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September 3, 2019

Dear Salary and Leaves Committee:

Thank you for the honor and privilege of taking this independent study sabbatical leave during the 2018 – 2019 academic year. Enclosed is my sabbatical leave report, which includes all the elements specified in the Salary and Leaves Committee guidelines (e.g., copy of the sabbatical leave application proposal, table of contents, detailed list, (narrative) journal of activities, etc.). Because the guidelines specified to “Use a thesis format. This is a professional document requiring proper English usage, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.”, the enclosed manuscript is structured like an empirical research article, with an Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion section, and the required elements in the relevant sections.

I also wanted to clarify a few wording changes in this final report from the original application proposal. In the original application proposal, the title of my project was *The Student Success Academy*, but I decided to change the title to *Psychology of Success* because the original title seemed limiting, as though it were only relevant for students. Also, the titles of two of the videos in the original application proposal were changed (e.g., *Grit* was changed to *Diligence* and *Resilience* was changed to *Persistence*) because the new titles seem to more accurately describe the content of the videos. I want to emphasize that these changes were merely wording changes. They did not alter the nature, substance, or scope of the project in any manner (please see original application proposal in the Appendix for clarification), but please let me know if you have any further questions or concerns.

Thank you once again for your support. This has truly been one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my professional career!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gene G. Ano".

Gene G. Ano, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Psychology
Mt. San Antonio College

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Psychology of Success: An Online Closed-Captioned Motivational Video Training Program for
Academic Excellence and Life Success

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Independent Study Sabbatical Leave Report for the 2018 – 2019 Academic Year

Independent Study Sabbatical Leave Report Contents

Abstract.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Statement of Purpose.....	4
Description of Psychology of Success.....	4
Potential Uses for Psychology of Success.....	5
Method.....	8
Timeline of Activities General Overview.....	8
Timeline of Activities Log.....	9
Results.....	18
Link to <i>Psychology of Success</i> YouTube Channel.....	18
Motivational Video Scripts.....	19
Discussion.....	41
Statement of Value and Benefit to the Professor.....	41
Statement of Value and Benefit to the Students.....	43
Statement of Value and Benefit to the Department.....	44
Statement of Value and Benefit to the College.....	45
References.....	48
Appendix: Copy of Sabbatical Application Proposal	51

Abstract

Academic underperformance, working below one's capabilities, is a serious problem on many college campuses (Ludovici, 2015), including Mt. San Antonio College. Each semester, personal experience and anecdotal evidence from faculty across campus indicates that professors' offices and e-mail accounts are filled with numerous requests from students to "bump up their grade" or offer inordinate amounts of extra credit. Furthermore, although Mt. SAC's graduation rate (32%) is better than the graduation rate for its comparison group (20%), which includes thirty-two institutions, 63% of Mt. SAC students still fail to transfer or graduate within three years (150% normal time of program completion), which is the standard measure developed to satisfy the Student Right-to-Know Act and Higher Education Act (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Thus, despite the plethora of resources available on campus to help students succeed, academic underperformance remains a problem. One often over-looked reason for academic underperformance is insufficient academic motivation. The purpose of this independent study sabbatical leave was to create an online closed-captioned motivational video training program for academic excellence and life success, entitled *Psychology of Success*. This online closed-captioned motivational video training program covers various attributes (adapted from empirical research on motivation, achievement, and success) that promote academic excellence in college, and success in life more generally, such as: (1) Purpose, (2) Responsibility, (3) Belief, (4) Action, (5) Mindset, (6) Collaboration, (7) Risk, (8) Vision, (9) Diligence, and (10) Persistence. By promoting such attributes, *Psychology of Success* helps to fulfill Mt. SAC's mission and vision to "support students in achieving their educational goals in an environment of academic excellence" and "be regarded as one of the premier community colleges in the nation" by "focusing on student success".

**Psychology of Success: An Online Closed-Captioned Motivational Video Training
Program for Academic Excellence and Life Success**

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this independent study sabbatical leave was to create an online closed-captioned motivational video training program for academic excellence and life success, entitled *Psychology of Success*. In addition to enhancing the motivation of students, staff, and the greater campus community to pursue excellence and success in various aspects of their lives, *Psychology of Success* aims to further establish Mt. San Antonio College's reputation as "one of the premier community colleges in the nation" through worldwide distribution and viewership on YouTube.

Description of *Psychology of Success*

Psychology of Success is an online closed-captioned motivational video training program that covers various attributes (adapted from empirical research on motivation, achievement, and success) that promote academic excellence in college, and success in life more generally, such as: (1) Purpose, (2) Responsibility, (3) Belief, (4) Action, (5) Mindset, (6) Collaboration, (7) Risk, (8) Vision, (9) Diligence, and (10) Persistence. Each video begins with a brief scene from a popular film to capture the viewer's attention and introduce the topic. After the introductory scene, the screen fades to black, which then leads into the main feature of each video—a motivational speech promoting the particular attribute of that episode, over-layed with inspirational music to enhance dramatic effect and captivate the viewers' emotions as a means of further enhancing motivation. The videos contain relevant images and scenes from popular films or original footage, and are synchronized with the narrative to promote entertainment value. In order to comply with federal and state regulations, all videos are closed-captioned. The average

duration of each video is four to five minutes. To promote accessibility and increase viewership, the videos are available on YouTube, which is the most dominant, convenient, and accessible video viewing and sharing website in the world, with about a billion unique visitors each month (Buzetto-More, 2014).

Potential Uses for *Psychology of Success*

Psychology of Success can be used in numerous ways. On an individual level, because the videos are posted on YouTube, students (or anyone else) can access them at their leisure whenever or wherever they want, for whatever reason they desire. Ideally, people will watch these videos for inspiration and/or instruction in whatever endeavors they are pursuing. And hopefully, watching these videos will become a part of people's normal routines so that each attribute will be cultivated through force of habit. For example, we all have goals and dreams that we're striving for, and all of us face challenges as we pursue these endeavors. The video on Mindset can provide much needed encouragement and motivation during such struggles because it emphasizes the importance of developing and maintaining a positive mindset during the pursuit of one's goals. The more a person watches the video, the more the narrative will sink into their consciousness, and the more they will develop a positive mindset. Thus, the videos can be used by anyone at their convenience for motivation and encouragement during whatever endeavors they are pursuing.

On an institutional level, *Psychology of Success* videos can also be used as a supplement to any programs, services, or workshops offered at Mt. SAC. For instance, academic counselors undoubtedly address motivation with students during individual counseling sessions. Because the videos are no longer than five minutes each, counselors might even watch a video with their students in session as the need arises. They can then discuss students' reactions to the

motivational speeches from the videos, using the principles contained therein to encourage, comfort, challenge, and/or inspire students in that very moment. For example, perhaps a student is struggling academically because they are feeling depressed over a recent break-up. The student might watch the video on Persistence, which emphasizes the importance of not quitting when things get tough, and discuss their reaction with their counselor, either in session or as homework. The same format can also be used in any workshop, as relevancy permits, for programs such as ACES, ARISE, ASPIRE, BRIDGE, etc. or for various student club meetings.

In a similar fashion, professors may incorporate *Psychology of Success* into their course curriculum in order to enhance student motivation and academic performance. Even if *Psychology of Success* might not be directly related to the particular course or its student learning outcomes, it is still applicable because it promotes academic performance by cultivating various attributes necessary for success in college and life more generally. For example, perhaps a student constantly has excuses for not completing their work and they blame the professor for being rigid and “giving [them] a bad grade on [their] paper”, ignoring the fact that they did not follow instructions and their writing was filled with grammatical errors. In a situation like this, it may be helpful for the professor to refer the student to the episode on Responsibility, which emphasizes the importance of taking full responsibility for getting the things you want out of life, rather than living with an over-inflated sense of entitlement. By watching the video and writing a reflection paper on how the principles might relate to their situation, the student might have a breakthrough in personal accountability because the video’s motivational speech might be more inspiring and effective than a direct reprimand.

Psychology of Success can also be used for various research purposes as it has widespread implications for theory, research, and practice in several areas of inquiry, such as

college student development, academic motivation, academic achievement or performance, student success, instructional technology, personality psychology, positive psychology, attribution theory, goal setting, habit formation, etc. Indeed, numerous empirical methodologies can be utilized to examine different research questions, such as experimental methods employing randomized controlled trials. For example, it would be relatively easy to quantitatively examine the effectiveness of *Psychology of Success* on any dependent variable, such as academic motivation, with an independent samples *t*-test or ANOVA. Qualitative analyses could also be employed to assess participants' perceptions of individual episodes or *Psychology of Success* as a whole. If any such research were to be conducted and presented at professional conferences or published in academic journals, it would bring greater recognition and prestige to Mt. San Antonio College's already outstanding reputation as "The College of Champions".

Along these lines, *Psychology of Success* can also be used as a marketing tool to bring further recognition to Mt. SAC by including links on the college website. It is no exaggeration to suggest that *Psychology of Success* has potential for worldwide use and recognition. After all, the YouTube channels that it is modeled after (e.g., *Motivation 2 Study*, *MotivationGrid*, and *Be Inspired*) have anywhere from hundreds of thousands to millions of subscribers all around the world and there's no reason *Psychology of Success* could not accomplish the same, if not more!

In sum, *Psychology of Success* has widespread practical applications at both the individual and institutional levels. On an individual level, viewers can watch the videos for motivation, instruction, and encouragement throughout whatever endeavors they are pursuing. On an institutional level, *Psychology of Success* can be used as a supplement to any relevant program, service, or workshop, as a research topic for academic inquiry or professional presentation, or as a marketing tool for Mt San Antonio College.

Method

Timeline of Activities General Overview

In order to create a structured schedule for myself during this independent study sabbatical leave, I conceptualized my work as progressing in three major phases, consisting of ten weeks each, with two weeks at the end to finalize the project and prepare the sabbatical leave report. Thus, the timeline of my activities during this sabbatical leave reflects the 2018 – 2019 academic calendar, with a total of thirty-two weeks (sixteen weeks during the Fall, 2018 semester, and sixteen weeks during the Spring, 2019 semester), progressing in three major phases.

In Phase 1 (Weeks 1 – 10), the main goal was to write the scripts for each episode of *Psychology of Success*. During this phase, I conducted extensive research on each attribute covered in *Psychology of Success* by reading various books, accessing various websites, and watching numerous videos on each topic for inspiration. One of the most challenging aspects of this phase was translating the information into an engaging and captivating narrative that would actually capture the viewers' emotions because much of the information was academic and/or cognitive in nature. Therefore, I decided to separate the writing phase from the editing phase in order to stay on task and keep the project moving along.

In Phase 2, (Weeks 11 – 20), the major tasks were to finalize the scripts and learn about video production and editing. Since this was not a formal study sabbatical proposal, I did not register in any official video production and editing classes. However, I spent a substantial amount of time learning about video production and editing through various online tutorials. During this phase, I also watched, re-watched, and screened a plethora of films for relevant video footage, and began developing and storyboarding my ideas for the pre-production process.

In Phase 3 (Weeks 21 – 30), the main objective was to create the videos for *Psychology of Success*. This involved a number of time and labor-intensive tasks, such as creating the timeline, importing media, selecting background music, recording the voiceover, soundtrack editing, synchronizing visual scenes with the narrative, closed-captioning, creating titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc. Learning *about* video production and editing (which occurred primarily during Phase 2) is one thing, but learning how to actually use the software for video production and editing is another. So, most of my learning during this phase occurred through self-directed trial-and-error experimentation. As Ludovici (2015) stated, “learning at its core, is independent in nature and up to one’s self.”

The last two weeks of the sabbatical leave (Weeks 31 – 32) involved setting up the actual YouTube channel for *Psychology of Success*. This task also proved to be fairly time and labor-intensive because it involved creating the logo for branding, as well as uploading, posting, sharing, marketing, and distributing the videos. I also used these last two weeks to prepare the final sabbatical leave report to be submitted to the committee. Following is a detailed log of the timeline, which documents the actual schedule of the aforementioned activities during the sabbatical leave.

Timeline of Activities Log

Fall 2018

Phase 1: Writing Scripts for Motivational Videos

Week 1 (Aug. 27 – Aug. 31):

- Research Topic = *Purpose*
 - Reading: *The Invisible Leader: Transform Your Life, Work, and Organization with the Power of Authentic Purpose*, by Zack Mercurio.

- Accessed various websites and watched numerous motivational videos for reference.
- Task = Wrote motivational speech and script for *Purpose* video.

Week 2 (Sep. 3 – Sep. 7):

- Research Topic = *Responsibility*
 - Reading: *Stepping Up: How Taking Responsibility Changes Everything*, by John Izzo, Ph.D.
 - Accessed various websites and watched numerous motivational videos for reference.
- Task = Wrote motivational speech and script for *Responsibility* video.

Week 3 (Sep.10 – Sep. 14):

- Research Topic = *Belief*
 - Reading: *Confidence: How to Overcome Your Limiting Beliefs and Achieve Your Goals*, by Martin Meadows.
 - Accessed various websites and watched numerous motivational videos for reference.
- Task = Wrote motivational speech and script for *Belief* video.

Week 4 (Sep. 17 – Sep. 21):

- Research Topic = *Action*
 - Reading: *The Art of Taking Action: Lessons from Japanese Psychology*, by Gregg Krech.
 - Accessed various websites and watched numerous motivational videos for reference.
- Task = Wrote motivational speech and script for *Action* video.

Week 5 (Sep. 24 – Sep. 28):

- Research Topic = *Mindset*
 - Reading: *Mindset: The new psychology of success*, by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.

- Accessed various websites and watched numerous motivational videos for reference.
- Task = Wrote motivational speech and script for *Mindset* video.

Week 6 (Oct. 1 – Oct. 5):

- Research Topic = *Collaboration*
 - Reading: *Never Eat Alone, Expanded and Updated: And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time*, by Keith Ferrazzi and Tahl Raz.
 - Accessed various websites and watched numerous motivational videos for reference.
- Tasks = Wrote motivational speech and script for *Collaboration* video.

Week 7 (Oct. 8 – Oct. 12):

- Research Topic = *Risk*
 - Reading: *The Art of Risk: The New Science of Courage, Caution, and Chance*, by Kayt Sukel.
 - Accessed various websites and watched numerous motivational videos for reference.
- Task = Wrote motivational speech and script for *Risk* video.

