Dear Joint Council for Faculty Prioritization

Hope the holidays were restful and offered you time to relax with your family and loved ones; we celebrated differently and are grateful to be safe and well. In November, I promised to update you on hiring after the Governor's January budget was released. The budget yielded some gains for higher education and community colleges in particular. Most of the new funds are in the form of one-time allocations. There is consensus that California's 2021-2022 budget seeks to maintain stability as we wrestle with the economic ravages of the COVID pandemic. Most analysts agree that Fiscal Year 22/23 and 23/24 will be challenging years as the California and national economy will likely face a downturn resulting from the structural impact of the pandemic; however a slow move towards an uneven recovery is expected by 23/24.

I have decided to authorize the hiring of two positions. First, the EATM faculty position which received the most votes for general funds and a second position, the CNSE faculty position to be funded from the Strong Workforce Program budget. The CNSE faculty position was not presented for faculty prioritization in the fall because at the time program plans were developed and the prioritization list was established, Professor Wayne Snyder had not resigned his full time position at the College. The program is now without a second faculty member while it is in the midst of an expansion and experiencing robust student enrollment and completion. Two years ago when the CNSE position was prioritized in the top five (see attached) by the Joint Council, the case was made that additional faculty is necessary to develop new Microsoft Cloud courses, certificates and short term specialization tracks. My decision to prioritize this position ahead of others on the current list follows the intent of the 2019 faculty prioritization which due to unforeseen circumstances was delayed by a year. Now, this position will help prepare students for a sector essential to economic recovery of our service area. Ventura County has been adversely impacted by the pandemic and the economic decline preceding the pandemic. Cyber security and Cloud Computing are two growth career pathways that will contribute to the economic recovery of our county. This is a program where faculty make more in industry and as such difficult to recruit for full time positions. Adjuncts in the program are mostly industry professionals who are not available for temporary full time assignments. There is a sense of urgency to fill this vacancy.

It is critical to hire a second CNSE faculty member to support the phenomenal work of Professor Ed Garcia because Moorpark College is in the process of applying for accreditation as a Center of Excellence for Cyber Security. The application requires 140 hours documentation and coordination with 20 stakeholders. Development of Cyber Security Virtual Center requires monthly regional activities with schools and employers once approved as Cyber COE. Moorpark College is the only approved Amazon Web Service Academy in our region and the program is in the midst of developing courses that will lead to an Associate Degree in Cloud Technology. To take advantage of the booming industry and demand for training , a new full time faculty member will be needed to teach course offerings in Cloud Foundations, Cloud Architect, Cloud Sysops, Cloud Security, and new development of Cloud Databases, Cloud Machine Learning, and further development of Cloud DevOps. Given that this is an emerging field of study, the new Faculty will need to be trained and pass certification in order for Moorpark College to offer these courses. Each course requires about 80 hours of training and successful passing of a professional exam. Currently Ed Garcia is the only faculty Districtwide with Certification to deliver these courses. In addition, local k-12 districts are exploring development of Cyber programs which will require college faculty support as they create multiple education pathways and certificates.

The need for affordable career training leading to high demand, high skill and high wage careers in computer network engineering is still significant. It is mission critical to fill this position and as such I am prioritizing its hiring. We need to be prudent due to the level of economic uncertainty the next few years will bring; however, we remain optimistic and may take advantage of hiring full time faculty as opportunities present themselves.

Thank you for your attention.

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