

May, 21, 2010

Memo To: Norco College Strategic Planning Committee
From: Dr. Brenda Davis, President
Subject: Update on Resource Allocation Decisions for 10/11

Each year at this time, pursuant to Norco College's procedures for linking program review, planning and resource allocation, I provide the membership of our Strategic Planning Committee with an update on decisions that have been made to-date in relation to the staffing and equipment priorities approved by NSPC. Because of the uncertainties surrounding this year's and next year's budgets, many of the decisions regarding the allocation of resources to meet prioritized College needs have been placed on hold. Nonetheless, in keeping with the timeline associated with our decision-making processes, I am providing you with an update on the decisions that have been made to-date as well as the priorities I will be pursuing over the next several weeks as the budget prognosis for 2010/11 become clearer.

Staffing Priorities

Faculty Positions – At this juncture, the College has yet to be informed concerning the number of new faculty positions (if any) we will be allocated by the District for 2010/11. In all likelihood it could be several months before a definitive answer is forthcoming in this regard. As most of you are aware, the District offered a “golden handshake” to the faculty that could result in some budgetary savings, a portion of which may be allocated toward new faculty positions at the constituent colleges. While it is likely that many, if not most of the positions vacated as a result of the golden handshake will be frozen in an effort to offset the projected district budget deficit of \$ 7 – 10 million, it is also possible that our campus could be allocated new faculty positions as a result of this initiative. In the event that this occurs, my intention will be to fill full-time positions in English (ranked #3 by NSPC) and counseling (ranked #5). My rationale for this choice is that our English faculty agreed to a one-year temporary position for 2009/10 in deference to the need for a digital art instructor, last year's #1 NSPC priority. It is my hope that this temporary English position can be converted to a tenure-track position for 2010/11. With regard to counseling, although we filled a full-time, tenure-track counseling position from last year's priority list in 2009/10, our counseling faculty has essentially remained at 2008/09 levels due to the long-term health-related absence of one of our five full-time counselors, leaving us with an effective ratio of one counselor per 2,750 students, well below the state guideline of one per 1,000 students. Moreover, our part-time counseling budget has been decimated by reductions to categorical program budgets that have historically funded most of the College's adjunct counselors. Consequently, although I concur with NSPC regarding the importance of securing faculty positions in health science (#1 ranked by NSPC), history (#2), and psychology (#4), I have come to regard English and counseling as the top college priorities for new faculty positions at this time. Of course, depending upon which faculty members our College loses to the golden handshake, these priorities are subject to revision.

Student Services Positions – At this juncture, no new student services positions have been added from this year's prioritized list approved by NSPC. The application support technician (#1 on the list) remains our top priority and my intention is to fill this position when funds become available. We simply cannot function very effectively as a college without this position, which provides a vital interface between our admissions and records and financial aid staff and Datatel. Concerning the second- and third-ranked positions in student services (financial aid and admissions and records administrators), the need for these positions has been addressed by Chancellor Gray's district reorganization plan, released this month. Should additional resources become available for student services positions as the budget process for 2010/11 unfolds, my intention at this time is to proceed in accordance with the staffing priorities identified by NSPC.

Administrative Positions – The first and third positions on the prioritized list of administrative positions approved by NSPC (food service manager and food service worker IV) are expected to be filled upon the opening of the new Student Success Center, as the budget for this facility includes funds necessary to staff the new building. These positions are to be funded from the restricted food services account and will not therefore affect the general fund. The position of Associate Dean of Career Technical Education (#4 on the NSPC priority list) has been filled. Funds for this position have been successfully obtained from the College's recently approved Title V grant. The second-ranked position on NSPC's list (administrative assistant for maintenance and operations), while still unfunded at this time, remains my top priority unfunded administrative support position and I am confident that once final budget decisions have been made for 2010/11 we will be able to support this crucial position.

Prioritized Equipment Needs

As most of you are aware, the traditional source of instructional and non-instructional equipment money at California community colleges, block grants from the state, have not been funded for the past two years, thus dramatically curtailing the amount of investment we can make in new equipment. This year, we have held back a small amount of general fund dollars in contingency accounts that have now been allocated toward high priority equipment needs that were identified on the prioritized lists that were submitted by our instructional and non-instructional departments. Although these amounts are small, we are endeavoring to address our highest priority equipment needs to the greatest feasible extent.

In conclusion, while these are, indeed, trying times for our College from a budgetary perspective, the processes by which we identify and prioritize our staffing and equipment needs remain critically important to our institution. Thank you for your continued participation in and support for these processes.