



Merritt College Counseling Department

Bylaws

Adopted February 25, 2008
(Amended April 26, 2010)
(Amended May 24, 2010)
(Amended October 11, 2010)
(Amended May 16, 2011)
(Amended November 28, 2011)

These bylaws document the overall and daily operations and principles of the Merritt College Counseling Department. These bylaws pertain to all contract and hourly faculty members of the Merritt Counseling Department, including those in categorical programs.

Committees

The department has the following standing committees:

- ♦ Counselor Manual Maintenance (may be one or two people, including hourly counselors)
- ♦ Internship
- ♦ Training

Department Chair

The department is steered by two co-chairs, elected from the counseling faculty, each serving a one-year term. Although it is not a requirement, the Counseling Department preference is for co-chairs to serve two one-year terms, with each co-chair's term beginning on alternate years to avoid having two new co-chairs at the same time. Any counselor is eligible to be a co-chair and all counselors may vote for any eligible candidate, regardless of the unit to which they or the candidate belongs.

Elections are held in the Spring term in accordance with PFT and other campus procedures in which department chairs are elected.

The duties of each co-chair are intended to be divided equally to limit the possibility of imbalance or overload. As a rough guide, the co-chair duties are divided as follows:

- ♦ Internal: Scheduling; daily operations and floor management; interaction with Classified Staff Assistant II (who supervises student workers) and Classified Staff Assistant I.
- ♦ External: Development of and overall responsibility for COUN schedule and COUN course matters; relations with Office of Instruction, including instructors and instructional departments; relations with other members of the campus community.
- ♦ Shared: Ongoing relationship with the Dean and Vice President of Student Services; representation on the Council of Department Chairs and Program Directors; representation on the Student Services Council (or similarly-named committee within Student Services).

COUN Classes

The full-time counselors recommend a schedule of COUN courses to the Office of Instruction each semester (including Summer), adhering to deadlines when suggesting courses, sections, times, days, and instructors.

Although the Office of Instruction makes the final determination about scheduling COUN courses, the Counseling Department policy when recommending instructors is that courses are to be offered first to contract counselors. If more than one contract counselor wishes to teach a course, the course assignment will be made on the basis of seniority *in the Merritt College Counseling Department as well as when the more senior counselor last taught the course*. If no contract counselor wishes to teach a scheduled course, it is then offered to those hourly counselors who are in the preferential instructional hiring pool in order of seniority in the Merritt College Counseling Department. If there are no counselors in the preferential instructional pool, or if there are but they do not wish to teach the course, it is then offered to all other hourly counselors in an order first determined by a random drawing of those hourly counselors who have identified themselves as interested in teaching. Once the order is determined, an hourly counselor who accepts an offer to teach goes to the bottom of the list for subsequent terms. An hourly counselor who declines an offer to teach stays in their spot in the rotation until the next term, when they are again offered a teaching opportunity in the same order as when they declined. In other words, a counselor who declines a teaching offer stays where s/he is in the rotation instead of going to the bottom of the list. Any new hourly counselor hired after the rotation is set starts at the bottom of the list.

In recommending assignments, the Counseling Department policy is that no counselor (neither contract nor hourly) “owns” a course or scheduled day and/or time. Internal Counseling Department decisions about recommended assignments and scheduling are made with the best interests of students in mind.

Evaluations

Evaluations of contract and hourly counselors are an ongoing responsibility of the contract counseling faculty, in accordance with the PFT contract. Each contract counselor, whether General or part of a categorical program, is expected to share equally in this responsibility by chairing or serving as a member of an evaluation committee.

For purposes of establishing eligibility for a preferential rehire pool, in accordance with the PFT contract, each Student Services unit in which counselors are employed (General, EOPS, DSP&S, CARE, CalWORKS, etc.) is responsible for completing evaluations of its own counseling faculty. A counselor who establishes eligibility for a preferential rehire pool in one Student Services unit does so for that unit only, not for any other Student Services unit.

