

Report on Assisted Professional Development Leave

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Position at Time of Leave: ESL instructor: Department of ESL/ Academic and Career Preparation

Immediate Supervisors: Linda McCandless & Norma MacSween/Jean Maltesen

Number of Weeks Requested for Leave: 15 weeks

Number of Weeks Granted for Leave: 7.4 weeks

Start Date: August 30, 2021 **End Date:** October, 19, 2021

Number of days/weeks: 5 days/7.4 weeks (i.e., full-time each week)

Summary

I am currently engaged in writing a book with co-author Dr. Liese Coulter (Royal Roads) regarding how to talk about adapting to and mitigating climate change so as to inspire agency and hope (title tbd). In the book, she, a climate academic, and I, a layperson, tackle the challenging topic of facing the reality of our changing climate. This report summarizes the work done before, during, and after my supported leave from August 30 – October 19, 2021: I highlight some work done prior to the supported leave, briefly describe the three chapters we drafted during the leave period, give an update on the book project to date, and include ideas for moving forward with climate conversations at VIU.

Report

1. Work done prior to the supported leave

Dr. Coulter and I did a substantial amount of work before this assisted leave:

- We submitted a proposal to Bristol University Press (BUP) in mid-February 2021. The publisher sent it to two external reviewers, and both the publisher and reviewers were positive about the proposal but wanted to see chapter samples.
- We met weekly over Zoom from February to August 29, 2021, discussing scope, contents, and context of the book.
- We wrote a draft 1 of chapter 1.
- I attended numerous webinars and read numerous books and articles to gain background.
- I kept a daily reflective journal on climate change.

2. Work done during the supported leave

- I co- wrote a Prologue (4, 117 words). This starts with Liese (Dr. Coulter) saying how she can “empty a room at a party, talking about the ways that climate change will affect our lives.” She gives some background around the focus of our book, adapting to climate change, and talks about why she invited me to be a co-author. The prologue then moves to when we met in September 2020 on Salt Spring Island, for what I thought was going to be just a friends-away-for a few-days-of-catch up. The first Saltspring section is in my voice, the second section is in hers, and then it finishes in my voice, with me reluctantly agreeing to *consider* being her co-author.
- We redrafted chapter 1 “Finding Our Rhythm” (2,062 words). This chapter took a long time to get to our submitted version. Again in both our voices, we chronicle how hard it is to have climate change conversations and how strong the impulse is to keep the idea of climate impacts at a distance. Indeed, we show how months went by while I circled the topic and how it took this summer’s right-here heat dome climate event to get fully engaged in the topic.
- I co-wrote chapter 2 “Talking About Adaptation, If Only” (4, 980 words). In this chapter, we take a question-and-answer approach to clarifying key terms regarding climate change. Interestingly, it starts off with me asking questions of Liese and she answering, but it moves to more of a back and forth, culminating in a matrix I came up with that helped me to visualize the four quadrants of climate change action needed:

Climate Change Actions	Personal	Social/political/collective
Adaptation		
Mitigation		

- I continued with the daily reflective journal on climate change.

3. Update on the book project

- We submitted Prologue, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2 to BUP for review in November (awaiting response).
- We drafted Chapters 3 and 4, to submit December 22.
- I am continuing with the daily reflective journal on climate change. This journaling has been key to getting at the underlying emotions regarding facing climate change, and it also is a place where I come up with questions and ideas for moving forward.

4. Ideas for moving forward with climate conversations at VIU

- Investigate ACP faculty’s interest and expertise in climate change
- Continue facilitating guest speakers on campus. (With VIU geography professor Don Alexander, I organized an event on Nov. 17th entitled “Facing Climate Change: What we Learned from COP26 and Working Towards Change” which featured two speakers: Dr. Steven Earle and Dr. Jessica Stanley.) On December 20 we met with

Joan Brown, CAO Snuneymux First Nation, and Scott Saywell, Superintendent SD68, regarding upcoming speaking opportunities on campus. We plan to help bring more speakers throughout the year.

- Participate in some way with the President's Task Force on Climate Action and Sustainability.

Conclusion

I am very grateful for time given by the Assisted PD Leave. It acted as an anchor to all the climate activities I conducted in 2021, both with regards to the book project and with regards to furthering climate conversations at VIU. Knowing that I had the 7.4 weeks to focus full-time on the book allowed me to commit throughout the year to learning more about climate change—and to taking climate action. I understand viscerally now how taking climate action with others is key to moving forward amidst climate anxiety.