Week 8 (Oct. 15 – Oct. 19):

- Research Topic = *Vision*
 - Reading: *Creative Visualization: Use the Power of Your Imagination to Create What You Want in Your Life*, by Shakti Gawain.
 - Accessed various websites and watched numerous motivational videos for reference.
- Task = Wrote motivational speech and script for *Vision* video.

Week 9 (Oct. 20 – Oct. 24):

- Research Topic = *Diligence*
 - Reading: *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, by Angela Duckworth.

- Accessed various websites and watched numerous motivational videos for reference.
- Task = Wrote motivational speech and script for *Diligence* video.

Week 10 (Oct. 27 – Nov. 2):

- Research Topic = *Persistence*
 - Reading: *The Resiliency Advantage: Master Change, Thrive Under Pressure, and Bounce Back from Setbacks*, by Al Siebert, Ph.D.
 - Accessed various websites and watched numerous motivational videos for reference.
- Task = Wrote motivational speech and script for *Persistence* video.

Phase 2: Video Production/Editing Tutorials and Finalizing Motivational Video Scripts

Week 11 (Nov. 5 – Nov. 9):

- Video Production/Editing Tutorial Topic = Introduction to Filmmaking and Video Production
 - Watched videos, accessed websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edited motivational speech and script for *Purpose* video. Researched films for relevant video footage. Storyboarded ideas for *Purpose* video.

Week 12 (Nov. 12 – Nov. 16):

- Video Production/Editing Tutorial Topic = Video Editing Basics: Timelines, Importing Footage, Splicing Scenes, Transitions, etc.
 - Watched videos, accessed websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edited motivational speech and script for *Responsibility* video. Researched films for relevant video footage. Storyboarded ideas for *Responsibility* video.

Week 13 (Nov. 19 – Nov. 23):

- Video Production/Editing Tutorial Topic = Post-Production Basics: Soundtrack Editing, Closed-Captioning, Titles, Credits, etc.
 - Watched videos, accessed websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edited motivational speech and script for *Belief* video. Researched films for relevant video footage. Storyboarded ideas for *Belief* video.

Week 14 (Nov. 26 – Nov.30):

- Video Production/Editing Tutorial Topic = Learning and Experimenting with Software: *Adobe Premiere Pro*
 - Watched videos, accessed websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edited motivational speech and script for *Action* video. Researched films for relevant video footage. Storyboarded ideas for *Action* video.

Week 15 (Dec. 3 – Dec. 7):

- Video Production/Editing Tutorial Topic = Learning and Experimenting with Software: *Camtasia Studio*
 - Watched videos, accessed websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edited motivational speech and script for *Mindset* video. Researched films for relevant video footage. Storyboarded ideas for *Mindset* video.

Week 16 (Dec. 10 – Dec. 14):

- Video Production/Editing Tutorial Topic = Learning and Experimenting with Software: *Movavi Video Suite*
 - Watched videos, accessed websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edited motivational speech and script for *Collaboration* video. Researched films for relevant video footage. Storyboarded ideas for *Collaboration* video.

Spring 2019

Week 17 (Feb. 25 – March 1):

- Video Production/Editing Tutorial Topic = YouTube Basics for Beginners
 - Watched videos, accessed websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edited motivational speech and script for *Risk* video. Researched films for relevant video footage. Storyboarded ideas for *Risk* video.

Week 18 (March 4 – March 8):

- Video Production/Editing Tutorial Topic = How to Start a YouTube Channel: Teach Your Passion
 - Watched videos, accessed websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edited motivational speech and script for *Vision* video. Researched films for relevant video footage. Storyboarded ideas for *Vision* video.

Week 19 (March 11 – March 15):

- Video Production/Editing Tutorial Topic = YouTube Success Guide (Thumbnails, Titles, Tags, etc.)
 - Watched videos, accessed websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edited motivational speech and script for *Diligence* video. Researched films for relevant video footage. Storyboarded ideas for *Diligence* video.

Week 20 (March 18 – March 22):

- Video Production/Editing Tutorial Topic = Ten Key Steps to Improving YouTube Search Results
 - Watched videos, accessed websites, etc.

- Tasks = Edited motivational speech and script for *Persistence* video. Researched films for relevant video footage. Storyboarded ideas for *Persistence* video.

Phase 3: Video Production/Editing

Week 21 (March 25 – March 29):

- *Purpose* Video Production/Editing: created the timeline, imported media, selected background music, recorded the voiceover, edited the soundtrack, synchronized visual scenes with the narrative, closed-captioned videos, created titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc.

Week 22 (April 1 – April 5):

- *Responsibility* Video Production/Editing: created the timeline, imported media, selected background music, recorded the voiceover, edited the soundtrack, synchronized visual scenes with the narrative, closed-captioned videos, created titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc.

Week 23 (April 8 – April 12):

- *Belief* Video Production/Editing: created the timeline, imported media, selected background music, recorded the voiceover, edited the soundtrack, synchronized visual scenes with the narrative, closed-captioned videos, created titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc.

Week 24 (April 15 – April 19):

- *Action* Video Production/Editing: created the timeline, imported media, selected background music, recorded the voiceover, edited the soundtrack, synchronized visual scenes with the narrative, closed-captioned videos, created titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc.

Week 25 (April 22 – April 26):

- *Mindset* Video Production/Editing: created the timeline, imported media, selected background music, recorded the voiceover, edited the soundtrack, synchronized visual scenes with the narrative, closed-captioned videos, created titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc.

Week 26 (April 29 – May 3):

- *Collaboration* Video Production/Editing: created the timeline, imported media, selected background music, recorded the voiceover, edited the soundtrack, synchronized visual scenes with the narrative, closed-captioned videos, created titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc.

Week 27 (May 6 – May 10):

- *Risk* Video Production/Editing: created the timeline, imported media, selected background music, recorded the voiceover, edited the soundtrack, synchronized visual scenes with the narrative, closed-captioned videos, created titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc.

Week 28 (May 13 – May 17):

- *Vision* Video Production/Editing: created the timeline, imported media, selected background music, recorded the voiceover, edited the soundtrack, synchronized visual scenes with the narrative, closed-captioned videos, created titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc.

Week 29 (May 20 – May 24):

- *Diligence* Video Production/Editing: created the timeline, imported media, selected background music, recorded the voiceover, edited the soundtrack, synchronized visual

scenes with the narrative, closed-captioned videos, created titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc.

Week 30 (May 27 – May 31):

- *Persistence* Video Production/Editing: created the timeline, imported media, selected background music, recorded the voiceover, edited the soundtrack, synchronized visual scenes with the narrative, closed-captioned videos, created titles, transitions, and thumbnails, etc.

Video Post-Production and Conclusion

Week 31 (June 3 – June 7):

- Video Post-Production/Post-Editing: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution for *Purpose, Responsibility, Belief, Action, and Mindset* videos.
- Prepared, wrote, edited, and finalized sabbatical report for committee review.

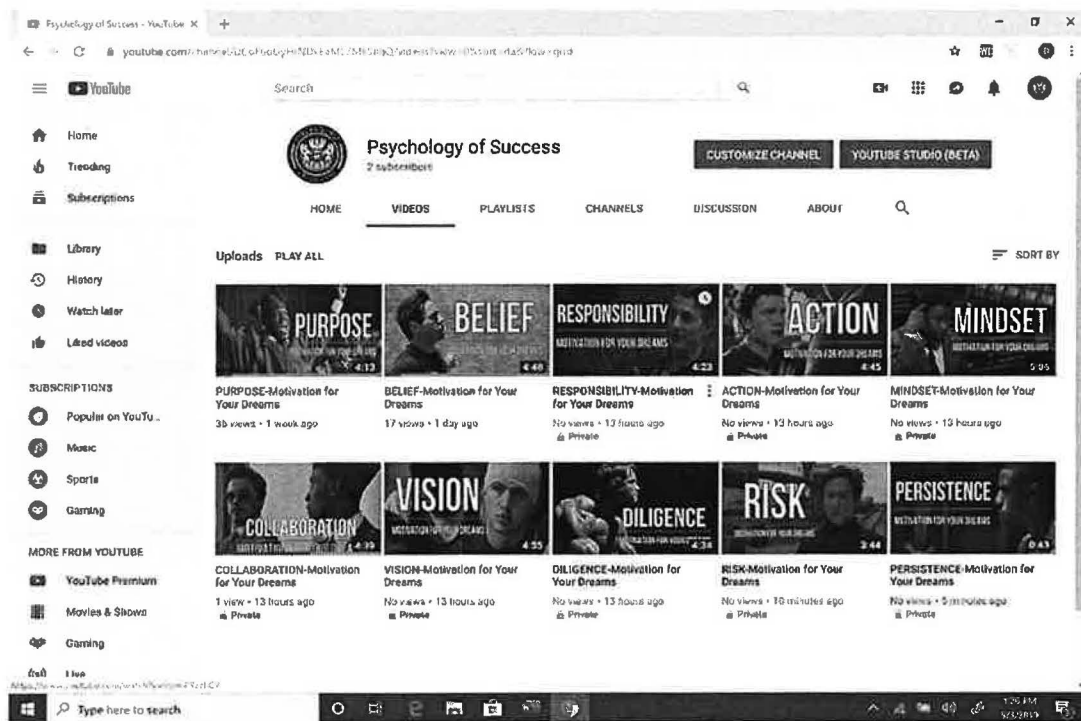
Week 32 (June 10 – June 14):

- Video Post-Production/Post-Editing: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution for *Collaboration, Risk, Vision, Diligence, and Persistence* videos.
- Prepared, wrote, edited, and finalized sabbatical report for committee review.

Results

In order to provide a coherent theme for *Psychology of Success*, I decided to begin each video with the same quote (e.g., “This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice”) to demonstrate to viewers that they already have the knowledge, capacity, and skills they need to succeed (“common sense”), but they need to actually exercise them consistently in order to do so (“common practice”). Introducing each video in this manner helps with branding because it maintains continuity between the different success principles covered in the program. It also sets the stage for each motivational speech. In the following section, the full scripts for each episode of *Psychology of Success* are presented. In order to view the videos, please go to the *Psychology of Success* channel page on YouTube at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoF6oUyHrNDkEaMLZMkS8qQ>, and click on the respective thumbnail for the video you want to watch. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Screenshot of Psychology of Success YouTube Channel Page



Motivational Video Scripts

Purpose – Motivation for Your Dreams

If you want to be successful, you have to discover your purpose. This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice. So many people are just floating through life, bouncing around from one place to another, with no sense of direction. They have no idea where they're going, and then they wonder why they're stuck. But you're here because you have a dream—a dream of something better. And if you want to be successful, if you want to make that dream come true, you have to remember your purpose. Your purpose is the ultimate reason why you're here—studying, grinding, putting in the blood, sweat, and tears... And it's your purpose that's going to get you to where you want to be.

But what is your purpose? Why are you here in college putting everything else on hold, sacrificing and scrapping to get by, when it seems like everyone else is getting their lives started in the so-called real world? Because you know that you're here for a greater purpose. You're here to learn. You're here to grow. You're here to become a better version of yourself. That is the purpose of higher education—to help you learn and grow so you can have access to opportunities that you might not otherwise have. And what are those opportunities? A better job. A better car. A better house. A better lifestyle. A college degree will open the doors to these better opportunities, and there's nothing necessarily wrong with pursuing these things. But none of these opportunities will be possible without a better you! Let me repeat that—None of these opportunities will be possible without a better you! And that's the purpose of higher education—to help you become a better you! So, when you're struggling and you're wondering if you should just drop out and get a full-time job, remember that the struggles you're going through to pursue your education are making you a better you!

Listen... I get it. It sucks when you have to sit in traffic all day and then fight for a parking spot in order to get to class on time. It sucks when you're struggling in your Algebra class and the truth is you're probably never going to have to use that stuff in the real world. It sucks when you have to wait in long lines at Student Services just to be told that your financial aid was denied. It sucks when you have to pull an all-nighter studying when you'd much rather be resting after a long day of work. But remember, all of the struggles that you're going through to get your education are making you a better you!

Sure, you can quit school, find a full-time job somewhere, and probably even make a decent living for yourself. A lot of successful people never got a college degree. And getting a college degree doesn't necessarily guarantee success. But if you quit school now, will you be the best version of yourself? If you quit school now, will you be fulfilling your purpose? You're going to be working for the rest of your life, but this is probably the only time in your life that you'll have the opportunity to learn things you wouldn't normally learn. This is probably the only time in your life that you'll have the opportunity to interact with people you wouldn't normally interact with. This is probably the only time in your life that you'll have the opportunity to do things you wouldn't normally do. This is probably the only time in your life that you'll be able to go to college... And that's a wonderful privilege! I know that college might not feel like a privilege when you're broke because tuition prices have gone up. I know that college might not feel like a privilege when you're exhausted from studying all night. I know that college might not feel like a privilege when you're bored out of your mind, sitting in classes that seem irrelevant. But the purpose of college is education, not entertainment! The purpose of college is to make you smarter. The purpose of college is to make you stronger. The purpose of

college is to make you a better you! And that is the ultimate purpose that's going to help you make your dreams come true!

Responsibility – Motivation for Your Dreams

If you want to be successful, you have to take 100% full responsibility for your life. Let me repeat that. If you want to be successful, you have to take 100% full responsibility for your life. This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice. Too many people refuse to take full responsibility for their lives, but instead, they blame other people or situations for their own lack of progress.

Consider the following scenario. You're a first-generation college student and it's the end of your third year in community college. It took you a little bit longer than you expected to finish your general education requirements because you've been working full-time to help your family. But now, you're finally about to graduate with your Associate's Degree and you've already been accepted to the university of your dreams. However, in order to transfer, you need to pass all your classes with at least a "C." Unfortunately, after final exams are graded, you realize you're one point short of a "C" in your History class, so you ask your professor if he'll round you up. You explain that this is the last class you need to transfer to the university of your dreams, but he's unwilling to budge. As a result, you're going to have to retake the class during the summer and you might not be able to transfer to the university in the Fall as you had planned.

Now, be honest, if you're anything like me, your first inclination is to blame the professor. Why does he have to be such a stickler? Why can't he just round you up?! You're only one point away from attending the university of your dreams, but now, those dreams are crushed because your professor is giving you a "D". But that's the whole point. Your dreams are not crushed because your professor is giving you a "D". Your dreams are crushed because you

earned a “D”. The standards were clear since the beginning of the semester, and you knew exactly what you needed to do in order to meet them. It was your dream to transfer to the university. Therefore, it was your responsibility to do everything possible to make that dream come true.

