Cañada College

NEW FACULTY POSITION PROPOSAL

Click in the shaded fields and start typing your response.

DISCIPLINE: BIOLOGY

A. How does the proposed position align with specific objectives within the college's strategic plans and initiatives? http://www.canadacollege.edu/plans/index.php

The Biological & Health Sciences program offers three categories of courses: general education (50%), majors (5%), and allied health (45%). Our program proposes that the college invest a new fulltime tenure-track biology faculty member to focus on our GE courses and to augment our existing fulltime faculty in other subdisciplines. This is our fourth request for this position since spring 2014.

This position will directly support the creation and sustainability of pathways that attract students to our college, more fully engage them in their studies and to increase their completion rates. This goal braids several objectives within our college's strategic plans: Student Engagement Plan (Focussed - Every student who enrolls to pursue a certificate, degree, or who plans to transfer will work with college personnel to create a Student Success Pathway – A Roadmap to Completion.), Sustainability Plan (4.1.2 - Utilize different pathways to integrate sustainability in the curriculum.), and Educational Master Plan (2.4 - Improve entry by identifying clear student pathways for basic skills, career/technical, general transfer, specific majors, and courses/programs.)

The Biology Program currently supports the college's pathway programs primarily through the actions of adjunct faculty. We teach a life science laboratory course (area B2 and B3) within the CWA as well as for the Sustainability GE Pathway, and a lifelong learning course (area E1) for the Social Justice GE Pathway. We also offer a 200-level lab science course (dual-CRN) as well as honors contracts for the Honors Transfer Program. At the encouragement of the HTP Advisory Committee, we would like to expand our offerings to include honors-level GE science courses.

Customizing curricula to the structure and themes of the GE, Honors, and CWA pathways requires substantial investments of faculty time and creativity. By relying primarily upon adjunct faculty to teach these courses, we are not ensuring a consistent learning experience, nor are we creating a sustainable way for the program to support these pathways. By hiring a dedicated fulltime faculty to focus on GE courses the college can provide the human capital to institutionalize our curricular investments and ensure sustainable opportunity for students in these pathway programs.

B. How does the proposed position address the program's strategic action plans and long-term goals? Please refer to specific elements of the most recent program review.

In our 2014-15 program review, we identified several long-term goals and action plans. Relevant to this proposal are the following: (a) to renovate our non-majors GE courses to attract and benefit more non-majors, (b) to develop honors addenda for non-majors GE courses, and (c) to address the inconsistent SLO analysis in courses that lack a dedicated fulltime faculty. We have already explained in part A of this proposal how a fulltime biology faculty would enable us to achieve goals (a) and (b). Goal (c) articulates the need for deeper and more consistent assessment of the teaching and learning that occurs in our non-majors courses. Such analyses permit for reflection and long-term planning, and often inspire faculty to experiment with new teaching methodologies. A fulltime faculty member dedicated to GE courses can experiment with curricular changes and/or alternative pedagogies that require longitudinal data to determine the optimal approaches to improving retention and success.

C. How does the proposed position support program vitality and viability?

1. How far is the program from achieving the legislative goal of having 75% of instructional hours taught by full-time faculty?
    a. %CRNs that are taught by FT faculty: 40% previous semester 41% current semester ☐not applicable

2. If this proposal is not funded, will there remain a minimum of one existing full-time faculty in the discipline? ☒ Yes ☐ No

D. What is the evidence of student demand to justify the proposed position?

1. Number (headcount) of full-time faculty in the discipline: 4 current semester

2. Total FTE of course offerings: 7.88 previous semester 8.40 current semester ☐ not applicable

3. Percent of "Total FTE of course offerings" comprised by FT faculty: 45% previous semester 41% current semester ☐ not applicable

4. Average departmental Fill Rate: 91% previous semester 90% current semester ☐ not applicable

5. Enrollment history – qualitatively and quantitatively describe student demand/course enrollments within this discipline, especially for those courses that will be assigned to the proposed faculty member.

   The biological-health science program's enrollment has declined since it's peak in 2011-12 roughly paralleling that of the college as a whole. During this time period, we have gradually discontinued/banked ten courses that had consistently insufficient enrollment. When the enrollments from these courses are removed from the calculations, our enrollment decline levels off between 2014-15 and 2015-16. When the data are further disaggregated, we observe that enrollment in GE courses and majors courses are actually stable over the past five years. Declining enrollment is only present in our allied health courses (see footnote). Given the stability of our GE course enrollments, we are confident that there is sustained capacity for a new fulltime faculty member.

   Our course offerings can sustain 8.4 FTEF. During the regular academic semester, a little more than 4 FTEF teach allied health courses, 1 FTEF teach majors courses, and 3 FTEF teach GE courses. Our 4 fulltimers teach 41% of the program's offerings. If reassigned time for Curriculum and Academic Senate were eliminated and our fulltimers were 100% in the classroom, there would still be 4.4 FTE worth of course offerings to support one new full-time faculty member along with a variety of adjunct faculty. Our program maintains a high productivity (529), high fill rates (90%), and 131 associates degree graduates over the last 5 years. These statistics suggest that an investment in the biology program is cost-effective and fully supported.

   Footnote: The decline in our allied health course enrollments is not unexpected. It is most like due to the softening of the nursing job market and the overall reduction in unemployed workers looking for a career change. Long-term, enrollment in our allied health courses may grow as demand increases for our AS-T in Nutrition & Dietetics and the AA-T in Kinesiology. Additionally, our faculty are working toward creating a new workforce program in Neurodiagnostic Technology which is strongly supported by labor market data and commitments from local employer. Such program would increase demand for allied health courses. We are also exploring collaborations beween Health Sciences and Human Services around the area of public health. If successful, these courses would further increase enrollments in our program.