At the start of the academic year, not later than the end of September, contract counselors will determine which counselors, contract and hourly, are due for evaluations that academic year (in accordance with the PFT contract). The evaluation committees will then be determined in accordance with the PFT contract. Each committee will then determine how to fulfill its evaluation responsibilities in a timely manner.

Regarding student evaluations, the PFT contract calls for evaluations from 3 classroom visits which has been interpreted to mean 30 student evaluations for counselors in tenure review. The department has determined that 15 student evaluations are required for contract counselors (past tenure review) and for part-time counselors.

Meetings

On November 28, 2011, the department voted (7 for, 0 against, 1 abstention) to meet on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Mondays of the month (instead of each week) and that the meeting on the 3rd Monday will be for full-time counselors only.

Professional Days

Counselors have no Professional Day responsibility, per se. However, contract counselors are expected to work during those Professional Days that occur during peak (typically the first two or three days before the semester begins). By agreement with the Vice President of Student Services, and in accordance with the PFT contract, when Professional Days occur mid-semester, hourly counselors who are scheduled to work

that day will be paid for their regularly scheduled hours with the expectation that they will attend Professional Day workshops for the same number of hours as they are scheduled to work. If the Counseling faculty (at Merritt or district-wide) is presenting a Professional Day workshop, hourly counselors are expected to attend. If the Counseling Department is not presenting a workshop, hourly counselors are expected to report to the Counseling Department and engage in counseling-related activities. Hourly counselors may attend Professional Day workshops that are not presented by the Counseling Department with prior agreement by the Vice President of Student Services. Those counselors who are not scheduled to work during Professional Day may certainly (and are encouraged to) attend workshops but are not paid.

Scheduling

In accordance with the PFT contract, the Counseling Department Co-Chairs recommend a schedule to the Vice President of Student Services who makes the final determination. The Counseling Department Co-Chairs consult with the contract faculty to determine a recommended schedule that meets the needs of the department and the faculty for both the 175 contracted days and any 11th month days. In developing a recommended schedule for hourly counselors, the Counseling Department Co-Chairs consider the needs of the department, the needs of the hourly faculty, and the terms of the PFT contract (i.e. part-time faculty re-hire rights).

On April 26, 2010, the department voted to adopt a procedure of scheduling no more than two weeks out.

On May 24, 2010, the department voted to adopt a procedure of placing an alert on SARS for those students who no-show. This procedure is as follows:

- The alert for the first no-show will be “No-Show 1”
- The alert for the second no-show will be “No-Show 2”
- Only counselors can place no-show alerts, not front-desk staff
- After the second no-show, when the student attempts to make an appointment s/he will be informed by the front desk staff that they cannot have an appointment without first seeing a counselor for a drop-in (of 10-15 minutes, maximum). In this drop-in, the counselor will inform the student of the reason for the no-show alert and counsel with the student about the reason(s) for the no-show and other pertinent issues.
- After the drop-in, the counselor will walk the student to the front desk and clear them to make an appointment.

On May 24, 2010, the department voted to create and implement a new SARS schedule code of “Follow-up” to allow counselors 30 minutes for follow-up activities in the service of students. The schedule code will be non-appointment allowable and will typically be placed in the last half-hour of the counselor’s assigned shift unless the counselor specifically requests another time period.

On October 11, 2010, the department voted to include the number of student evaluations required for tenure track contract, non-tenure track contract, and part-time counselors (notation added in “Evaluations” section above).

On May 16, 2011, the department voted (6 for, 0 against, 2 abstain) to amend the section on COUN classes to include provisions and language about counselor instructors in the preferential rehire pool (notation added in COUN Classes section above).

On November 28, 2011, the department voted (unanimously) to adopt a policy that only full-timers will participate in preparing a recommended schedule of COUN classes for the Office of Instruction (notation added in COUN Classes section above).