

To: Roger Schultz, the Executive Administration Team, and the MSJC Board of Trustees
From: Anjeanette Oberg, Academic Senate President
Date: December 10, 2025
Subject: Professional Development Concerns

Purpose of this Memo

The Academic Senate is writing to express an urgent concern regarding the recent changes in the Professional Development department including the expiration of the Interim Associate Dean of PD position, lack of faculty engagement in the hiring committee for a replacement dean, the pending loss of the Professional Development Coordinator position currently being funded through the Equitable Placement Grant which terminates at the end of Spring 2026, and no clear transparent plan to ensure these positions are institutionalized and integrated into our ongoing budget planning in order to support the future success of faculty and the college.

Consistent with the authority and purview on academic and professional matters outlined in Title 5 §53200 (10+1), the Senate affirms that uninterrupted Professional Development leadership is mission-critical for instructional quality, accreditation alignment, and faculty onboarding. The college cannot afford even a single semester without a fully functional Professional Development Department including appropriate Dean support and a permanent Full Time Professional Development Faculty Coordinator. The risks to accreditation, compliance, faculty readiness, and student success are substantial and immediate. Therefore, corrective action is needed to ensure that both roles are sustained and appropriate resources are put in place to uphold the continued successful operation of the Professional Development Department.

Background

1. Professional Development Falls Under Academic and Professional Matters (10+1)

Professional Development is explicitly identified in Title 5 §53200 as an academic and professional matter requiring collegial consultation and faculty primacy. PD directly supports several areas of the 10+1, including:

- #1 Curriculum: PD supports curriculum development, revision, and training on Title 5–mandated DE addenda.
- #5 Student Preparation & Success: PD is required for AB 705/1705 implementation, Guided Pathways, and equity-centered teaching.

- #7 Faculty Roles in Governance: PD prepares faculty to participate effectively in governance, evaluation, and district processes.
- #8 Policies for Faculty Professional Development Activities: PD itself is explicitly listed as a faculty-driven academic and professional matter.
- +1 Title 5 §55204, related to Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI), also requires that faculty be trained and supported to meet federal requirements for distance education. RSI is a pedagogical standard, not an administrative task. A faculty-led PD program is necessary to ensure consistent training, documentation, and compliance with RSI, accessibility, and other instructional mandates.

Education Code §70902 obligates the district to ensure effective faculty participation in academic and professional matters, and a consistent faculty PD Coordinator is essential to that ongoing participation. Without this role, the institution lacks a functional mechanism for fulfilling its legal shared-governance obligations in PD planning, coordination, and evaluation.

2. Accreditation Standards Require Continuous, Systematic, Faculty-Led PD

ACCJC Standards (III.A.14, II.A, I.B.5, I.B.9) require ongoing, intentional, and systematic professional development connected to student learning and institutional effectiveness.

A lapse in the PD Coordinator role directly threatens compliance with:

- RSI expectations and DE regulations (Title 5 §55204)
- Faculty evaluation training and consistency (III.A.5 & III.A.9)
- Evidence-based improvement cycles (I.B.5 & I.B.9)

ACCJC is explicit that PD must be coordinated, systematic, and tied to pedagogy. Without a coordinator, PD becomes fragmented or superficial—an accreditation risk.

3. Compliance & Risk Mitigation Require a permanent PD Coordinator

Several federal, state, and district obligations require structured, faculty-driven training:

- ADA/504 accessibility and Office of Civil Rights (OCR) compliance
- Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) for federal financial aid
- AB 705/1705 implementation
- FERPA, Title IX, and online teaching standards

A PD Coordinator directly mitigates institutional exposure by ensuring faculty training is timely, consistent, and documented.

Current Challenges

1. Administration is not upholding their responsibility to collegial consultation with Academic Senate on PD related matters.

Because PD is one of the 10+1 areas, the administration should not unilaterally restructure, remove, or defund the PD program without Academic Senate participation, as defined in Title 5 §53203. PD is faculty work, and therefore, requires faculty leadership in both design and implementation. This should include collegial consultation with Academic Senate in the redesign of PD positions, in determining the process by which individuals are selected for those positions, and in the design and implementation of PD activities.

- Academic Senate was not notified that the Associate PD Dean position was lapsing.
- Academic Senate was not consulted in the development of the new Interim Dean position merging PD with DE, Library, LRC, Perkins, and Strong Workforce oversight responsibilities. Nor was Academic Senate notified of the budgetary plans for this position. The funding mechanism in place for this position is still unclear. If it continues to be attached to temporary grant funds, that may jeopardize the stability of this role and the PD department as a whole.
- Academic Senate was excluded from appointing faculty to participate in the hiring process utilized to select the new Interim Dean candidate.
- Academic Senate was not consulted in the determination to utilize short term grant funds (Equitable Placement Grant) to fund the current Faculty PD Coordinator position, nor was discussion had about the interim nature of that funding plan.
- Academic Senate has not been afforded the opportunity to participate in any planning meetings to identify a permanent solution to ensure that the Faculty PD Coordinator position is institutionalized and incorporated into our ongoing budget planning.

Faculty-led professional development is not optional programming, it is a legal and governance requirement. An effective PD Department is necessary to meet those obligations, and a permanent Faculty PD Coordinator is the essential role through which MSJC fulfills its Title 5, Education Code, and accreditation-related obligations.

2. There is not sufficient staffing, or alternate faculty, to absorb the duties of a PD Coordinator and maintain effective faculty participation in Professional Development beyond Spring of 2026.