I understand that it’s frustrating because you were off by just one point, but that one point difference is really the result of a series of choices you made throughout the entire semester. How many times throughout the semester did you choose to sleep in when you knew you could have been studying? How many times throughout the semester did you choose to binge-watch TV when you knew you could have been studying? How many times throughout the semester did you choose to hang out with friends when you knew you could have been studying? How many times throughout the semester did you choose to waste time on social media when you knew you could have been studying? Did you read the textbook like you were supposed to? Did you turn in all your assignments like you were supposed to? Did you proofread your papers like you were supposed to? Did you ask questions in class like you were supposed to? Did you visit your professor during office hours to get extra help like you were supposed to? Did you review your notes one more time before the exam like you were supposed to? The point is, you are responsible for your success, or lack thereof, and no one can stand in your way except you.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not necessarily saying that you are to blame for all the problems in your life. The world isn’t fair. Horrible things may have happened to you through no fault of your own and now you might be in a situation where you would never want to be. However, no matter who or what got you to where you are, it is always your responsibility to get yourself to where you want to be. It’s not fair that you might have to work full-time to support your family while pursuing your education, but you still have the power to take responsibility and learn how

to manage your time and finances more efficiently. It's not fair that you might face discrimination because of your race, sex, or sexual orientation, but you still have the power to take responsibility and learn how to fight for your rights. It's not fair that you might have been diagnosed with some disease or disability, but you still have the power to take responsibility and learn how to overcome such obstacles. Whatever situation you are in, you always have the power to change—if not the situation, then yourself. And if you change yourself, chances are your situation will eventually change too. But you have to take the responsibility to make that happen. If you want to be successful, you have to take the responsibility to make your dreams come true!

Belief

If you want to be successful, you have to believe it's possible. This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice. So many people sabotage their success before they even begin because they don't believe it's possible.

For example, before 1954, the prevailing belief in the athletic community was that it was impossible to run a mile in under four minutes. Numerous people had tried. Everybody had failed... Over and over again. As a result, medical professionals and the athletic community believed that it was physically impossible to break the four-minute barrier. However, on May 6, 1954, Roger Bannister achieved the impossible by completing the mile in 3 minutes and 59.4 seconds. He shocked the world with his amazing achievement and became the first person in history to break the four-minute barrier. But here's what's so ironic about his achievement. Although Roger Bannister is arguably the most famous record-setter in the mile-run, he is also the man who held the record for the shortest period of time. Just 46 days after Bannister broke the four-minute barrier, John Landy broke his record and ran the mile in 3 minutes and 58 seconds. For hundreds of years of recorded history, no one had been able to break the four-

minute barrier until Roger Bannister did. However, less than two months after Roger Bannister did it, John Landy also achieved the impossible. Since then, numerous people have broken the four-minute barrier, forever changing the possibilities of what could be accomplished with the human spirit. But what changed? Were there significant advances in exercise science? Did they develop revolutionary training techniques? Were there major breakthroughs in nutrition? No... After Roger Bannister broke the four-minute barrier for the first time in history on May 6, 1954, people finally believed it was possible. And because they believed it, they achieved it!

Therefore, if you want to be successful, you have to take charge of your beliefs. Just like the four-minute barrier that everyone thought was impossible to break, people create their own mental barriers with limiting beliefs. You want to get your degree, but you've been out of school for a while now and you're a lot older than the typical student, so you just don't believe it's possible. You want to meet the person of your dreams, but you're sick of all the games you have to play while dating, so you just don't believe it's possible. You want to write a book, but your mind goes blank every time you sit down to write, so you just don't believe it's possible. You want to get more fit, but you hate dieting and going to the gym, so you just don't believe it's possible. You want to pursue a particular career, but you don't have the resources or connections to get your foot in the door, so you just don't believe it's possible. You want to improve your finances, but it seems like you have to have money to make money, so you just don't believe it's possible. You want to be happy, but it seems like bad things keep happening to you over and over again, so you just don't believe it's possible. You want to change the world by promoting love and acceptance, but it seems like people are stuck in their ways, so you just don't believe it's possible.

Limiting beliefs will sabotage your success before you even begin, but you have the power to change your beliefs. And by changing your beliefs, you can change your reality. Maybe you are older than the typical student, but you have a lot to contribute because of your life experience. Maybe it is difficult to meet quality people, but it'll be worth it once you meet your soul mate. Maybe you do struggle with writer's block, but you have a lot of ideas to share with the world. Maybe you don't like dieting and working out, but you do enjoy eating healthy and being outdoors. Maybe it is tough to break into your career field, but there are people out there who are willing to help you. Maybe you don't have a lot of money, but you can learn how to manage and grow whatever finances you do have. Maybe bad things do keep happening to you, but you're getting wiser and stronger in the process. Maybe people are stuck in their ways, but you can change people through the power of your love. Whatever it is you're striving for, if you want to be successful, you have to believe it's possible. Success starts with the power of belief. And the power of belief starts with you! So stop limiting your potential, take charge of your beliefs, and make your dreams come true!

Action – Motivation for Your Dreams

If you want to be successful, you have to take action on your dreams. This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice. So many people live their entire lives with dreams that never get realized because they refuse to take action on them. They sit around wishing and waiting for their dreams to come true, instead of taking action to actually make them come true. They live in the world of someday, hoping that *someday* they'll lose weight, *someday* they'll get their finances straight, *someday* they'll meet the person of their dreams, *someday* they'll give up that destructive habit, *someday* they'll go back to college and finish their degree, *someday* they'll perform on stage, *someday* they'll visit that place

they've always wanted to see, *someday* they'll finally be happy. They have all these dreams and desires, and might talk the talk, but when push comes to shove, they don't walk the walk.

So, what about you? How many times do you let fear, doubt, or just plain laziness stop you from taking action on your dreams?! You want to approach that person you're interested in, but you're afraid you'll look stupid and be rejected. You want to pursue a particular major, but your parents keep telling you there's no future in that field. You want to be true to yourself and come out to your family and friends, but you're afraid of how they'll react. You want to break up with your partner because you know it's a toxic relationship, but you're afraid of being alone. You want to write a book, but you're afraid that no one will read it. You want to travel and see the world, but you have no idea how you're going to support yourself. You want to start your own business, but you have no idea how to get started... So you never start at all. Far too many dreams die because people never take action on them. However, if you want to be successful, if you want to make your dreams come true, you have to take action!

I know that it's hard, I know that it's scary, I know that it's overwhelming, but there's tremendous power in taking action on your dreams! First, taking action gets you into flow. You've been there before—that feeling of energized focus that you experience when you're fully immersed and present in what you're doing. It might not have happened immediately, but we've all moments like that, times when you felt like you were just “in the zone.” For example, maybe you didn't feel like studying, but once you got started, the ideas started flowing and your mind was clearer than ever before. Or maybe you didn't feel like going to the gym, but once you started working out, you felt a boost of energy and had one of the best workouts that you've ever had. Or maybe you didn't feel like going to practice, but once you warmed up, you felt unstoppable and had one of the best performances of your life. Or maybe you didn't feel like

going out, but once you got out, you had a great time and met some of the coolest people you've ever met. Or maybe you didn't feel like going to work, but once you pushed yourself, you had one of the most productive days you've ever had and felt a tremendous sense of accomplishment. Or maybe you didn't feel like going on stage, but once you faced your fears, you crushed it and felt like you could go on forever. When you take action on your dreams, you begin fulfilling your purpose and feel more alive than ever before because taking action gets you into flow.

Second, taking action gives you something to show. When you take action on your dreams, you get results—plain and simple. One page at a time, your book gets written. One class at a time, your degree gets earned. One customer at a time, your business gets built. One dollar at a time, your bank account grows. One sit-up at a time, your six pack forms. One meeting at a time, your addiction gets conquered. One mile at a time, your marathon gets finished. One *anything* at a time, your dreams come true! It might not happen overnight, but you'll be amazed at how things start to come together when you take action on your dreams because taking action gives you something to show.

Finally, taking action makes you grow. When you face your fears, when you push yourself beyond your comfort zone, you develop the discipline necessary to make your dreams come true. There's tremendous power in taking action on your dreams, and that power is in you! So do what you need to do, and take action to make your dreams come true!

Mindset – Motivation for Your Dreams

If you want to be successful, you have to cultivate a positive mindset. This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice. So many people live lives of mediocrity, or even worse, misery, because they are enslaved to

negative thinking. They dwell on past hurts, focus on their limitations, and worry themselves to death.

For example, Nick Sitzman was a strong and vibrant man who worked on a train crew years ago. Nick had a lot going for him—a steady job, a wife and two kids, and many friends. He was intelligent and hard-working, but he had one major weakness—Nick was a notorious pessimist. He could find the negative in any situation, and he always worried about the worst possible scenario. One day, in the middle of summer, Nick was doing his final checks on the train when he accidentally got locked inside a refrigerator boxcar. Nick panicked. He screamed and banged on the doors until his fists were bloody, pleading for someone to let him out. Unfortunately, the rest of the crew had already left, and Nick was trapped. *If I can't get out, I'll freeze to death in here*, he thought. He found a knife and tried to pry the door open, but still couldn't get out. Awaiting his impending doom, Nick wanted to let his wife and family know exactly what had happened to him, so he began to carve these words on the wooden floor: "It's so cold. My body is getting numb. If I could just go to sleep, these may be my last words." The next morning, the crew slid open the heavy doors to the boxcar, and to their horror, they found Nick huddled on the floor, dead. An autopsy later revealed that every physical sign of his body indicated he had frozen to death. However, the refrigeration unit of the boxcar was inoperative, and the temperature inside was 55 degrees, nowhere near cold enough to freeze someone to death. The cold didn't kill Nick. His pessimistic thoughts did.

In a similar way, how often do we kill ourselves with a negative mindset. It might not be as drastic as physical death, but how often do we kill our drive, our desires, our dreams by dwelling on the negative. *This class is too hard. I just know I'm going to fail that exam. I'm never going to get my degree. I'm too short. I'm too fat. I'm never going to find the love of my*

life. We've tried over and over again, but we just can't seem to get pregnant. We'll never be able to have children. I'm not that talented. Things just don't seem to work out for me. I'll never be successful. The market is insane. My offers keep getting rejected. I'll never be able to buy a house. The doctor said the results don't look good. No one's ever recovered from this condition. I'm never going to get well.

Like being trapped in a refrigerated boxcar, we trap ourselves and kill our dreams with negative thoughts. That's why someone once said, "Watch your thoughts, for they become words. Watch your words, for they become actions. Watch your actions, for they become habits. Watch your habits, for they become your character. Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny." It all begins in your mind. But here's the good news. Your destiny isn't determined. It's created. And you can create the destiny of your dreams through the power of your mind.

Therefore, if you want to be successful, if you want to make your dreams come true, you have to develop a positive mindset. You have to dig deep down inside yourself, to that reservoir of strength that you know you have, and harness the power of your mind. *I may be struggling right now, but I'm getting stronger in the process. I am beautiful just the way I am, I don't need someone else to make me complete. I have so many blessings in my life that I am grateful for. I am confident in my abilities because I can always learn and grow. I am focused on my goals and am passionate about my work. I have a clear and definite purpose to make a difference in the world. I can accomplish anything I set my mind to.* When you cultivate a positive mindset, you take charge of your destiny. So unleash the power of your mind and make your dreams come true!

Collaboration – Motivation for Your Dreams

If you want to be successful, you have to collaborate with others and ask for help. This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice. So many people go through life trying to do everything on their own, pretending to have everything together, too embarrassed to ask for help.

For example, in my early days of training as a psychologist, I was working at a university counseling center when a young lady came in without an appointment. She was extremely distressed, and pleaded to speak with someone as soon as possible. When I asked her what brought her in, she immediately burst into tears. “I haven’t been able to sleep for weeks. I’ve been having nightmares about my grandma, who passed away a few months ago, and I haven’t been able to function.” Because she was so distressed and came in without an appointment, my first response was to help her stabilize herself and make sure she was safe.

“Has it been so bad that you’ve been thinking about hurting or killing yourself,” I asked.

“No, nothing like that. But I’ve been missing all my classes and my grades have really dropped. I wake up crying in the middle of the night and can’t go back to sleep. I just can’t function. This isn’t like me. I’m a straight A student, I have a lot of friends, and I’m usually pretty strong. I just don’t understand what’s happening to me.”

“Have you talked to anyone else about what you’ve been going through?” I asked.

“That’s just it. I haven’t told anyone.”

And that was the problem. Sure, she was grieving about the loss of her grandmother, but when she started to have difficulty functioning, she held everything inside and kept it to herself.

It might sound surprising that this young lady, who had a lot of friends, didn’t reach out for help, but how many times do we do the same thing? How many times do you try to tackle life’s problems or just figure things out on your own? You have a question during class, but

you're afraid to raise your hand because you don't want to look stupid. You want to borrow someone's notes, but you're afraid to ask because you don't want to be a burden. You want to start a study group, but you think it'll be too much of a hassle to coordinate everybody's schedules. You've had a crush on someone for a while now, but you're afraid to ask them out for a date. You've been unmotivated to work out lately, but you don't want to find a workout partner or hire a personal trainer. You're struggling with an addiction, but you refuse to reach out to a sponsor. You've been feeling depressed lately, but you keep it to yourself because you don't want anyone to think that you're weak.

It's easier to try to get through life on your own because you don't have to be vulnerable. We've all been hurt by someone in the past—disappointed, betrayed, maybe even violated or abused. Of course, you never want to experience that kind of pain again, so you close yourself off and just try to go it alone. However, if you want to be successful, if you want to make your dreams come true, you have to collaborate with others and reach out for help. No one can reach their full potential on their own. We all need one another's help.

For example, penguins live in some of the harshest environments on the planet, and one of the greatest dangers they face is the extreme conditions of their environment. Freezing temperatures can plummet to 40 degrees below zero and winds can reach up to 120 miles per hour. To protect themselves against these conditions, penguins have thick layers of blubber and tightly packed feathers that act like insulation to keep them warm. However, even these natural characteristics aren't enough to protect them on their own. So, the way they survive is by huddling together. They stand side by side, tightly packed together, in groups of thousands, shielding one another from the cold and sharing the warmth of their bodies with one another. If a penguin were left alone, it could freeze to death. But by joining the others, it takes turns rotating

from the outside of the huddle to the center, where temperatures can reach up to 70 degrees. *Its protection is in its connection.* Penguins survive and thrive in some of the harshest environments in the world because they understand the power of collaboration.

