Non-Instructional Support Staff

Environmental-Science-2011

I. Current Support Staff
II. Request for additional support staff (clerical, lab tech, IS, comp tech, tutor, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Approx. hours per week</th>
<th>To support:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>Part-Time</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4000 Students</td>
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Justification: Please address the following areas as applicable. How will it be used? How will instruction be improved for student learning and success? How will access be improved? What student learning outcomes are expected? How will the outcomes be measured? What data or evidence is supplied to support your justification?

SCIENCE CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Currently there is only a part-time administrative assistant for the three departments of Life and Earth Sciences, Physical Sciences and Mathematics. This is a total of eight disciplines and approximately 4,000 students per year. This is the only administrative assistant for the Austin Science Center, which has classes morning, afternoon and evening at least six days a week. This is also the only administrative assistant for the central office for this building, which also serves many students whose programs are housed elsewhere, as well as people new to the campus who are lost or otherwise need assistance.

This situation has produced several problems. First, it has been difficult to retain quality staff in this position, since part-time hours imply part-time salary. (The last two people who had this job left in order to get better hours and salaries elsewhere). Second, the job of serving so many students and faculty with so few hours is far more difficult than those of other administrative assistants on campus who have longer hours and fewer responsibilities. Third, lack of any administrative staff whatsoever in the building for many hours when classes are in session sends a strong message to students that they are ignored by the College.

Fortunately, many of these problems can be remedied with a simple solution. No new job category must be created. No new position must be filled. A strong step in the right direction would be merely to add the hours needed to bring up
the existing position to full time, as it was for many years previously.

**Shared Resources:** If you have requested additional staff that will be used by more than one department, please indicate here. Please indicate which disciplines and/or departments and the number of combined students/faculty or classes he/she would serve. Please indicate how it will improve access or outcomes and if it is needed for health and safety concerns or required by law.

This position benefits three departments, Life and Earth Sciences, Physical Sciences and Engineering, and also occasionally students from other departments and programs.

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<th>Purpose:</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Approx. hours per week:</th>
<th>To support:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab Tech</td>
<td>Full-Time</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1000 Students</td>
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</table>

**Justification:** Please address the following areas as applicable. How will it be used? How will instruction be improved for student learning and success? How will access be improved? What student learning outcomes are expected? How will the outcomes be measured? What data or evidence is supplied to support your justification?

**MUSEUM LAB TECH**

**Last Year's PRAC Recommendation**

From information our department has received, we understand that PRAC last year recommended filling this position for this next year (2012), since this is when the new building and museum are scheduled to open. Since this was based on documentation previously submitted, we have not repeated all of this information again. Rather, we have provided below excerpts from our requests, beginning with 2006 when the position originally became vacant, and continuing up to the present, to show that the need has not diminished in the past year. Indeed, with the opening of the new building, the need is expected to increase.

**From Original 2006 Meeting with Vice-President Anita Martinez:**
The Vice President urged the department to write immediately a description for a full-time museum lab tech since this was a key position, in service to students and in care for valuable college infrastructure, and especially in light of a forthcoming move to a new building.

**From 2010 Program Review:**

The biology/geology museum laboratory technician position has been vacant since May, 2006. Since that time, in a series of meetings among faculty and administrators, all have repeatedly agreed that it is unwise to leave this position vacant any longer.

At the end of the *last* Program Review, this position was given the highest priority, but apparently was not funded.

Since then, students have suffered reduced service, and the department has experienced two incipient fires, ten probable toxic chemical releases and continued deterioration of materials, resulting in a damaged learning environment and risks to health and safety.

Staff will be shared by two programs within the same department, biology and geology. Furthermore, although specific job capabilities must differ among the different laboratory technicians within our department, the fact is that all can have some basic knowledge of where equipment and supplies are kept, general departmental laboratory procedures, and common health and safety principles.

**Additional Museum Lab Tech Notes 2011**

Further problems have continued to result from the failure to fill the vacant museum lab tech position in a timely manner in 2011. Aside from the thefts, deterioration, health and safety issues and lack of service to students already reported in previous reviews, a few examples can be reported from this past year:

1. At least one more near-occurrence of fire, which fortunately resulted only in melted plastic.
2. Deterioration of specimens due to lack of ethanol replenishing
3. Continuing hazardous fumes due to lack of inspection of possible isopropyl alcohol and formalin leaks
4. Lack of updating of inventory as required by state and federal standards
5. Flagrant interruption of service to students.

In this last area, several student comments are worth noting:
"I made a special point of coming in early on Friday to do my assignment, but there was nobody present to unlock the door or turn on the lights. I had to turn around and go home again without getting anything accomplished. For a working student, this was a major inconvenience. I cannot believe that a school can pay so little attention to students."

"The apathy and disorganization on the part of the College of Marin staff in maintaining the museum was less than reassuring, to say the least. Assign a staff position to the museum!"

On the other hand, those students who were fortunate enough to be able to catch the museum open when things were set up were impressed:

"Wow! This week's museum observation definitely captured my interest. It was fascinating to dive into the world of parasites and learn about the many different types and their life cycles and reproductive processes."

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The new museum will the opportunity for collaborative work in all of the sciences at COM, if properly staffed and maintained. Thus this position will serve not only the disciplines in Life and Earth Sciences, but also the disciplines in Physical Sciences and Engineering. This could double the number of students served.
Access will be enhanced particularly for visually- and tactile- oriented learners, but will improve for all.

The position is essential for complying with health and safety regulations. Until it is filled, the health and safety risks will continue to increase. Up to now, we have relied mainly on luck to avoid major disasters, but relying on luck is not the best safety policy.