents an important 21st century skill (currently missing in our Area) that will help students connect psychology to their real lives, and share these connections with others in their community. Second, Dr. McNeil's emphasis on counternarratives (that is, narratives that are not part of the dominant discourse in our society) will undoubtedly resonate with many of our underrepresented students who do not see their stories represented in traditional texts or media, and help our Area advance the DEI work that is central to the college mission. Finally, by focusing her studies on the topic of menarche, Dr. McNeil will highlight a critical yet unfortunately understudied and stigmatized period in human development. While her work developing a paradigm for digital counter-narratives can be effectively used in all psychology courses, her research into the topic of menarche will be particularly applicable to a wide variety of high-impact courses in our Area and across the college, including (but not limited to) PSYCH 101 (Introduction to Psychology), PSYCH 200 (Life Span Development), PSYCH 160 (Psychology of Women), PSYCH 225 (Social Psych), SOCIO-124 (Gender, Culture, and Society), and HIST 170 (History of Women in the United States).

A sabbatical will be required to support Dr. McNeil's project. As outlined in her proposal, there is considerable work involved in a) synthesizing the research on menarche across disparate texts, b) developing the technological and pedagogical tools required to create digital counternarratives, and c) developing the material and examples to share these tools with students and faculty. Based on Dr. McNeil's exemplary work in her classes and for the college, as well as her tenacious spirit and conscientious personality, we have no doubt that she will effectively use the time afforded to her. We also believe that Dr. McNeil is well-positioned at DVC to disseminate the content and tools that she will develop for this project both within our Area and across other Areas at the college. Finally, it is important to note that Dr. McNeil has taught since 1998 with no official breaks, while juggling multiple responsibilities and pursuing a variety of additional professional development (including earning her PhD). Receiving a sabbatical not only provides her the time and resources to complete this wonderful project, but also the space from her work needed to refresh, recharge her teaching, and help transform our Area into a program that advances digital counter-narratives.

It's exciting to think about how Dr. McNeil will use the time and resources provided by this sabbatical to benefit our students and college. Please feel free to reach out if you have other questions.

Signed, the members of the Psychology Area,

*Mark Akiyama*

*Rochelle Burnaford*

*Chris Capozzo*

*Arman Catterson*

*Laura Jones-Hagata*

*Taylor Oliver*

*Lee Rode*

Mark Akiyama  
Rochelle Burnaford

Chris Capozzo  
Arman Catterson

Laura  
Jones-Hagata

Taylor Oliver  
Lee Rode

2/7/23

To the Sabbatical Leave Committee members,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Dr. Carmen McNeil's faculty sabbatical leave application. I have worked with Dr. McNeil in my capacity as the Social Science liaison librarian and have seen up close her passionate dedication to student learning and equitable classroom communities.

Dr. McNeil's project is an exciting pedagogical innovation that supports student participation in critical discourses about an often-overlooked and vilified topic. Her detailed sabbatical application clearly connects this work to the Strategic Plan and Educational Master Plan, and her vision to foster intercultural dialog on campus through a sample teaching module is an excellent example of applied diversity, equity, and inclusion pedagogy.

I am particularly excited by her proposed use of digital counter-narrative storytelling as an innovative method for student perspectives and experiences to shape disciplinary content. Her project counters the single-story narrative of introductory psychology textbooks and aligns with longstanding equity and representation goals from the [American Psychological Association](#). As the open educational resources coordinator at DVC, I am deeply familiar with the limitations of traditional textbook narratives and am enthusiastic about Dr. McNeil's vision of digital counter-narratives that center the lived experiences of our students. How exciting will it be when young women see themselves represented in their PSYCH-101 courses (among others), talking directly about menarche!?

Given her demonstrated expertise and dedication to students, I am confident that Dr. McNeil will successfully complete this project, and that the resulting storytelling videos and teaching module will be powerful pedagogical tools that benefit DVC students. I look forward to learning from her about digital counter-narrative storytelling, and I see potentially broad applications of this tool in the library. Dr. McNeil will undoubtedly bring her sabbatical achievements back to the college in a way that strengthens our collective efforts towards equity pedagogy.

I am delighted to support her application for a well-deserved and innovative sabbatical project. Please let me know if you have any questions.



Lindsey Shively  
DVC Public Services Librarian  
lshively@dvc.edu

February 7, 2023

Dear Members of the 4CD Sabbatical Leave Committee:

It is with pleasure that I am writing in support of Dr. Carmen McNeil's sabbatical proposal, "Using Counter Narratives and Digital Storytelling to Connect with Course Material." I am closely acquainted with Dr. McNeil's work as an instructor, having partnered with her to teach linked courses in the Umoja learning community as well as being a member of her evaluation team in fall 2021. In addition, we co-coordinated the DVC Umoja program together. Carmen is an enthusiastic, creative, and inspiring instructor who is constantly exploring new ways to make her curriculum and pedagogy meaningful, engaging, and relevant to her students. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are woven into the fabric of her courses, raising the voices of those who have been historically underrepresented, underserved, and unheard. Her proposed sabbatical project will provide valuable insight into a topic that is currently neglected in Psychology and related fields, give voice to the counter narrative that has heretofore be ignored, and apply her impressive skills in digital storytelling to help other faculty more skillfully incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion in their own curricula. Dr. McNeil's sabbatical will significantly benefit students, other faculty, the college, and the fields of Psychology and teaching. I endorse her proposal with enthusiasm and encourage the Committee to approve it.

As a counselor and fellow instructor, I deeply appreciate the way Carmen creates a space where students can explore sometimes difficult, incredibly important topics. In addition to teaching Psychology in Modern Life, an applied psychology course in which students reflect upon and apply theory to their own lived experiences to grow and develop, she also teaches Psychology of African Americans. This is a powerful course that centers the African American experience, something that most students have not previously experienced. Students explore topics and engage in dialog that is challenging, sometimes painful, and critically important. Her proposed sabbatical topic is one that will explore and center the voices of those who menstruate, and the psychological and social impacts of that milestone on their identity development. Engaging students through the sharing of their lived experiences and learning about others' supports the District's Strategic Directions and DVC's Educational Master Plan of enhancing student learning and achievement, improving student completion, creating a culture of engagement, and helping students feel nurtured, connected, and valued. As a counselor, I deeply appreciate Carmen's willingness and passion for addressing this major gap in the field, engaging students in this critical dialog, and helping other faculty learn to use a new method to approach topics that can positively impact our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Dr. Carmen McNeil is one of the most dedicated, impactful, and engaging instructors at DVC (if you don't believe me, ask her students!). Approving her sabbatical proposal will benefit absolutely everyone – students, faculty, the college and district, and the entire field of





psychology. The District's investment of one semester of sabbatical leave will be repaid far more than seven-fold by the outcomes of her sabbatical proposal, and I urge the Committee to approve it.

Please contact me if I can provide additional information in support of her application.

Sincerely,

*Yvonne Canada*

Yvonne Canada  
DVC Counselor  
Academic Senate Secretary