In the same way, if you want to be successful, you have to collaborate with others and reach out for help. No one who's ever achieved greatness has done it completely on their own. There's tremendous power in the collective energy of family, friends, and community, so harness the power of collaboration to make your dreams come true!

Risk – Motivation for Your Dreams

If you want to be successful, you have to be willing to take risks. This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice. So many people limit their possibilities for greatness by staying in their comfort zone, and miss countless opportunities to take their lives to the next level because they're too afraid to take risks.

For example, in the 1950's, Art Linkletter, host of hit TV shows like *Kids Say the Darndest Things* and *People Are Funny*, was living comfortably. He had a successful career in the entertainment business, and one of his friends approached him with an opportunity to invest in some real estate in an area that was being newly developed. But Linkletter was hesitant. He had more than enough cash to spare because a lot of the land was still empty and could've been purchased for pennies on the dollar. But he was comfortable where he was at, and he didn't want to risk losing money on his friend's overinflated enthusiasm. So, he politely declined the offer. Unfortunately, he passed up the opportunity to make millions because his friend's name was Walt Disney, and the property he was encouraging him to invest in was the surrounding area of Disneyland! Art Linkletter eventually hosted the opening of Disneyland on July 17, 1955, and

when he saw how successful the park was, he kicked himself for passing up the opportunity of a lifetime because he wasn't willing to take the risk.

But how often do *we* do the same thing? How often do we miss out on life because we're too afraid to take risks? You want to go away to college, but you've never lived anywhere else, and you're afraid you're going to miss your family and friends. *What if I get lonely? What if I get homesick?* Sure, that might happen. But what if you meet some of the coolest people who become your friends for the rest of your life? What if you meet *the* person who becomes even more than a friend for the rest of your life? That *can* happen, but it *won't* happen unless you're willing to take the risk. Or maybe you've always wanted to develop a particular skill or pursue a particular goal, but you're already set in your routine, and you're afraid that it might not be worth the effort. *What if I'm not any good at it? What if it's a waste of time?* Sure, that might happen. But what if you excel and soar? What if you discover new strengths in yourself that you never knew you had? That *can* happen, but it *won't* happen unless you're willing to take the risk. Or maybe you've been thinking about switching careers because you're much more passionate about something else, but you're comfortable where you're at, and you've got bills to pay. *What if I fail? What if I lose everything I've worked for?* Sure, that might happen. But what if you feel happier by letting go of the things you don't really need? What if you feel more alive than ever before because you're actually fulfilling your purpose? That *can* happen, but it *won't* happen unless you're willing to take the risk.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not necessarily saying that you should do something reckless, impulsive, or stupid. But there's tremendous power in taking risks! When you take risks, you open the doors to countless opportunities that you wouldn't normally have. You meet new people

and make valuable connections. You have new adventures and experience life more fully. You push yourself to grow by developing courage and character.

Life is risky no matter what, so you might as well take the risk and go for it! Speak up in class. Stand up for your beliefs. Get that degree. Apply for that job. Audition for that role. Go to that meeting. Try that new treatment. Have that challenging conversation. Start that business. Write that book. Contribute to that charitable cause. Train for that marathon. Submit an offer on that house. Approach that person you're interested in. You may hear a thousand "no's", but it only takes one "yes" to transform your life. Any goal worth pursuing is going to involve some risk. So live the adventure, take the risk, and make your dreams come true!

Vision – Motivation for Your Dreams

If you want to be successful, you have to have a vision for the life that you want. This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice. So many people are wandering through life blindly, day to day with no drive or direction, paycheck to paycheck with no passion or purpose, because they have no vision for where they want to be. They allow their problems to blind them from their possibilities, and then they resign themselves to a life of limitation.

But not Helen Keller. Helen Keller is known around the world as a symbol of hope in the face of overwhelming obstacles, because despite being blind and deaf, she lived a remarkable life of tremendous vision. Helen Keller was born on June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama. She was a relatively healthy baby, but when she was just nineteen months old, she was stricken with what was likely Scarlet Fever or Meningitis, and tragically lost her hearing and sight. As a result, young Helen had considerable difficulty functioning. She couldn't see, she couldn't hear, and she couldn't speak, so she often burst into fits of rage because she couldn't communicate. Friends

and relatives urged her parents to put her in an institution, but they refused to give up on her. The breakthrough came when Helen was six years old. After consulting with a number of specialists, the Kellers contacted the Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston and hired a young teacher named Anne Sullivan, who became Helen's lifelong teacher, friend, and companion. Ms. Sullivan taught Helen to communicate using a tactile form of sign language. Through Ms. Sullivan's brilliant instruction, Helen learned to read, write, and communicate. Her curiosity, imagination, and ability to reason soared. She excelled academically and became the first deaf blind person to graduate with a Bachelor's degree from Radcliffe College in 1904. Helen Keller went on to become a world-famous author, lecturer, humanitarian, and social and political activist. She published twelve books and numerous professional articles, co-founded Helen Keller International and the American Civil Liberties Union, and was a leading member of the American Federation for the Blind. Helen Keller traveled to thirty-five countries and received numerous awards from various world leaders for her work, including *The National Order of the Southern Cross* from Brazil, the *Legion of Honour* from France, the *Order of the Golden Heart* from the Philippines, the *Sacred Treasure* from Japan, the *Gold Medal of Merit* from Lebanon, and the *Presidential Medal of Freedom* from the United States. Clearly, she didn't allow anything to stop her from pursuing her dreams. In fact, she was once asked what it was like being blind, and her response was profound. She said, "The only thing worse than being blind is having sight, but no vision."

The reason this is such a powerful statement is that all of us, at some point, have a vision for what we want. But life has a way of distorting or even destroying our vision. Disappointment, depression, divorce, betrayal, bankruptcy, bereavement, anxiety, abuse, abandonment, failure, fear, or frustration. Any one of these can distort our vision and all of us will experience them at

some point in our lives. But whatever problems you face, never lose sight of your vision! If anybody had problems, Helen Keller did. If anybody faced overwhelming obstacles, Helen Keller did. If anybody had reason to give up, Helen Keller did. But she didn't. Despite the tremendous adversity she faced, she never allowed her blindness to limit her vision. She said, "If I, deaf, blind, find life rich and interesting, how much more can you gain by the use of your five senses!" She also said, "Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties." We can all achieve greatness by following Helen Keller's example. Don't let your problems blind you from your possibilities. Live your life with vision and make your dreams come true!

Diligence – Motivation for Your Dreams

If you want to be successful, you have to be diligent and work hard for what you want. This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice. So many people are looking for the easy way out. They want the six-pack without the sit-ups, the degree without the studying, the championship without the fight, the happy marriage without the sacrifice, the promotion without the overtime, the success without the struggle. However, you can't have a million-dollar paycheck with a minimum wage work ethic. If you do what is easy, you're life will be hard. But if you do what is hard, you're life will be easy.

I had a student come into my office a few weeks before the end of the semester because he was recently notified by his boss that if he didn't bring up his GPA, he was in danger of losing his job. He was panicked because he was failing all of his classes, and he wanted to see if there was any extra credit he could do in order to raise his grade in my class. I told him there were no more extra credit opportunities available, but after reviewing his grade with him, we discovered

that it was still possible for him to pass the class with a “C.”—All he needed to do was get a “B” on his final exam. He was relieved, but also pumped. He did horribly on his first two exams, but he readily admitted that he hadn’t been studying, so he was super confident that he could bring up his grade if he just applied himself. “So, you know what you need to do?” I asked him.

“Yeah, Doc. Thanks so much! I got this! I’m gonna ace my final and make you proud! You’ll see.” He left my office with the resolve of a wartime soldier on a mission to get home, super pumped and confident that he was going to bring up his grade. However, when I ran his final exam through the scantron machine, it sounded like it was throwing up as it marked all the questions he got wrong, spitting it out with a big fat “F.” When I asked him what happened, he reluctantly admitted that he just didn’t study... Again. But then he had the audacity to ask me if I would pass him if he just donated his textbook for a future student to use. He knew he could’ve passed the class if he did the work, but he was just looking for the easy way out. Yet, how many times do we do the same thing?! How many times do we look for the easy way out?!

However, if you want to be successful, if you want to make your dreams come true, you have to be diligent and work hard for what you want. There’s no easy way to success. If you want to lose weight, you have to stop eating everything on your plate, get off your butt, and start working out. There’s no easy way about it. If you want to improve your finances, you have to stop wasting money on things you don’t need, practice some self-control, and learn how to save and invest your money more wisely. There’s no easy way about it. If you want to get your degree, you have to stop wasting time, go to class, read your textbook, study, and turn in your assignments. There’s no easy way about it. If you want to have a happier relationship, you have to stop being selfish, make some sacrifices, and love your partner like you did when you first met. There’s no easy way about it. If you want to land that audition, you have to stop

complaining about the industry, work on honing your craft, and be willing to get rejected over and over again until you finally get it. There's no easy way about it. If you want to get that promotion, you have to stop messing around with your coworkers, put in the extra hours, and do whatever it takes to prove that you're the best person for the job. There's no easy way about it. The only place that success comes before work is in the dictionary. Hard work works. So stop making excuses, put the axe to the grind, and work hard to make your dreams come true!

Persistence – Motivation for Your Dreams

If you want to be successful, you have to be persistent when things get tough. This might sound like common sense—because it is—but the unfortunate truth is this is not common practice. So many people live in defeat because they haven't mastered the habit of persistence. They might start out with a lot of hype and excitement, but whenever things get tough, they quit, never knowing that success might be right around the corner.

For example, R. U. Darby caught gold fever during the early days of the gold rush, when his uncle journeyed out west to Colorado and staked a claim. After weeks of digging with a pick and shovel, his hard work payed off when he came across the shiny ore. But he needed more equipment to bring it up to the surface. So, he came back home to Maryland, told some friends and family about his discovery, and convinced them to invest in the equipment needed to mine the gold. The equipment was shipped to Colorado, and Darby and his uncle worked the mine.

When the first car of ore was mined and shipped to a smelter, the returns proved they had one of the richest gold mines in Colorado. Darby and his uncle were ecstatic. They only needed a few more loads of that ore to pay back their investors and clear their debts, and then they would make a killing in profits! With each new load, their excitement grew. But then, something happened. The vein of gold ore vanished. They continued to dig, desperately hoping to strike the

vein again, but no such luck. Drained, discouraged, and defeated, Darby and his uncle finally decided to quit. They sold the equipment to a junk dealer for a few hundred dollars, and took the train back home to Maryland.

However, the junk dealer decided to give the mine another try. He consulted a mining engineer and discovered that the vein of gold ore hadn't disappeared, it merely shifted because it was on a fault line. So, he adjusted his direction, continued to dig, and discovered millions of dollars in gold, just three feet away from where Darby and his uncle had stopped digging. If only Darby would've persisted, he could've transformed his life forever. But because things got tough, he decided to quit when he was just three feet from gold. Yet, how many times do we do the same thing? How many times do we quit whenever things get tough, not knowing that we might be just three feet from gold.

You've been taking classes for a while now, but it seems like you're never going to graduate. Don't quit! Be persistent! It might be tough, but you're tougher, and you might be just three feet from getting your degree. You've been struggling with a breakup for a while now, but you just can't seem to move on. Don't quit! Be persistent! It might be tough, but you're tougher, and you might be just three feet from a more fulfilling lifestyle. You've been trying to get a full-time position for a while now, but you can't seem to get past the first interview. Don't quit! Be persistent! It might be tough, but you're tougher, and you might be just three feet from that promotion. You've been working out for a while now, but you just can't seem to lose the weight. Don't quit! Be persistent! It might be tough, but you're tougher, and you might be just three feet from being able to fit into that dress. You've been going to meetings for a while now, but it doesn't seem to be getting any easier. Don't quit! Be persistent! It might be tough, but you're tougher, and you might be just three feet from total sobriety. You've been unhappy in your

marriage for a while now, and your coworker seems to be giving you some attention. Don't quit! Be persistent! It might be tough, but you're tougher, and you might be just three feet from avoiding a disastrous divorce. You've been in counseling for a while now, but you still can't seem to be happy. Don't quit! Be persistent! It might be tough, but you're tougher, and you might be just three feet from a major breakthrough. You've been getting treatment for a while now, but the cancer keeps coming back. Don't quit! Be persistent! It might be tough, but you're tougher, and you might be just three feet from complete healing and restoration.

Listen, I get it. I know that it's draining. I know that it's discouraging. I know that it's disappointing. Life can be tough. But you can be tougher! Don't tap out of the fight. Instead, tap into the fighter in you! Whatever it is you're striving for... Don't quit, be persistent, and make your dreams come true!

Discussion

Statement of Value and Benefit to the Professor

According to the Salary Leave Orientation Meeting on Monday, October 23, 2017, the major purpose of a sabbatical is “to provide opportunity for continued professional growth and new or renewed intellectual achievement through study, research, writing, and/or travel.” I can definitely say that this sabbatical leave has fulfilled this purpose as it has promoted my professional growth in several ways. First, I have gained valuable knowledge and skills in video production and editing, which I can now use in all my classes. Research shows that this current generation of students prefers multiple modes of instruction, particularly videos, which appeal to more visual learners (Buzzetto-More, 2014; Buzzetto-More, 2015; Seemiller & Grace, 2016; Twenge, 2017). In fact, one study found that incorporating YouTube videos enhances student engagement, depth of understanding, and overall student satisfaction (Buzzetto-More, 2015). As a result, more and more faculty are including YouTube videos as a teaching resource, but some express concern about the potential relevance, accuracy, and credibility of some of the videos in YouTube’s enormous open-source database (Burke, Snyder, & Rager, 2009). By creating my own videos, I can ensure relevance and accuracy by specifically tailoring them to my own needs.

For example, I plan to use the video production skills I gained during my sabbatical to create more videos for my online classes in the future, such as video instructions on how to complete and submit assignments with real-time on-screen captures, video announcements, tips for success, explanations for class policies, etc. Currently, I provide all this information to my online students via written announcements, some of which contain pictures or diagrams when relevant. However, providing information, instructions, and announcements via video may be much more engaging and effective, particularly for students who are more visual and audio

learners. In fact, Buzetto-More (2015) found that online students have a particular proclivity towards YouTube videos compared to hybrid and traditional in-person students.

