**SRJC Petaluma**

**Faculty Staffing 2015-16**

**NARRATIVE SUMMARY – Counselor (Connections/Financial Aid/Veterans)**

**Position Requested:** The request is for a full-time Counselor for SRJC Petaluma. This is a **net new position** based on the expanded need for counseling services to support the Connections Learning Community, Financial Aid and Veteran’s counseling, course offerings, and to meet the mandates of the Student Success Act from the State Chancellor’s Office. This is a growth position for Petaluma. The chair estimates that we currently are using .7 FTE in adjuncts to cover direct service to students and the position would consolidate some adjunct positions. It has not yet been confirmed as to whether or not this position could be funded through SSSP. The need is great enough that this request is being submitted through Faculty Staffing just in the event categorical funding is not available.

**Current Contract Faculty Considerations:** Currently there are five full-time counselors assigned to the Petaluma campus: one with 50% release time for Puente; one with 20% release time for EOPS, and one with 100% reassignment to Santa Rosa for chair duties. All counselors teach one class plus orientation classes as overload. No non-credit courses are taught by counselors.The cost to cover the critical counseling services for students is approximately $55,000/year in adjunct counseling, excluding the Gateway to College Program.

**Current Adjunct Faculty Considerations:** Adjunct faculty numbers vary by availability, and are all provided by the general Counseling Department pool. Petaluma rotates approximately 5-8 adjunct counselors throughout the year. The availability of adjuncts in Counseling fluctuates. Adjunct interviews have taken place yearly, and twice in the last six months to address the need. The training needs to adequately prepare adjunct counselors with accurate, timely information about SRJC, internal and external processes and procedures, is extensive and requires considerable effort.There is a shortage of adjunct counselors to cover direct service to students, and to cover all the counseling sections in Petaluma. In fall 2015, those sections were only covered by a full time counselor agreeing to take an extra load.

**Instructional Impact:** Counselors provide individual counseling on a drop-in basis, or same-week appointments for all students including the development of complex educational plans. They teach orientations, workshops and 15-18 full-semester credit Counseling courses. In addition to providing generalist functions and intrusive targeted outreach to local high schools, all Petaluma campus counselors provide targeted services for the following special populations: EOPS (currently .2 FTEF dedicated); CalWorks (currently no representation); Veterans (currently no representation); Financial Aid (currently some representation from Santa Rosa when available); Puente (.5 FTEF dedicated), ELL/ESL/Basic Skills (currently no representation); Athletes (Santa Rosa only); STEM/CTE (Santa Rosa only).Average class size has increased from 26.6 in spring 2009 to 29.3 in spring 2012 to 30 in spring 2015.Contract counselors teach 1-2 classes as overload, with 77% of sections taught by adjuncts. There is fairly strong demand for these courses, many of which are supporting the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) mission. We had difficulty finding faculty to cover the sections in fall 2015. Resources exist to support this position.

**District and Departmental Need and Goals**

Counseling needs in Petaluma fall in three main areas: support for the Connections Latino-based Learning Community stemming from the HSI initiative, Financial Aid and Veterans counseling, and Generalist counseling. Fall 2016 will begin the Connections Learning Community that requires a dedicated Counselor at .2 FTEF. Due to the nature of the program and the mentoring involved, a full time Counselor who is continuously present on campus is needed. Additional learning communities are also being explored, which would require expanded Counseling capacity. Furthermore, Petaluma has no consistent Counseling staff member who provides financial aid counseling to students who have problems with satisfactory academic progress, or who provides educational planning for Veterans. Those students with academic progress issues are required to attend workshops, see a counselor, obtain an educational plan, and make progress toward declaring a major. Petaluma needs someone to coordinate these efforts for the nearly 5,000 students at the campus. Finally, Petaluma requires more generalist and counselor instruction hours. Currently adjunct counselors cover .7 FTEF student contact hours weekly, without counting coverage for the 1.0 counselor currently reassigned to Santa Rosa for chair duties. In addition, Counseling course offerings are robust and there is difficulty covering sections offered. The Counseling Department’s curriculum, programs, SLO assessments, and faculty evaluations, both full time and adjunct, are all current and completed as required.

**Degrees, Certificates, Prerequisites, and/or General Education:** Counselors have a profound impact on student achievement of degrees, certificates, prerequisites, or general education. The complexities students face on how to make choices about educational goals, how to select courses based on these goals, and navigate the balance with the many personal demands they face can overwhelm the new community college student. In addition, community colleges are often the first educational opportunity for many of our first generation, low income and under-represented students. Counselors are navigators for students to guide them through the complex wave of information, procedures and educational options. The persistence rate for those students who see a counselor is 80.49% as compared to the district-wide average of 67.75%; and for those who take a counseling class, the persistence rate rises to 88.26% versus 67.75% district-wide

**CTE Positions:** Not applicable.

**Position Mandates:** Not applicable.

**District Impact:** With the passage of the Student Success Act significant mandates are now required including the reporting of counseling service student contacts, educational plans, new student orientations, assessments, and follow up services for each new and continuing student. In addition, Student Equity legislation demands a focus on disproportionately impacted populations, including low-income (financial aid), Latino, and veteran students, on which this position will focus. These numbers are reported to the State Chancellors Office through the Student Success Scorecard and Student Equity priorities, which in turn provided the funding formula for each district. Currently, SRJC Petaluma Counseling staffing still has not risen to adequate levels to provide appropriate time for critical educational planning, and must instead provide services, on a limited first-come, first-served basis.