

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

RESOLUTION

Resolution for the Academic Senate in Support of Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) Hiring Tenure-Track Faculty

WHEREAS: University counseling centers have seen an increased demand for mental health services (Prince, 2015; Xiao et al., 2017), as well as an increased severity of mental health issues among college students (Prince 2015). Top factors that impact college students' academic performance include stress, anxiety, and depression (American College Health Association National College Health Assessment III, Cal Poly Pomona, 2020), and students experiencing chronic and severe mental health concerns graduated at a lower rate than those that did not need mental health services (Lee, Olson, Locke, Michelson, & Odes, 2009; Scofield et al., 2017). Research shows that campus counseling services are instrumental in impacting these discrepancies (Kivlighan et al., 2020);

WHEREAS, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is accredited by the International Accreditation of Counseling Services (IACS), which recommends a minimum staffing ratio of one FTE professional counselor for every 1,000-1,500 students. The CPP Fall 2020 Fast Facts sheet indicates there were 29,704 students enrolled in Fall 2020. CAPS had 12 counselors at that time. The ratio of FTE counselor to students was 1:2,475, which is well beyond the minimum ratio recommended by IACS. To meet the demand for mental health services, CAPS employed various methods over the years including a long wait list delaying students' access to services, infrequent sessions slowing treatment gains, and/or referrals to off-campus mental health resources often resulting in students not accessing services due to financial, transportation, and privacy barriers;

WHEREAS, Other California State Universities recognized the importance of and hired tenure-track faculty. CSU Dominguez Hills hired 6 tenure-track counselors in 2018, CSU San Jose hired 2 tenure-track counselors in 2018, CSU San Bernardino hired 1 tenure-track counselor in 2018, CSU Fullerton hired 1 tenure-track counselor in 2019 and again in 2020, CSU Northridge hired 3 tenure-track counselors in 2016, 2 tenure-track counselors in 2017, and 2 tenure-track counselors in 2018 to replace tenured counselors who

retired, and CSU San Francisco plans to convert 5 temporary faculty counselors to tenure-track counselors over the next 2 fiscal years;

WHEREAS, In 2017, the Academic Senate at San Francisco State University passed a resolution in support of hiring 6 more tenure-track counselors, and in 2020, the SFSU Academic Senate passed a resolution supporting the conversion of five temporary Counselor Faculty positions to tenure-track Counselor Faculty positions over the next two fiscal years. In 2017, the Academic Senate at CSU Stanislaus also passed a resolution in support of hiring tenure-track faculty counselors;

WHEREAS, CAPS was approved for three tenure-track positions in late 2019, which have since been rescinded. Prior to this, CAPS has not had a tenure track hire since 2017, which was to back-fill a position vacated in 2015. This position was filled by a temporary counselor who transitioned after applying and participating in an open search. In the last 10 years, CAPS has attempted to hire 21 temporary lecturer counselors, 13 of whom either rejected our offer, did not get their contract renewed, or left after 1-2 academic years for a more stable position or for personal reasons;

WHEREAS, Frequent turnover of temporary faculty counselors interrupts continuity of care of students, prevents long-term and comprehensive student success programming, is costly due to the regular searches, is disruptive to CAPS operation, and engenders losses of liaison relationships with other departments with the departure of counselors;

WHEREAS, Temporary faculty counselor contracts contribute to diminished opportunities for promotions, salary increases, professional development, and participation in and making significant contributions to shared governance and the university community. To promote a safe campus, prevent mental health tragedies, and provide services that reduce major barrier to student success, mental health issues and emotional wellness must be a priority through a well-staffed, permanent, healthy and thriving counseling center;

WHEREAS, The California Faculty Association (CFA) supports the hiring of more counselors for CSU counseling centers and indicated that mental health resources were one of the topics at the top of its agenda for the March 2021 CSU Board of Trustees meeting (CFA, 2021), therefore be it

- RESOLVED,** The CPP Academic Senate strongly recommends that the CSU adopts the policy goal of ensuring that all CSU campuses meet or exceed relevant professional mental health service standards for students; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the University increase the number of Counselor Faculty to meet the basic counselor to student ratio (1:1,500) as a minimum recommended by the IACS, which would mean hiring at least 6 more Tenure Track Counselor Faculty; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the University commits to hiring Tenure Track Counselor Faculty in order to ensure the health and wellbeing of Counseling and Psychological Services, thereby securing increased stability and longevity for the center, allowing for increased health for the campus community.

Works cited:

- California Faculty Association. "CFA Members Address Trustees Chancellor on Bargaining, Repopulation, Racial Justice, and More." CFA News Index, April 1, 2021, <https://www.calfac.org/cfa-members-address-trustees-chancellor-bargaining-repopulation-racial-justice-and-more/>. Accessed 9/2/2021.
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