Another benefit of this sabbatical leave is that it helped me to get more in touch with my artistic, creative talents, which have been somewhat dormant for quite some time now. As an academic scholar, my mind tends to operate more logically and analytically. However, because creating *Psychology of Success* involved the production of several short films per se, I was forced to tap into creative talents that I didn't even know I had, such as script writing, scene development, visual storytelling, etc. This newfound creativity will also enhance my teaching effectiveness as I develop more creative assignments and ways of presenting the material. Thus, the video production skills I gained during this sabbatical have stimulated my professional growth by enhancing my pedagogical repertoire and effectiveness.

Finally, this sabbatical leave has also provided me with a sense of "renewed intellectual achievement." Before this sabbatical leave, I had been teaching full-time at Mt. San Antonio College consecutively for twelve years. During that time, it seemed like students were developing a more relaxed work ethic and a greater sense of entitlement, as evidenced by numerous requests (or expectations) for inordinate amounts of extra credit, particularly toward the end of the semester, when students were more panicked because they didn't just do the work they were supposed to do earlier in the semester. At first, I thought I was just being cynical, but anecdotal evidence from various colleagues and a plethora of evidence from empirical research demonstrates that this newer generation of students has a more relaxed work ethic and greater sense of entitlement than previous generations (Twenge, 2014; Twenge & Campbell, 2010; Sasse, 2017). For example, one study found that a third of undergraduates believed they deserved

a B just for attending class and that the professor should agree to reschedule an exam if it interfered with their vacation plans (Greenberger et al., 2008).

In light of this apparent relaxed work ethic and greater sense of entitlement among my own students, I wanted to experience a sense of “renewed intellectual achievement” by choosing a project that would address the problem of academic underperformance by enhancing motivation, and thus, have some practical utility in the classroom. Creating *Psychology of Success* during my sabbatical leave has proven to be invaluable in this regard. By studying motivation in depth, and more importantly, doing something to improve it, I have gained a deeper sense of purpose and accomplishment by creating a program that will actually make a difference for my students.

Statement of Value and Benefit to the Students

Because the major feature of *Psychology of Success* involves motivational videos, the most obvious benefit to students is that it can enhance their academic motivation and performance, thereby improving their grades and ability to graduate. If they do indeed graduate, it can literally transform their lives. For example, every year during Mt. San Antonio College’s commencement ceremony, Dr. Audrey Yamagata-Noji, Vice-President of Student Services at Mt. SAC, shares inspiring stories of students who have transformed their lives through the power of education. These students are now graduating because somewhere along their journey, they learned to set their education as a priority and did whatever it took to succeed. For example, many of them are returning students who have overcome insurmountable obstacles, such as homelessness, death of family members, drug addictions, incarceration, diagnoses of cancer or other severe medical conditions, etc. By learning to truly value their education, these students

were able to overcome significant obstacles in their lives and graduate by developing many of the attributes from *Psychology of Success* on their own accord.

In a similar fashion then, because *Psychology of Success* promotes the cultivation of various attributes related to success, it is no exaggeration to suggest that students can transform their lives if they develop these virtues through force of habit by repetitiously watching the videos and practicing the principles contained therein. Indeed, Duhigg (2014) has found that developing “keystone habits” like the attributes from *Psychology of Success* can lead to major changes in other areas of life.

Statement of Value and Benefit to the Department

In an informal Google Docs survey created during the proposal stage of this sabbatical project, 93% ($N=15$) of full-time and adjunct professors from the psychology department reported that their students “struggle with academic motivation.” Therefore, *Psychology of Success* is an extremely valuable resource for the psychology department because professors can incorporate it into their courses in order to enhance academic motivation and improve student success. In fact, when asked if it would be helpful to have videos like those contained in this program, ten out of twelve professors who responded said “Yes.” When asked to explain, one professor wrote:

Many students seem like they're just "going through the motions" when it comes to their education. While some are self-motivated to achieve/succeed, others often need additional resources to facilitate their success. Videos such as this can help put their goals & dreams in the proper perspective, and realize the consequences of not taking their education seriously. Although the Mt. SAC Counseling dept. provides courses related to student success, it certainly won't hurt for other professors to reiterate those messages as well.

In addition to the practical application of enhancing academic motivation, *Psychology of Success* can also be used as a pedagogical supplement because it is related to various topics from

the course outline of record for PSYC 1A: Introduction to Psychology, such as learning, psychological development, motivation and emotion, health, stress, and coping, social psychology, and personality psychology, to name a few. *Psychology of Success* is also directly related to the curriculum of other psychology courses offered in our department, such as PSYC 5: Psychology of Reasoning and Problem Solving, PSYC 14: Developmental Psychology, PSYC 20: Introduction to Social Psychology, and PSYC 33: Psychology of Effective Living. Therefore, *Psychology of Success* can benefit the psychology department in multiple ways: pragmatically and pedagogically.

Statement of Value and Benefit to the College

One of the most unique and beneficial aspects of *Psychology of Success* is its universal value and utility to professors and students from any and every academic discipline. *Psychology of Success* transcends all academic boundaries because it addresses the widespread problem of academic underperformance that professors and students from all disciplines struggle with. Therefore, *Psychology of Success* provides tremendous value to the entire college because it helps to fulfill the goals and strategic objectives of the 2015-2017 Mt. SAC Strategic Plan, which “have their origin in proposals from teams across campus—departments and committees—and from the President’s Advisory Council” (retrieved Nov. 26, 2017 from http://www.mtsac.edu/about/overview/goals/2015-17_Strategic_Plan_rev.pdf). Furthermore, by encouraging the development of various attributes that promote academic excellence in college and success in life more generally, *Psychology of Success* directly supports College Goal #1 “The college will prepare students for success through the development and support of exemplary programs and services” of Theme A “To Advance Excellence and Student Achievement” from the 2015-2017 Mt. SAC Strategic Plan.

Along these lines, *Psychology of Success* directly supports the mission and vision statements of Mt. San Antonio College. According to the Mt. SAC website, “The mission of Mt. San Antonio College is to support all students in achieving their educational goals in an environment of academic excellence. Specifically, the College is committed to providing quality education, services, and workforce training so that students become productive members of a diverse, sustainable, global society. The College pledges to prepare students for lifelong learning through the mastery of basic skills, the achievement of associate degrees and certificates, and the completion of career and transfer pathways” (abbreviated) (retrieved Nov. 26, 2017 from <http://www.mtsac.edu/about/overview/mission-and-goals.html>). By cultivating various attributes from *Psychology of Success*, students will fulfill Mt. SAC’s mission by developing an appreciation for lifelong learning and enhancing their probability of transferring or graduating with their certificate or associate’s degrees.

According to the Mt. SAC vision statement, “Mt. San Antonio College strives to be regarded as one of the premier community colleges in the nation. We will be viewed as a leader in community college teaching, programs, and services. As a premier community college, we will provide access to quality educational programs and services, focusing on student success within a climate of integrity and respect. We will earn this reputation by consistently exceeding the expectations of our students, our staff, and our community.” Although all other colleges have particular programs and services to help students succeed (e.g., financial aid, tutoring, disability services, etc.), to my knowledge, no other institution has anything like *Psychology of Success*, which is extremely practical, relevant, accessible, and convenient. As such, it will help Mt. SAC fulfill its vision to “be regarded as one of the premier community colleges in the nation” by

equipping students with the motivation and characterological attributes necessary for success in a diverse, competitive, global economy.

Finally, *Psychology of Success* provides tremendous value and benefit to the college because it is relevant not only for students, but to faculty, staff, administration, and everyone on the campus. We all have goals and dreams that we are striving for, and we could all use some extra encouragement and motivation as we pursue such endeavors. Because *Psychology of Success* is not limited to academic motivation, it can help motivate anyone with anything they are striving for, thereby enhancing the work productivity and quality of life for everyone on campus—students, faculty, staff, and administration alike.

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Appendix: Copy of Sabbatical Leave Application Proposal



SALARY AND LEAVES COMMITTEE 2017-18

APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE

Name of Applicant: Gene Ano, Ph.D. Date: 11-27-17

Department: Psychology Division: Humanities / Social Sciences

Email: gano@mtsac.edu Ext.: 6306 Phone (cell/home): (949) 929-5247

Address: 11823 E. 207th St.

City: Lakewood Zip: 90715

Dates of Adjunct Employment at Mt. SAC: _____ Accumulated LHE: _____

Dates of Full Time Employment at Mt. SAC: Aug. 2006 - Present Dates of last sabbatical: From N/A To _____

Any Previous Sabbatical Leave(s)? No/Yes If yes, dates: From N/A To _____

Previous Leave(s) of Absence or breaks in service in the past 10 years?

Yes/No Dates: N/A Paid? Yes/No

Length of sabbatical leave requested:

10 Month: One semester Two semesters **11/12 Month:** Half Year Full Year

Effective dates for proposed sabbatical leave:

10 Month: Fall (year) 2018 Spring (year) 2019

11/12 Month: Start Date _____ End Date _____

Formal Study Independent Study Work Experience

Combination (specify) _____

I plan to use banked leave to supplement my sabbatical leave. No Yes*

(*If yes, you must submit a separate "Use Banked Leave" form to your Division office, be approved by your Dean, and received by Human Resources by the third week of the semester preceding your leave.)

ATTACHMENTS NEEDED

- A THREE TO FOUR SENTENCE ABSTRACT OF YOUR PLAN FOR PREPARATION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AGENDA.
- A COMPREHENSIVE, WRITTEN STATEMENT OF THE PROPOSED SABBATICAL ACTIVITY(IES) INCLUDING:
 - DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE OF THE ACTIVITY(IES)
 - TIMELINE OF THE ACTIVITY(IES)
 - PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD(S) OF INVESTIGATION, IF APPLICABLE
- A STATEMENT OF THE ANTICIPATED VALUE AND BENEFIT OF THE PROPOSED SABBATICAL ACTIVITY(IES) TO THE APPLICANT, HIS/HER DEPARTMENT OR SERVICE AREA, AND THE COLLEGE.
- LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (ENCOURAGED).
- ACADEMIC REFERENCE LIST/ WORKS CITED/SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Any change or modification of the proposed sabbatical activity(ies) as evaluated and approved by the Salary and Leaves Committee must be submitted (in writing) to the Committee for reconsideration.

Applicant's Signature:  Date: 11-27-17

Vice President of Instruction

Revised September 2017 • Page 9

APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE – CONT'D

Applicant: Gene Ano, Ph.D.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT/DIVISION

- The acknowledgment signatures reflect awareness of the sabbatical plan for the purpose of personnel replacement.
- Department chairs and appropriate administrators are required to submit a statement regarding the value of the sabbatical plan to the College, division/department, and individual, directly to the Office of Instruction.
- Applicants must obtain the signatures of acknowledgment prior to submitting application to the Salary and Leaves committee.

Department Chairperson:

Name: Charis Louise

Signature: [Signature]

Date: Nov 27, 2017
11/30/17

I certify that this leave will not be detrimental to the department. (16.K.7)

Division Dean:

Name: Karlyn Hour

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 11/30/17

I certify that this leave will not be detrimental to the department. (16.K.7)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE APPROPRIATE VICE PRESIDENT (INSTRUCTION OR STUDENT SERVICES)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Received in Instruction by: _____ Date: _____

APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE – CONT'D

Applicant: Gene Ano, Ph.D.

For Salary and Leaves Committee use:

Received by Office of Instruction Date: _____ By: _____
Application - Complete/Incomplete? Complete Incomplete
(If Incomplete applicant is given 5 working days to resubmit)

Date returned to applicant: _____

Due date for resubmission: _____

Date resubmission received: _____

Complete application sent to individual Committee Members for review: Date: _____ By: _____

Reviewed by Committee as a whole:

Action:

- Acceptable
- Conditionally Acceptable with Additional Information
Additional Information requested. Due back by: _____
- Not acceptable – Not recommended to the Board of Trustees

Review of Conditionally Accepted Applications:

- Acceptable
- Not Acceptable – Not recommended to the Board of Trustees

Recommendation:

- Recommended to Board of Trustees
Ranked as # _____ of _____ (# of applications)

Notification:

- Applicant notified of Committee Action Date: _____ By: _____
- Applicant notified of Board of Trustees Action Date: _____ By: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Chairperson, Salary and Leaves Committee

The Student Success Academy:
An Online Closed-Captioned Motivational Video Training Program for Academic Excellence

Gene G. Ano, Ph.D.

Department of Psychology

Mt. San Antonio College

Independent Study Sabbatical Proposal for the 2018 – 2019 Academic Year

Independent Study Sabbatical Proposal Contents

Abstract.....3

Rationale and Description of the Nature of the Activities.....4

Timeline of the Activities.....16

Statement of Anticipated Value and Benefit to:

 The College.....24

 The Department.....26

 The Students.....27

 The Professor.....28

References.....31

Evidence of Support from Colleagues (Letters of Recommendation).....34

Abstract

Academic underperformance, working below one's capabilities, is a serious problem on many college campuses (Ludovici, 2015), including Mt. San Antonio College. Each semester, personal experience and anecdotal evidence from faculty across campus indicates that professors' offices and e-mail accounts are filled with numerous requests from students to "bump up their grade" or offer inordinate amounts of extra credit. Furthermore, although Mt. SAC's graduation rate (32%) is better than the graduation rate for its comparison group (20%), which includes thirty-two institutions, 63% of Mt. SAC students still fail to transfer or graduate within three years (150% normal time of program completion), which is the standard measure developed to satisfy the Student Right-to-Know Act and Higher Education Act (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Thus, despite the plethora of resources available on campus to help students succeed, academic underperformance remains a problem. One often over-looked reason for academic underperformance is insufficient academic motivation. The purpose of the proposed independent study sabbatical is to create an online closed-captioned motivational video training program for academic excellence—*The Student Success Academy*. This online closed-captioned motivational video training program will cover various attributes (adapted from empirical research on motivation, achievement, and success) that promote academic excellence in college, and success in life more generally, such as: (1) Purpose, (2) Responsibility, (3) Belief, (4) Action, (5) Mindset, (6) Collaboration, (7) Risk, (8) Vision, (9) Grit, and (10) Resilience. By promoting such attributes, *The Student Success Academy* will help to fulfill Mt. SAC's mission and vision to "support students in achieving their educational goals in an environment of academic excellence" and "be regarded as one of the premier community colleges in the nation" by "focusing on student success".

