



Office of Administrative Services

San Luis Obispo County Community College District

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Stearns
FROM: Dan Troy, on behalf of the Planning and Budget Committee
DATE: 11/03/2020
SUBJECT: Recommendation for Hiring of 2021-22 Full-time Faculty

Each fall, the Planning and Budget Committee is required to provide a recommendation to the Superintendent/President regarding the hiring of full-time faculty for the subsequent fiscal year. As of the 2019-20 year, the process for making this recommendation was modified to include information concerning specified factors, including: current figures related to faculty position control and the percentage of FT instruction; regulatory context, such as the Full-Time Faculty Obligation Number (FON); district FTES; and other budgetary considerations. Given that faculty prioritization is a separate process, the Committee recommendation is approximate in nature, as we don't yet know the positions assessed through that process.

Position Control: Number of faculty in position control for 2020-21: 136, including 134 filled tenure track positions and 2 budgeted vacancies (Accounting and Nursing). These numbers have declined in recent years, due largely to early retirement incentives (2018 and 2020) and through a cancellation of faculty recruitments in the spring of 2016. In 2014-15, the District had 159 filled FT faculty positions. That dropped to 150 (budgeted and filled) in 2017-18 and dropped further to 140 in 2018-19 (the effective year of the retirement incentive). Additional vacancies have occurred over the past several months due to another retirement incentive. Declining campus FTES, of course, have also played a role in the reduction of FT faculty positions.

Despite the decline in FT positions, the percentage of FT instruction has been stable. FT percentage of instruction last 5 years: 57.2%, 56.4%, 58.6%, 58.4%, and 57.5%. These percentages are similar to the statewide average.

Regulatory issues: As of the Fall 2020 report, Cuesta is 18.9 FTEF over our FON. Our current FON (115.2), should be relatively stable at this point, as we have ceased to aggressively employ a summer shifting reporting strategy. Whatever decision the District chooses to make on hiring need not be influenced by regulations.

FTES: FTES has been relatively flat over the past several years. The district has been on a slight upward trajectory since 2017-18, though this is attributable to a large increase in CCAP FTES rather than in traditional FTES. Given the relatively low high school graduating classes in the

region (a statewide trend), FTES is not expected to increase significantly in the near future. Historical FTES trends (earned rather than reported):

- 7,683 in 2014-15
- 7,753 in 2015-16
- 7,672 in 2016-17
- 7,801 in 2017-18
- 7,921 in 2018-19
- 7,972 in 2019-20
- Dual enrollment grew from 50.7 in 2014-15 to 523 in 2019-20

Budgetary considerations: As discussed in Committee, the state's revenues have declined significantly due to the pandemic. Community colleges escaped direct year-over-year cuts in the 2020-21 year through an aggressive deferral schedule. As deferrals provide only one-time savings to the state, the threat of direct reductions remains until state revenues recover.

Cuesta College is in year 3 (of 6) of hold harmless from the Student-Centered Funding Formula (SCFF) calculation. Our SCFF hold harmless allocation will grow by the state-funded COLA (if applicable) through the 2023-24 year, then we will be subject to the SCFF calculation. It is anticipated that the College will see a decline in funding due to the Supplemental Allocation and the formula's 3-year averaging of FTES. During this time, the college will also need to fund increasing pension costs, particularly after the 2021-22 year.

As state funding has been constrained, the district may fall into basic aid status in the near future. This provides a funding floor for general purpose revenue, though the state has shown a willingness to reduce the restricted funds of basic aid districts in order to have them share the burden of statewide cuts. All told, the district should not expect significant increases in revenue over the next few years and needs to have sufficient reserves to handle economic uncertainties.

Recommendation: The workgroup represented a diversity of views. Some suggested that budgetary concerns and the lack of substantial FTES growth did not support an increase in FT faculty, especially during a time when many other vacant staff positions have gone unfilled. Others noted that the reduction in FT faculty positions in recent years has been significant. It was stated that faculty obligations go beyond instruction, and the ability to perform the work of the college could be impaired if new positions aren't hired. It was further noted that the number of positions tend to slide down due to the timing of retirements; i.e., department requests for positions lag in the prioritization process if a faculty member retires later in the year. Finally, it was suggested that the college has a constant need to plan for its future, and that recruitment of new faculty positions the college for success down the road.

The workgroup ultimately agreed to recommend increasing the number of positions from between 0 and 3. The logic of hiring up to 3 new positions was to restore the college back to 139 FT positions, which was our number as of the prior year. It is noted, though, that the amount of hires should be dependent on the justification of these positions through the faculty prioritization process. The Committee does not wish to suggest that the Superintendent/President stretch to hire positions that

are unjustified simply to achieve 139 positions. While the District should be cautious about increasing any positions in the current budgetary and enrollment climate, it is possible for the college to decrease numbers through attrition in future years, if necessary.