

The College President recommends the acceptance of Kimberly Hurt's sabbatical report.

### **Sabbatical Report Supplement – Fall 2020**

Thank you for the opportunity to take a sabbatical in Fall 2020. When I applied, I was working towards my MBA taking one or two classes a term towards completion. During the Fall 2020 term, I was able to take three MBA courses and start on a fourth, which included my capstone course for the program. I pursued my MBA to enhance my credibility as an instructor and increase my value to the institution and communities we serve.

The pursuit of the MBA improves both the business and accounting programs with new ideas and improvements. It also strengthened my professional ties to the academic community as I learned from other instructors and shared thoughts on improving online courses.

During the term, the three courses I took were Accounting Theory, Tax Planning and Strategies, and Strategy Innovation and Integration. While I have taught and taken various accounting classes in the last twenty-plus years, the Advanced Theory class went beyond general knowledge. It concentrated on the whys and hows of accounting. We were able to delve into the development of accounting and the pursuit of the conceptual framework. We then took this knowledge and applied it to two companies. We were able to compare and contrast these two companies' financial statements and notes. I plan to take the project used and modify it for use in my intermediate accounting class.

I have always had a love/hate relationship with taxes. The tax planning and strategies course took my knowledge of taxes and expanded into the planning phase. I analyzed retirement plan saving options, examined the importance of ethical tax practices, and learned the tax consequences of different business succession alternatives. I look forward to adding this knowledge to the tax classes at Central Community College.

The most beneficial, hardest, most time-consuming course was the Strategy Innovation and Integration course. This course was considered our capstone course for the entire program and built on all the knowledge we learned through every class we took. We analyzed businesses and their internal and external strategies on competition, global diversity, and diversification throughout this course. We took that knowledge and ran a company to see how successful we could be in the business environment. I am proud to say our company did well, and while we did not finish first, we did achieve a second-place finish.

I learned many excellent materials, not just in these three classes but in all the classes I took throughout the program. However, I would say my biggest take away is what makes a great online course. Like any program, you have professors that are great at what they do and other professors students tolerate. The key takeaways to a great online course are as follows.

- Make sure the learning objectives are clear and understandable
- Layout deadlines and send constant reminders

- The deadlines should be listed in the syllabus, throughout the course, and in a weekly announcement
- Assessments – do not always need to be a quiz or test.
  - Use a project, a paper, or a discussion board post to assess what your students know.
- Videos – students love videos.
  - Whether they are discussing an overview of the week or presenting complicated materials, it makes the instructor feel present
- Schedule virtual office hours to meet your student's needs.
- Discussion Boards – be present daily.
  - The classes I got the most out of were the ones that the Professor was always present and digging deeper into the materials.
  - And yes, you can have discussion boards in accounting.
- Be sure the material presented has a purpose and is not just busywork.
  - Students do know the difference.

While I am sure there are many other concepts for great online courses, these were my key takeaways. Several of these concepts were already being used in my classes. However, I plan to expand on them. I utilized the month of December to start updating one of my courses. I started with the Capstone course, which currently includes five projects. I changed/enhanced three of those projects and added weekly discussion board posts to add content and materials to the class. This will also allow for more engagement between myself and the student and student to student.

I am looking forward to enhancing my other courses throughout the next year. I plan to maximize student success by improving retention in the classroom and discovering ways to motivate and engage students in their classes better.

At the time of this report, I have six weeks left of one course before I can successfully graduate with my MBA with accounting and tax concentrations. My official end date will be March 6, 2021.

Again, I truly appreciate the opportunity the sabbatical afforded me, and I look forward to applying the knowledge as I continue to teach.

Sincerely,

Kimberly J Hurt, CPA