Rationale and Description of the Nature of the Activities

An All-Too-Common Occurrence

It was just a few weeks before the end of the semester when Raoul¹ poked his head in through the doorway during my office hours. “Hey Doc. You got a second?” he called from the doorway. I had just taught three classes back to back, so I was trying to scarf down my dinner while I had a brief moment of respite before my next class. I took one last sip of my Diet Coke to clear my throat and put my half-eaten sandwich on my desk. “Sure, Raoul. C’mon in,” I said.

“Sorry, Doc. I didn’t mean to interrupt your dinner.”

“No, don’t worry about it, man. These are my office hours. That’s what I’m here for”, I said reassuringly. Raoul came inside, plopped his backpack on the floor, and took a seat on the chair next to my desk. “What can I do for you?” I asked.

“Well, I haven’t been doing too well and I know the final exam is coming up in a few weeks, so I was wondering if it’s still possible for me to pass the class?”

“Let’s take a look”, I said. After reviewing his points in Canvas and doing a few calculations, I told him, “Well, you’re right. Currently, you’re failing the class, but the good news is there are still enough points left for you to pass with a ‘C’. However, in order to do so, you’d have to get at least a high ‘B’ on both the final paper and the final exam. You’re first two exam scores aren’t even close to that, you did pretty badly on the first paper, and you missed one of your in-class participation activities, which was worth 10 points.”

“Can I still make that up,” he asked.

¹ Raoul is not his real name. It’s a pseudonym to protect confidentiality

“Well, you’ve already had two weeks to make that up and unfortunately, the deadline already passed. I posted an announcement in Canvas and sent out an e-mail clearly explaining the instructions and deadline for the make-up for students who were absent. What happened?”

“Yeah, I know. I just haven’t been checking my e-mail”, he said.

“So even though you failed the first two exams and did pretty badly on the first paper, you didn’t check the syllabus or Canvas to see if there was anything you missed when you were absent?” I asked with one eyebrow raised and a piercing smirk.

“I know, Doc. I’m not gonna lie to you. I know it’s my fault.”

“Well, it’s not about fault or blame, Raoul. I’m just trying to understand the situation. If I were you and I ‘really needed to pass a class’, but I knew I wasn’t doing well, I would do everything I could to make sure I wasn’t missing anything, especially if I was absent.”

“Yeah, I know. I don’t know what happened. I was hanging out with my friends and even though I knew I should come to class, we ended up going to watch the game at my homie’s house.”

“OK, but what about the other times? Your first two exam scores were horrible. Did you see where and why you made the mistakes you did when we went over them in class?”

“Yeah, honestly, I just didn’t study. I know you warned us that you’re tests are hard, but I guess I thought I would be OK since they’re multiple choice.”

“I can understand that happening for the first exam. But after that, you kinda know what to expect, right? If I wanted to pass a class, but failed the first exam, I’d make sure to study and read the textbook for the second exam, especially if the class doesn’t really have any homework.”

“Yeah, I know. I just didn’t expect it to be this hard. I just get confused on your tests because they make you think. In high school, most of the tests were just memorizing terms and stuff. I barely studied and got mostly ‘B’s.”

“Yeah, but this isn’t high school, Raoul. This is college. As I’ve said since the beginning of the semester, my job is to help you get to the next level by challenging you to think critically, helping you develop better problem-solving skills, etc.”

“I know, Doc. I appreciate everything you do. I’m not gonna let you down. I promise. I got this!” Raoul exclaimed confidently.

“Well, I appreciate that, but it’s not about *me*, Raoul. You’re not letting *me* down if you fail. This is about *you* and what *you* want. This is about *your* success. Got it?”

“Yeah, you’re right. I got it.”

“So you know what you need to do to pass, right?”

“Yeah, I know I gotta study, but is there ANYTHING I can do for extra credit?”

The Problem with Extra Credit

I don’t necessarily have a problem with extra credit. In fact, I offer multiple opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester. However, extra credit, at least the way students are requesting it these days, is not really “extra credit” at all. Let me explain. If extra credit were really “extra”, then it should only be available as a supplement to help students who might need a little extra boost because they are still struggling after completing all of their assignments and putting in reasonable efforts to perform adequately on exams. In other words, students should only be eligible to earn “extra credit” if they actually fulfill the minimum requirements for any given course. However, these days, students often request inordinate amounts of extra credit to make up for missed assignments, inadequate preparation resulting in poor exam performance,

etc. Thus, extra credit is not being used as a *supplement* for completed work, it's being used as a *substitute* for actual work. This inappropriate use of extra credit is further evidenced by the fact that many students do not participate in extra credit opportunities in the beginning or even the middle of the semester. Instead, they request opportunities for extra credit toward the end of the semester or even after the semester has ended, when it is too late and they are panicking about their grades because they didn't just do what they were supposed to do earlier in the semester (e.g., read the textbook, study, complete their assignments, etc.). For example, despite his "promise not to let [me] down," Raoul did not pass the class. He later e-mailed me after the semester ended, saying "so i fell 26 points short of a C. would you even begin to consider giving me 26 point extra credit if I donate my book to you so you could help one of your future students lol?" (Grammatical errors intentionally left in). To be honest, I'm surprised he even had the textbook.

Every faculty member can relate to this all-too-common occurrence. My colleagues across campus and the country all have similar stories about students slacking off for the whole semester, then e-mailing them asking if they can write some trivial two-page paper (or something of that matter) to make up for a whole semester's worth of missed work. Unfortunately, many professors seem to perpetuate the vicious cycle by supplying the demand. Every semester, I am bombarded with numerous e-mails and flyers from various organizations across campus requesting that I offer students extra credit for attending their event. In fact, at a recent meeting for the Academic Senate, participants were discussing the need to get more people to attend an upcoming town hall meeting in order to express concerns about a particular issue. One professor expressed frustration about not being able to attend. "Who sets the town hall meeting times

anyway?! Why are they always during class time?! I really want to go, but I can't cancel class to attend a town hall meeting," he griped.

"Bring your class," someone blurted out.

"I don't think they'd want to go and I can't use class time for something like this," the professor answered.

"Give them extra credit. They LOVE it," retorted someone else. A roar of laughter ensued because everyone knew it was true.

I wholeheartedly support campus involvement, extracurricular participation, and the open exchange of ideas, so I always announce such events to my students and encourage them to attend. However, in every single instance, a student will inevitably ask, "Will you give us extra credit for going? My professor for my [so and so] class is giving us extra credit." I certainly support academic freedom and would never want to encroach on how other professors run their classes, but in my opinion, offering excessive opportunities for extra credit indiscriminately just to fill seats seems to feed the problem. Students expect to be able to make up for slacking off by attending some campus event that might not even have anything to do with the course or its student learning outcomes.

The Real Problem: Academic Underperformance

Although problematic in its own right, this inordinate use of extra credit is still just a symptom of a bigger problem—academic underperformance. Simply put, academic underperformance in college occurs when students work below their capability. According to Ludovici (2015), there are no official statistics from the U.S. Department of Education or local colleges on the prevalence of academic underperformance, but the end result can be seen in how many and how quickly students graduate. According to the most recent data from the U.S.

Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 41% of undergraduate students seeking a bachelor's degree at 4-year institutions fail to graduate within six years (150% normal time of program completion), which is the standard measure developed to satisfy the Student Right-to-Know Act and Higher Education Act (McFarland et al., 2017). For community college students at 2-year postsecondary institutions, the situation is much worse—a staggering 71% fail to transfer or graduate with a certificate or associate's degree within three years, which is the standard 150% normal time for program completion (McFarland et al., 2017). Although Mt. San Antonio College's transfer and graduation rate of 37% is higher than the national average of 29% for community college students, 63% of Mt. SAC students still fail to transfer or graduate within the standard measure of three years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

Admittedly, numerous factors might account for why so many students never graduate (or take longer to graduate), and graduation rates are not the only indicator of student success. However, when coupled with numerous accounts of students readily admitting that they are not working to their full potential, these dismal graduation rates demonstrate that academic underperformance is a serious problem. Although there may be multiple causes for academic underperformance, one often over-looked reason for academic underperformance is insufficient academic motivation. As Rowell and Hong (2013) put it, “lack of motivation leads not only to disengagement with school in general, but to underachievement and dropping out of school.”

Students readily admit that they struggle with academic motivation, particularly in light of all the distractions from their smartphones, texting, social media, etc. For example, 75% of students ($N = 137$) from my current classes reported that they “struggle with academic motivation” on an informal Google Docs survey created for this sabbatical proposal. Academic

motivation is a complex construct as it contains various components, including beliefs, goals, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and values (Rowell & Hong, 2013). According to Seemiller and Grace (2016), today's generation of college students has a particular set of values that distinguishes them from earlier generations, largely as a result of advances in technology, smartphones, and the internet. Values are the things that people find important, the things people ultimately devote their time to, so they are inherently tied to motivation. Along these lines, Dr. Ben Carson (2013), in his book, *America the Beautiful: Rediscovering What Made This Nation Great*, offers an interesting viewpoint that can account for the apparent lack of motivation and subsequent academic underperformance that characterize American college students today—Americans no longer value education; instead, they value entertainment. Although Carson was not specifically addressing the issue of academic motivation in his book, the idea that American college students' lack of academic motivation is a result of an inordinate preoccupation with entertainment is quite compelling, especially when considered with findings from various studies regarding this issue. For example, according to a study in 2015 by Common Sense Media, on average, American teenagers spend about nine hours a day using media for entertainment purposes, excluding time spent at school or for homework (cited in Sasse, 2017). Psychologists, Philip Zimbardo and Nikita Coulombe (2016), estimate that young American males have played more than 14,000 hours of video games by the time they turn twenty-one and Sasse (2017) states, "More and more young American men are opting out of higher education, work, and marriage in favor of electronic amusements." According to Twenge (2017), high school seniors spend an average of six hours a day on their smartphones, texting, gaming, surfing the web, checking and posting to social media, etc. and the average American teenager checks their phone more than eighty times a day.

This apparent obsession with entertainment, technology, and leisure has numerous consequences for education. Every three years, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development obtains global rankings for academic performance in reading, math, and science by administering a worldwide assessment to fifteen year-olds in seventy-two countries. According to the latest results, although the United States is among the world's biggest per-student spenders on education, it ranked twenty-third in reading, thirty-fifth in math, and twenty-sixth in science, far below many Asian countries that have fewer resources, such as Singapore, South Korea, Vietnam, China, and Japan (OECD, 2017). According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, only 18% of American eighth-graders score "proficient or better" in U.S. history, 27% score "proficient or better" in geography, and 23% score "proficient or better" in civics. Thus, "for more than two decades, our students' civic and historical knowledge has been superficial at best" (Sasse, 2017). Furthermore, despite tremendous wealth and resources, the United States has fallen from second to sixteenth in college graduation rates in a study involving twenty-nine developed nations (Ludovici, 2015). Based on these findings, it is clear that Americans value entertainment over education. In fact, 90% of students from my current classes ($N=137$) reported that they "believe Americans value entertainment more than education" on an informal Google Docs survey created for this sabbatical proposal. This disparity in values and deficiency in academic motivation seems to be leading to an epidemic of delinquency in academic performance among American college students today.

However, college campuses are not oblivious to the problem of academic underperformance, as most colleges have a plethora of resources to help students succeed. For example, according to the Mt. San Antonio College website, Mt. SAC offers more than 25 free

programs to help students succeed in college (e.g., ACES, ARISE, ASPIRE, BRIDGE, DREAM, EOPS, and Mountie Vets to name a few). Different programs emphasize different factors to help students succeed, such as learning communities, enrollment services, tutoring, counseling, specialized workshops on various topics, etc. However, to my knowledge, none of these programs specifically focuses on academic motivation. Granted, certain workshops might address academic motivation within the greater context of their particular learning objectives, and academic counselors undoubtedly discuss academic motivation with their students during individual counseling sessions, but empirical research shows that students may be reluctant to seek counseling or attend a workshop for a variety of reasons, including fear, shame, stigma, or merely a lack of convenience (Marsh & Wilcoxon, 2015). In sum, students readily admit that they struggle with academic motivation and research consistently demonstrates that academic motivation is an extremely important factor in student success (Dembo & Seli, 2011). However, no known programs at Mt. San Antonio College specifically focus on enhancing academic motivation. Although academic motivation might be addressed briefly in various workshops or individual counseling sessions, students might not be willing or even able to attend workshops or counseling for any number of reasons. Therefore, a convenient, accessible, program that specifically aims to enhance student motivation seems warranted.

The Student Success Academy

The purpose of the proposed independent study sabbatical is to create an online closed-captioned motivational video training program for academic excellence—*The Student Success Academy*. This online closed-captioned motivational video training program will cover various attributes (adapted from empirical research on motivation, achievement, and success) that promote academic excellence in college, and success in life more generally, such as: (1) Purpose,

(2) Responsibility, (3) Belief, (4) Action, (5) Mindset, (6) Collaboration, (7) Risk, (8) Vision, (9) Grit, and (10) Resilience. In order to maintain student attention and increase the chances of repetitive viewing or listening, each video will ideally be between four to five minutes. The videos will be visually captivating, containing images and scenes from popular culture or original footage in order to ensure relevance and enhance entertainment value, particularly in light of American college students' aforementioned preoccupation with entertainment. The main feature of each video will be a motivational speech promoting the particular attribute of that episode, over-layed with inspirational music to enhance dramatic effect and captivate the viewers' emotions as a means of further enhancing motivation. In order to comply with federal and state regulations, all videos will be closed-captioned using video editing software such as Camtasia or through services such as 3C Media Solutions. As a frame of reference for what each episode of *The Student Success Academy* will be like, please see the video entitled, *STUDY HARD—Motivational Video for Success & Studying*, at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrWOSZrxaUg>

Potential Uses for *The Student Success Academy*

The Student Success Academy can be used in numerous ways. Because the videos will be posted on YouTube, students (or anyone else) can access them at their leisure whenever or wherever they want, for whatever reason they desire. Ideally, watching these videos will become a normal part of people's routines so that each particular attribute will be cultivated through force of habit. For example, on a personal note, I usually start each day with videos similar to those that will be created for *The Student Success Academy* in order to motivate myself for whatever goals or responsibilities I may have on any given day. Initially, I might sit and watch a certain video if there is a particular issue I'm dealing with. Then eventually, I usually play these

videos in the background while I am getting ready in order to motivate myself with the proper mood and mindset to get started. I have found this process to be extremely helpful, particularly if I am feeling lazy or unmotivated to go to the gym or exercise. In fact, this process is what initially inspired me to create *The Student Success Academy* because I thought, “If this can work for physical training, why can’t it also work for intellectual training?!”.

