



California
Community
Colleges

MARTY ALVARDO
Executive Vice Chancellor
Educational Services and Support

May 10, 2019

Omar Orihuela,
CCCEOPSA President
Director of EOPS & Special Populations

Dear Mr. Orihuela:

I want to take a moment and respond directly to the concerns and frustrations that I have heard regarding possible updates to EOPS Guidelines. First, I want to be clear that I greatly value and respect the historic work and impact of the EOPS program, its leadership, and staff. I know my team has voiced this support, but I want you to hear it from me as well. The Chancellor's Office team will continue to make efforts to engage and work alongside the EOPS leadership and we will continue to engage the EOPS leadership in informing the ongoing conversations around the program.

Please let me explain how we got to this point. The Chancellor's Office is reviewing the guidance it provides to colleges for a number of program areas to ensure they are current and streamlined. The goal is to lighten the administrative burden where possible so that practitioners can focus more of their time doing what they do best – helping our students succeed. This process was initiated to respond to concerns I have consistently heard from the field, that far too much time is spent responding to Chancellor's Office bureaucratic processes, and it reduces the amount of time available for colleges to work directly with our students.

With this focus, proposed revisions to the EOPS Implementation Guidelines were drafted and sent out on April 11, 2019 to the EOPS Regional Coordinators for review and feedback. I understand that there may be confusion over the process for review and updates to the Implementation Guidelines. Please allow me to clarify. The intent and communication from the Chancellor's Office, beginning in Spring of 2018 has been to invite the EOPS community to review and provide recommendations for any changes to the Implementation Guidelines. While we have not received any recommendations to date, and have been unable to engage in conversations about the proposed changes, I hope that we can rectify this moving forward. We are still very much at the beginning stage of the process, and we want to engage the EOPS leadership with these drafts and in ongoing discussions. It is important to note, as we've stated, that changes will not move forward without the requisite discussions and engagement with the EOPS leadership and statewide stakeholders. At this point in time, the Chancellor's Office has



no recommendations for changes to the Implementation Guidelines moving forward to Consultation Council or the Board of Governors.

This brings us to the current draft of proposed changes. As I hope has been clearly communicated, these were introduced as an initial draft for your feedback and discussion. These are not final; in fact, they are meant as a starting point for discussions with EOPS leadership and statewide stakeholders. While we look forward to the ongoing dialogue around any changes, it is important to clarify a few misunderstandings regarding the proposed changes.

None of the proposed changes eliminates minimum qualifications for either the Program Directors or the Program Counselors. The minimum qualifications aspect of the EOPS program is not only valuable, it is a standard that should be encouraged statewide. The proposed changes waived the existing requirements for colleges to submit a formal request for waiver signed by the campus CEO to the Chancellor's Office, and instead directed colleges to work with their local academic senate to document the justification for any waiver. This was intended to reinforce local control and accountability. If there are potential unintended consequences to this proposed change, we want to hear about those and make informed adjustments.

The proposed changes did not eliminate full-time EOPS Director positions. The proposed changes removed the requirement to submit a formal request signed by the campus CEO, and approval by the Chancellor's Office to modify the full-time position. The changes were intended to reinforce that this is a local decision based on size, scope, and structure of the college's student services programs and student populations.

The proposed changes to required student contacts does not in any way prevent college's from requiring the current prescribed three counseling contacts. Rather, it was intended to provide flexibility for colleges to design student contacts based on individual student needs and where they may already be receiving services from the college. Again, this is an area where healthy discussions around both positive and negative impacts will be important for understanding potential unintended consequences.

Lastly, there were no proposed changes in the document that changed the role of EOPS Counselors or broadened their scope of work in any way.

As stated at the May EOPS training, and in subsequent conversations, our intent and desire is to work alongside the EOPS leadership in ensuring that the guidelines support and reinforce the systemwide commitment to student success and equity as well as the health and viability of the colleges EOPS programs to meet the needs of their students. We hope that this clarification reinforces



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the mutually stated path forward, which is continued dialogue and collaboration around any future changes to the Implementation Guidelines.

The equity agenda at the core of EOPS and both the Vision for Success and the range of education reforms moving through our system, cannot be advanced without leveraging and learning from the experiences and expertise of the EOPS field. I personally look forward to continuing this journey in partnership with the EOPS leadership, and to strengthening the impact of EOPS and our institutions in service to our students.

Sincerely,

Marty J. Alvarado

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