The Student Success Academy videos can also be used as a supplement to any programs, services, or workshops offered at Mt. SAC. For instance, as mentioned earlier, academic counselors undoubtedly address motivation with students during individual counseling sessions. Because the videos will be no longer than five minutes each, counselors might even watch a video with their students in session as the need arises. They can then discuss students’ reactions to the motivational speeches from the videos, using the principles contained therein to encourage, comfort, challenge, and/or inspire students in that very moment. For example, perhaps a student is struggling academically because they are feeling depressed over a recent break-up. The student might watch the video on Resilience, which is defined as the ability to “bounce back” after difficult times, and discuss their reaction with their counselor, either in session or as homework. The same format can also be used in any workshop, as relevancy permits, for programs such as ACES, ARISE, ASPIRE, BRIDGE, etc. or for various student club meetings. Alternatively, instead of being used merely as a supplement, any particular episode of *The Student Success Academy* can be used as the major topic or student learning outcome of a service or workshop, since each attribute is significant and substantive in its own right.

In a similar fashion, professors may incorporate *The Student Success Academy* into their course curriculum in order to enhance student motivation and academic performance. Even if *The Student Success Academy* might not be directly related to the particular course or its student

learning outcomes, it is still applicable because it promotes academic performance by cultivating various attributes necessary for success in college and life more generally. Indeed, professors might even offer extra credit to students for watching a particular video, as relevancy permits. For example, perhaps a student constantly has excuses for not completing their work and they blame the professor for being rigid and “giving [them] a bad grade on [their] paper”, ignoring the fact that they did not follow instructions and their writing was filled with grammatical errors. Despite their apparent sense of entitlement, which is more characteristic of today’s students than previous generations (Twenge, 2014; Twenge & Campbell, 2010), the professor is willing to offer them extra credit. Instead of allowing them to attend *Puttin’ On the Hits* for extra credit, the professor might assign them to watch the episode on Responsibility, which emphasizes the importance of taking full responsibility for getting the things you want out of life, rather than expecting things to be handed to you on a silver platter. By watching the video and writing a reflection paper on how the principles might relate to their situation, the student might have a breakthrough in personal accountability because the video’s motivational speech might be more inspiring and thus, more effective than a direct reprimand.

The Student Success Academy can also be used for various research purposes as it has widespread implications for theory, research, and practice in several areas of inquiry, such as college student development, academic motivation, academic achievement or performance, student success, instructional technology, personality psychology, positive psychology, attribution theory, goal setting, habit formation, etc. Indeed, numerous empirical methodologies can be utilized to examine different research questions, such as experimental methods employing randomized controlled trials. For example, it would be relatively easy to quantitatively examine the effectiveness of *The Student Success Academy* on any dependent variable, such as academic

performance, with an independent samples *t*-test or ANOVA. Qualitative analyses could also be employed to assess participants' perceptions of individual episodes or *The Student Success Academy* as a whole. If any such research were to be conducted and presented at professional conferences or published in academic journals, it would bring greater recognition and prestige to Mt. San Antonio College's already outstanding reputation as "The College of Champions".

Along these lines, *The Student Success Academy* can also be used as a marketing tool to bring further recognition to Mt. SAC by including links on the college website. It is no exaggeration to suggest that *The Student Success Academy* has potential for worldwide use and recognition. After all, the YouTube channels that it is modeled after (e.g., *Motivation 2 Study*, *MotivationGrid*, and *Be Inspired*) have anywhere from hundreds of thousands to millions of subscribers all around the world and there's no reason *The Student Success Academy* could not accomplish the same, if not more! However, I also recognize that achieving such status will take some time, and the first step is actually creating *The Student Success Academy*, which is a formidable and time-consuming task in and of itself.

Timeline of the Activities

One of the biggest challenges I have had during this process is narrowing down my ideas for a sabbatical project. I have attended three sabbatical orientation meetings during the past few years and one of the most consistent recommendations from the committee has been to develop a realistic project that can be completed within a reasonable timeframe. Originally, I had planned to create fifteen videos, but I consulted with Dr. Joshua Knapp, a psychology professor here at Mt. SAC who took formal classes in video production, and he strongly encouraged me to reduce the extent of my project, particularly because I do not have any experience with video production and will need to devote a tremendous amount of time to experimenting and learning the craft. I

also consulted with Dr. David Lane, a philosophy professor here at Mt. SAC who has extensive experience producing videos for his YouTube channel, *neuralsurfer*. Dr. Lane adamantly validated Dr. Knapp's caveats and further advised me to limit my videos to "no longer than five minutes maximum", in order to maintain viewer interest and avoid over-extending myself with the extremely tedious nature of video production and editing. After seriously considering their feedback, I decided to take their advice and limit my project to ten videos with an approximate duration of four to five minutes for each video, and have developed a tentative timeline for the proposed project below.

Even though this is not a formal study sabbatical proposal, please note that much of the Fall 2018 semester will be devoted to conducting research for the content of the videos and learning various aspects of video production. I am not planning to officially register in any formal classes because there are numerous video production tutorials available online. Furthermore, although time-consuming, much of video production is self-taught through trial-and-error experimentation. As Ludovici (2015) stated, "learning at its core, is independent in nature and up to one's self." Nevertheless, I have created a tentative proposed curriculum based upon relevant topics that are normally covered in formal video production classes in order to provide structure and clarity for the committee. During the Spring 2019 semester, there might not be as much written detail about the proposed activities because most of the time will be spent actually creating the videos through trial-and-error experimentation, but I have written brief descriptions of the expected tasks to provide structure and clarity for the committee.

Fall 2018

Week 1 (Aug. 27 – Aug. 31):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = Hardware: Cameras, Lighting, Audio Equipment, etc.

- Research Topic = *Purpose*: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Write motivational speech and script for *Purpose* video

Week 2 (Sep. 3 – Sep. 7):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = Software: Camtasia, Movavi, PremierePro, iMovie, Final Cut Pro, etc.
- Research Topic = *Responsibility*: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Write motivational speech and script for *Responsibility* video

Week 3 (Sep.10 – Sep. 14):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = 10 Tips for Beginning Filmmakers
- Research Topic = *Belief*: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Write motivational speech and script for *Belief* video

Week 4 (Sep. 17 – Sep. 21):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = Introduction to Filmmaking and Video Production
- Research Topic = *Action*: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Write motivational speech and script for *Action* video

Week 5 (Sep. 24 – Sep. 28):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = Lighting, Camera Angles, and Visual Effects
- Research Topic = *Mindset*: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Write motivational speech and script for *Mindset* video

Week 6 (Oct. 1 – Oct. 5):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = The Basics of Recording Audio for Digital Video

- Research Topic = *Collaboration*: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Write motivational speech and script for *Collaboration* video

Week 7 (Oct. 8 – Oct. 12):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = Cinematography Basics: Shooting Great Videos
- Research Topic = *Risk*: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Write motivational speech and script for *Risk* video

Week 8 (Oct. 15 – Oct. 19):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = Video Editing Basics: Timelines, Importing Footage, Splicing Scenes, Transitions, etc.
- Research Topic = *Vision*: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Write motivational speech and script for *Vision* video

Week 9 (Oct. 20 – Oct. 24):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = Post-Production Basics: Soundtrack Editing, Closed-Captioning, Titles, Credits, etc.
- Research Topic = *Grit*: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Write motivational speech and script for *Grit* video; Search Cyber Monday deals for any necessary equipment

Week 10 (Oct. 27 – Nov. 2):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = Distribution Basics: Uploading, Posting, Sharing, and Marketing, etc.
- Research Topic = *Resilience*: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Write motivational speech and script for *Resilience* video

Week 11 (Nov. 5 – Nov. 9):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = YouTube Basics for Beginners
- Research Topic = Success and Personal Development: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edit motivational speeches and scripts for *Purpose* and *Responsibility* videos

Week 12 (Nov. 12 – Nov. 16):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = How to Start a YouTube Channel: Teach Your Passion
- Research Topic = Success and Personal Development (cont.): read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edit motivational speeches and scripts for *Belief* and *Action* videos

Week 13 (Nov. 19 – Nov. 23):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = YouTube Success Guide
- Research Topic = College Student Success: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edit motivational speeches and scripts for *Mindset* and *Collaboration* videos

Week 14 (Nov. 26 – Nov.30):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = Ten Key Steps to Improving YouTube Search Results
- Research Topic = College Student Success (cont.): read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edit motivational speeches and scripts for *Risk* and *Vision* videos

Week 15 (Dec. 3 – Dec. 7):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = Shareable Content: The Psychology Behind Viral Videos

- Research Topic = Academic Underperformance: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Edit motivational speeches and scripts for *Grit* and *Resilience* videos

Week 16 (Dec. 10 – Dec. 14):

- Video Production Tutorial Topic = YouTube Thumbnails: How I Got 116k Subscribers and 11,000,000+ Views
- Research Topic = Academic Motivation: read books and articles, watch videos, access websites, etc.
- Tasks = Final review of motivational speeches and scripts for all videos

Spring 2019

Week 1 (Feb. 25 – March 1):

- *Purpose* Video Pre-Production: research background music, sound effects, video scenes, stock images, transitions, special effects, etc.
- *Purpose* Video Production: storyboarding, filming, scene editing, special effects, soundtrack editing, closed-captioning, titles, credits, thumbnails, etc.

Week 2 (March 4 – March 8):

- *Responsibility* Video Pre-Production: research background music, sound effects, video scenes, stock images, transitions, special effects, etc.
- *Responsibility* Video Production: storyboarding, filming, scene editing, special effects, soundtrack editing, closed-captioning, titles, credits, thumbnails, etc.

Week 3 (March 11 – March 15):

- *Belief* Video Pre-Production: research background music, sound effects, video scenes, stock images, transitions, special effects, etc.

- *Belief* Video Production: storyboarding, filming, scene editing, special effects, soundtrack editing, closed-captioning, titles, credits, thumbnails, etc.

Week 4 (March 18 – March 22):

- *Action* Video Pre-Production: research background music, sound effects, video scenes, stock images, transitions, special effects, etc.
- *Action* Video Production: storyboarding, filming, scene editing, special effects, soundtrack editing, closed-captioning, titles, credits, thumbnails, etc.

Week 5 (March 25 – March 29):

- *Mindset* Video Pre-Production: research background music, sound effects, video scenes, stock images, transitions, special effects, etc.
- *Mindset* Video Production: storyboarding, filming, scene editing, special effects, soundtrack editing, closed-captioning, titles, credits, thumbnails, etc.

Week 6 (April 1 – April 5):

- *Collaboration* Video Pre-Production: research background music, sound effects, video scenes, stock images, transitions, special effects, etc.
- *Collaboration* Video Production: storyboarding, filming, scene editing, special effects, soundtrack editing, closed-captioning, titles, credits, thumbnails, etc.

Week 7 (April 8 – April 12):

- *Risk* Video Pre-Production: research background music, sound effects, video scenes, stock images, transitions, special effects, etc.
- *Risk* Video Production: storyboarding, filming, scene editing, special effects, soundtrack editing, closed-captioning, titles, credits, thumbnails, etc.

Week 8 (April 15 – April 19):

- *Vision* Video Pre-Production: research background music, sound effects, video scenes, stock images, transitions, special effects, etc.
- *Vision* Video Production: storyboarding, filming, scene editing, special effects, soundtrack editing, closed-captioning, titles, credits, thumbnails, etc.

Week 9 (April 22 – April 26):

- *Grit* Video Pre-Production: research background music, sound effects, video scenes, stock images, transitions, special effects, etc.
- *Grit* Video Production: storyboarding, filming, scene editing, special effects, soundtrack editing, closed-captioning, titles, credits, thumbnails, etc.

Week 10 (April 29 – May 3):

- *Resilience* Video Pre-Production: research background music, sound effects, video scenes, stock images, transitions, special effects, etc.
- *Resilience* Video Production: storyboarding, filming, scene editing, special effects, soundtrack editing, closed-captioning, titles, credits, thumbnails, etc.

Week 11 (May 6 – May 10):

- *Purpose* Video Post-Production: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution, etc.
- *Responsibility* Video Post-Production: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution, etc.

Week 12 (May 13 – May 17):

- *Belief* Video Post-Production: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution, etc.

- *Action* Video Post-Production: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution, etc.

Week 13 (May 20 – May 24):

- *Mindset* Video Post-Production: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution, etc.
- *Collaboration* Video Post-Production: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution, etc.

Week 14 (May 27 – May 31):

- *Risk* Video Post-Production: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution, etc.
- *Vision* Video Post-Production: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution, etc.

Week 15 (June 3 – June 7):

- *Grit* Video Post-Production: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution, etc.
- *Resilience* Video Post-Production: uploading, posting, sharing, marketing and distribution, etc.

Week 16 (June 10 – June 14):

- Final review of pre-production, production, and post-production for all videos
- Prepare, write, edit, and finalize sabbatical report for committee review
- That's a wrap!

Statement of Anticipated Value and Benefit to:

The College

One of the most unique and beneficial aspects of *The Student Success Academy* is its universal value and utility to professors and students from any and every academic discipline.

Although every sabbatical project has value in its own right, most sabbatical projects are discipline or even course specific. As a result, their applicability is somewhat limited to the particular discipline or course for which they are created. However, *The Student Success Academy* transcends all academic boundaries because it addresses the widespread problem of academic underperformance that professors and students from all disciplines struggle with. Therefore, *The Student Success Academy* provides tremendous value to the entire college because it helps to fulfill the goals and strategic objectives of the 2015-2017 Mt. SAC Strategic Plan, which “have their origin in proposals from teams across campus—departments and committees—and from the President’s Advisory Council” (retrieved Nov. 26, 2017 from http://www.mtsac.edu/about/overview/goals/2015-17_Strategic_Plan_rev.pdf). Furthermore, by encouraging the development of various attributes that promote academic excellence in college and success in life more generally, *The Student Success Academy* directly supports College Goal #1 “The college will prepare students for success through the development and support of exemplary programs and services” of Theme A “To Advance Excellence and Student Achievement” from the 2015-2017 Mt. SAC Strategic Plan.

Along these lines, *The Student Success Academy* directly supports the mission and vision statements of Mt. San Antonio College. According to the Mt. SAC website, “The mission of Mt. San Antonio College is to support all students in achieving their educational goals in an environment of academic excellence. Specifically, the College is committed to providing quality education, services, and workforce training so that students become productive members of a diverse, sustainable, global society. The College pledges to prepare students for lifelong learning through the mastery of basic skills, the achievement of associate degrees and certificates, and the completion of career and transfer pathways” (abbreviated) (retrieved Nov. 26, 2017 from

<http://www.mtsac.edu/about/overview/mission-and-goals.html>). By cultivating various attributes from *The Student Success Academy*, students will fulfill Mt. SAC's mission by developing an appreciation for lifelong learning and enhancing their probability of transferring or graduating with their certificate or associate's degrees.

According to the Mt. SAC vision statement, "Mt. San Antonio College strives to be regarded as one of the premier community colleges in the nation. We will be viewed as a leader in community college teaching, programs, and services. As a premier community college, we will provide access to quality educational programs and services, focusing on student success within a climate of integrity and respect. We will earn this reputation by consistently exceeding the expectations of our students, our staff, and our community." Although all other colleges have particular programs and services to help students succeed (e.g., tutoring, disability services, etc.), to my knowledge, no other institution has anything like *The Student Success Academy*, which is extremely practical, relevant, accessible, and convenient. As such, it will help Mt. SAC fulfill its vision to "be regarded as one of the premier community colleges in the nation" by equipping students with the motivation and characterological attributes necessary for success in a diverse, competitive, global economy.

The Department

In an informal Google Docs survey created for this sabbatical proposal, 93% ($N=15$) of full-time and adjunct professors from the psychology department reported that their students "struggle with academic motivation" and 80% believed that their students "value entertainment more than education." Therefore, *The Student Success Academy* would be an extremely valuable resource for the psychology department because professors can incorporate it into their courses in order to enhance academic motivation and improve student success. In fact, when asked if it

would be helpful to have videos like *STUDY HARD—Motivational Video for Success & Studying*, which *The Student Success Academy* will be modeled after, ten out of twelve professors who responded said “Yes.” When asked to explain, one professor wrote:

Many students seem like they're just "going through the motions" when it comes to their education. While some are self-motivated to achieve/succeed, others often need additional resources to facilitate their success. Videos such as this can help put their goals & dreams in the proper perspective, and realize the consequences of not taking their education seriously. Although the Mt. SAC Counseling dept. provides courses related to student success, it certainly won't hurt for other professors to reiterate those messages as well.

In addition to the practical application of enhancing academic motivation, *The Student Success Academy* can also be used as a pedagogical supplement because it is related to various topics from the course outline of record for PSYC 1A: Introduction to Psychology, such as learning, psychological development, motivation and emotion, health, stress, and coping, social psychology, and personality psychology, to name a few. *The Student Success Academy* is also directly related to the curriculum of other psychology courses offered in our department, such as PSYC 5: Psychology of Reasoning and Problem Solving, PSYC 14: Developmental Psychology, PSYC 20: Introduction to Social Psychology, and PSYC 33: Psychology of Effective Living. Therefore, *The Student Success Academy* can benefit the psychology department in multiple ways: pragmatically and pedagogically.

The Students

Because the major feature of *The Student Success Academy* involves motivational videos, the most obvious benefit to students is that it can enhance their academic motivation and performance, thereby improving their grades and ability to graduate. If they do indeed graduate, it can literally transform their lives. For example, every single year during Mt. San Antonio College's commencement ceremony, Dr. Audrey Yamagata-Noji, Vice-President of Student

Services at Mt. SAC, shares inspiring stories of students who have transformed their lives through the power of education. These students are now graduating because somewhere along their journey, they learned to set their education as a priority and did whatever it took to succeed. For example, many of them are returning students who have overcome insurmountable obstacles, such as homelessness, death of family members, drug addictions, incarceration, diagnoses of cancer or other severe medical conditions, etc. By truly valuing their education, these students were able to overcome significant obstacles in their lives and graduate by developing many of the attributes from *The Student Success Academy* on their own accord.

In a similar fashion then, because *The Student Success Academy* promotes the cultivation of various attributes related to success in life more generally, it is no exaggeration to suggest that students can transform their lives by developing these virtues through force of habit if they repetitively watch or listen to the videos and repetitiously practice the principles contained therein. Indeed, Duhigg (2014) has found that the development of so-called “keystone habits” like the ones required to cultivate the attributes from *The Student Success Academy* can lead to major changes in other areas of life. And 87% of students in my current classes reported that motivational videos like the ones *The Student Success Academy* will be modeled after would “help them succeed in college” on an informal Google Docs survey created for this proposal.

The Professor

According to Maslach and Leiter (1997), one of the major components of job burnout is a sense of professional ineffectiveness. To be completely honest, I love what I do as a professor and don't necessarily believe I am experiencing job burnout, but I must admit that I have been struggling with a growing sense of professional ineffectiveness lately, even though I have received several awards since I started teaching here at Mt. SAC, including two Outstanding

Educator Awards from the University of California, Irvine, the Educator of Distinction Award from Mt. SAC, and the President's Award for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching and Learning from Mt. SAC. Despite these accolades, I have been feeling more ineffective because of stories like Raoul, the student requesting an inordinate amount of extra credit whom I wrote about in the beginning of this proposal. These types of stories are all-too-common and unfortunately, seem to be growing in prevalence these days, regardless of how much I try to empower students to take full responsibility for their own success. At first, I thought maybe I was just being cynical, but anecdotal evidence from various colleagues, personal experience, and a plethora of evidence from empirical research undeniably demonstrates that this newer generation of students has a more relaxed work ethic and greater sense of entitlement than previous generations (Twenge, 2014; Twenge & Campbell, 2010; Sasse, 2017). For example, one study found that a third of undergraduates believed they deserved a B just for attending class and that the professor should agree to reschedule an exam if it interfered with their vacation plans (Greenberger et al., 2008).

In light of the impact that this relaxed work ethic and greater sense of entitlement has had on academic motivation and performance among my own students, I have been much more adamant about promoting a strong work ethic, personal responsibility, and an intrinsic appreciation for lifelong learning and education by incorporating mini-motivational speeches into my classes while lecturing. While many of my students have responded favorably to my passionate exhortations, others have responded with apathy or resistance, which has been particularly draining because I sometimes feel like my attempts to motivate students are futile in light of their insatiable appetite for entertainment, leisure, social media, or the "easy way out". Therefore, I believe one of the major ways I will benefit from a sabbatical is a renewed sense of

passion from a time of retreat, restoration, and replenishment. According to the Salary Leave Orientation Meeting on Monday, October 23, 2017, the major purpose of a sabbatical is “to provide opportunity for continued professional growth and new or renewed intellectual achievement through study, research, writing, and/or travel.”

This is another reason why I chose *The Student Success Academy* as my independent study sabbatical project. Although I am seeking some respite from my basic assignment duties in the classroom, I certainly am NOT seeking a respite from working. I would get bored if I didn't work because I find a great sense of purpose, joy, and achievement in working. Therefore, I wanted to choose a project that would directly address the problems of academic underperformance and lack of motivation that are plaguing our students today. By studying this phenomenon in depth, and more importantly, doing something to improve it, I will benefit from this sabbatical project by gaining a deeper sense of purpose and accomplishment with work that will actually make a difference for my students, which will greatly enhance my teaching effectiveness when I return to the classroom.

In addition, the knowledge and video production skills that I will gain from creating *The Student Success Academy* will provide numerous benefits to myself, the students, the department, and the college because I will be able to use these skills to produce videos for all of my other classes, thereby increasing my pedagogical repertoire and effectiveness. This knowledge and skill in video production will be particularly beneficial to the college as it increases its online course offerings in order to meet the growing needs of students for advances in instructional technology. Thus, this independent study sabbatical project provides tremendous value to myself, the students, the department, and the college in countless, powerful, ways— personally, academically, and professionally.

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Evidence of Support from Colleagues

November 28, 2017

Dear Sabbatical Leave Committee:

I am writing to support Dr. Gene Ano's sabbatical application for the 2018-2019 academic year. I have been encouraging him to take a sabbatical ever since he mentioned his interest a few years ago because I know it will yield meaningful benefits for him as well as for our students. A sabbatical is an excellent opportunity for Gene to focus on his own professional growth and development.

In addition, I am confident that Gene's sabbatical project will make a valuable contribution to our students, our department, and our campus. He is often sought out for support and personal advice, and I have often observed him encouraging students. Gene's project, "The Student Success Academy", addresses an often neglected aspect of academic performance—motivation. Gene has a challenging, yet effective and compassionate way of motivating students, so I am confident that his "Student Success Academy" videos will reflect his style and be helpful for our students. I can definitely relate to the rationale behind his idea that students have difficulty staying motivated because they are distracted with their cell phones, texting, social media, and such, and believe the videos will be of great value to the Mt. SAC community.

We as a department are prepared to cover his teaching and departmental responsibilities. Therefore, I give him my highest recommendation without reservation. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at Ext. 4442 or via e-mail at clouie@mtsac.edu.

Sincerely,



Charis Louie, Ph.D.
Co-Chair and Professor
Department of Psychology

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November 22, 2017

Dear Salary and Leaves Committee:

I am writing this letter of recommendation in support of Dr. Gene Ano's application for an independent study sabbatical for the 2018-2019 academic year in the strongest possible terms, without reservation.

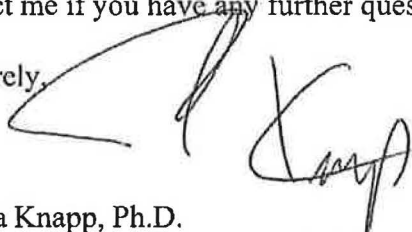
Gene has been a very valuable member of the Psychology Department since he started working here in the fall of 2006. He is a dedicated colleague, very passionate about teaching and student success. Many of my students who have taken his classes tell me how they appreciate his commitment to students. It is very evident that Gene is dedicated to student success.

Therefore, it is no surprise that his project proposal, the Student Success Academy, aims to help students succeed both in and outside of the classroom. I have spoken with Gene extensively about his goals for his sabbatical project and I believe this project will provide a very valuable resource for students and faculty in the Psychology Department and the greater Mt. SAC campus community.

As previously mentioned, Dr. Ano's project will address student motivation. Throughout the course of my career, I have found that problems with motivation are often a major barrier to success for my students. Dr. Ano's project seeks to directly address this problem by creating videos in key areas that impede the motivation and progress of students. Each video is designed to address a different topic area related to motivation and the entire project will be a great resource for students, faculty, and the college. I am excited about providing this resource to my students.

I have spoken with Gene numerous times concerning his project. During the course of our discussions, I strongly encouraged Gene to scale back the scope of his original idea. As the committee members are likely aware, video production is extremely time consuming. There is also a fairly steep learning curve to creating instructional videos when an individual does not have formal training. Therefore, I believe that the current scope of Gene's project strikes the proper balance between the needs of the project and the amount of time necessary for Dr. Ano to successfully complete the project. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Joshua Knapp, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Psychology
Mt. San Antonio College
E-mail: jknapp@mtsac.edu
Extension: 4428

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November 28, 2017

Dear Sabbatical Committee,

I am writing this letter of recommendation for Gene Ano, who is applying for a sabbatical next year (2018-2019). I am the director of the ARISE program on campus and Gene has given workshops for our students and sat on a few panels throughout the years, so I know he is dedicated to helping our students succeed. The ARISE program provides help to Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) students looking for a place to belong, so we place a big emphasis on our learning communities to help students succeed. A lot of our students come to attend Mt. SAC from abroad, so they often get homesick, which can affect their performance in school. Because Gene's sabbatical project focuses on student motivation, I believe it will be very helpful for our students.

I also really like that Gene's project involves numerous videos. For the past few years, I worked with our students to help them produce their own "Digital Stories", media projects based upon their real life experiences, significant events, and important people, and the intersections of these within education. Through these projects, I have seen how helpful and powerful videos can be to teach and inspire students. Although creating these videos was an intense process, from story-boarding to post-production, our students grew so much from the experience and I know Gene will too. I believe his sabbatical project will be very helpful for our students in the ARISE program and the whole Mt. SAC community. Please feel free to call me at ext. 5905 or e-mail me at acuenza@mtsac.edu if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aida Cuenza-Uvas".

Aida Cuenza-Uvas, M.S.

Director, ARISE Program

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November 27, 2017

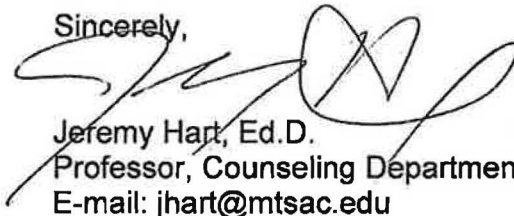
Dear Salary and Leaves Committee:

Hello. My name is Dr. Jeremy Hart and I work as an academic counselor here at Mt. San Antonio College. I am writing to support Dr. Gene "Gin" Ano's application for a sabbatical during the upcoming 2018 – 2019 year. I have known Gene for quite a while and have always known him to be dedicated to student success. For example, Gene has served as a faculty mentor to students in the ASPIRE program, which is specifically designed to provide support to African-Americans and other diverse students in order to increase their chances for success, transfer, and graduation. As the designated counselor for the ASPIRE program, Gene and I have collaborated on various projects throughout the years. I also served as a guest speaker for Gene when he was the faculty advisor for the Psychology Club a few semesters ago.

Whenever I talk to students who have taken Gene's classes, they always say positive things about him, so I always refer students to Gene whenever they need a psychology class. Many of the students I work with have difficulty navigating the college system, so I know I can always rely on Gene to help them succeed and "get to the next level." That's why I am excited about giving my recommendation for Gene's sabbatical project, the student success academy, an online motivational video training program for academic excellence.

In my experience as an academic counselor, I see students struggling with numerous issues that affect their academic performance. However, whenever I get to the bottom of things, after I get past all their excuses and reasons they think they are failing, it always comes down to issues of motivation and priorities. Therefore, I think Gene's project is a great idea! Having a set of success videos that students can watch at any time would be so convenient and would help students who might otherwise "fall through the cracks". Plus, all of the students I work with watch YouTube videos, so I know this is something they would be interested in. Gene showed me an example of the types of videos he is planning to create, so in addition to them being relevant and helpful, I think they'll be "really cool" because you can just watch one really quickly whenever you're struggling and it can give you that little "push" you might need in that moment. You can even listen to them in the car while you're driving. I know Gene will give this project his best efforts, and he has a very high standard of quality. Therefore, I give Gene my highest recommendation.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Hart, Ed.D.
Professor, Counseling Department
E-mail: jhart@mtsac.edu

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