The current PD Coordinator position is funded from the Equitable Placement Grant, which expires at the end of the Spring 2026 semester. Currently, there are not any institutional plans to ensure a permanent replacement for that position. The duties of the Professional Development Coordinator cannot be redistributed without creating significant operational and governance problems. If this role lapses, responsibilities would fall to individuals or offices that are neither structurally designed, nor contractually obligated to perform them, including:

- The DE Expert, who is only a 50% position, which is already well below that which is needed to effectively support faculty in the demands and training needs associated with maintaining effective distance education.
- Department Chairs, who are not fairly and appropriately compensated for their existing duties, and therefore, do not have the added capacity to absorb the additional training responsibilities associated with onboarding a large cohort of faculty in the coming academic year without the support of an effective PD department, including a consistent and qualified Faculty PD Coordinator.
- Senate Officers, who are also not appropriately compensated, and do not have the capacity to absorb those roles. Additionally, some officers are not compensated at all for their associated tasks, and the amount of compensation varies across faculty classification which already strains capacity on some faculty in Senate positions.
- There are also not sufficient Administrators available to ensure the integrity of PD.
 - The Interim PD Associate Dean position expired without a clear replacement plan in place.
 - A new Interim Dean of PD, DE, Library, LRC, Strong Workforce and Perkins position was developed, but has yet to be filled.
 - The previous PD Dean, who was best positioned to take on this new role, just announced they will be exercising their retreat rights and returning to a faculty position. Therefore, any person stepping into the new role will be learning their administrative responsibilities, and with the addition of so many other responsibilities, will have limited time to commit wholly to PD.
 - Furthermore, this position was approved as an Interim position, and it is unclear if this position is also relying on temporary grant funding and not factored into our ongoing institutional budgeting, which could further jeopardize the ongoing stability of the PD Department.

- Ad hoc volunteers are inconsistent, inequitable, and unsustainable as a means of supporting quality and effective PD needs of a growing institution in a critical transition period.

Decentralizing faculty PD work creates immediate risk to instructional quality, accreditation readiness, consistency in faculty evaluation training, and compliance with state and federal mandates. The PD Coordinator provides the cohesive infrastructure that ensures PD is planned, communicated, implemented, and evaluated systematically with faculty. No existing role can assume these duties without compromising institutional effectiveness or violating governance requirements.

3. Effective processes for the successful onboarding of Full-Time Faculty and Associate Faculty are essential and now at risk without a stable PD Department and assurance of a permanent Faculty PD Coordinator.

With 28 new positions approved for the upcoming academic year—one of the largest cohorts in MSJC’s history—continuity in onboarding and mentoring is essential. A lapse in coordination would result in:

- No unified system for learning institutional policies, expectations, and culture
- Inconsistent preparation for evaluation processes
- Equity gaps between new hires and established faculty

Furthermore, Associate faculty, who teach a significant share of our courses, rely on PD as their primary access point for institutional knowledge, accreditation expectations, and instructional standards. We cannot leave associate faculty without structured support, as this directly impacts instructional quality and, ultimately, student success. Without a PD Coordinator, this access collapses, widening disparities across the faculty and reducing consistency in the student experience.

4. The PD Coordinator Sustains Institutional Culture & Collaboration

The PD Coordinator has been foundational in building:

- Cross-departmental collaboration
- Leadership development pathways
- Shared institutional values and pedagogical innovation

These functions cannot be decentralized, absorbed by volunteers, or performed intermittently without significant loss of continuity and morale.

5. Reallocation or Elimination of a PD Faculty Coordinator Creates Higher Long-Term Costs

Removing the PD Coordinator may appear to save money short-term, but it creates:

- Greater ADA/504 remediation work
- Increased grievance and audit risk
- DE compliance concerns
- Loss of consistency in evaluation training
- Reduced capacity to support equity initiatives
- Faculty burnout and turnover
- Lost opportunity to capture categorical and grant funds tied to PD

The PD Coordinator prevents far costlier institutional problems.

Request to the Administration and Board

The Academic Senate requests that the President and the Board of Trustees take immediate action as follows:

- 1. Hire a Permanent Faculty PD Coordinator** out of our General Fund at the expiration of the grant funded position in Spring of 2026, with no lapse between the end of the current grant-funded term and the establishment of a sustainable position. Given the commitment of the CCCCO to maintain robust PD funding allocations for the 2026 to 2027 budget, the ongoing importance of Professional Development as outlined in this memo, and the critical need for PD to onboard what is set to be a record breaking cohort size of faculty in the coming academic year, we ask the institution take the steps necessary to fund a permanent Faculty PD Coordinator position, as well as the additional instructional faculty if needed to offset that hire and remain in compliance with the 50% law.
 - 2. Establish appropriate structures and processes by which Administration collegially consults with Academic Senate on PD**, in order to ensure that Senate is part of the planning processes necessary to establish, review, and revise structures, positions, and processes associated with Professional Development in accordance with Title V.
 - 3. Revise current AP and BP as needed to ensure faculty involvement in the hiring of all Interim and Permanent positions related to PD**, and other areas that may apply to 10+1 Academic and Professional Matters, and therefore, fall within the purview of Academic Senate.
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Conclusion

The Academic Senate is committed to protecting Senate primacy on PD, and other areas that fall under Senate purview, as we believe our active role in these processes is essential to supporting student success and upholding our institutional values and commitment to providing transformative and equitable education and experiences. We deeply value the opportunity to build a strong and effective relationship between faculty, administration, and the Board. Instability in the administrative and faculty leadership in PD, even for a single term, significantly hinders faculty readiness, jeopardizes accreditation compliance, and creates avoidable institutional risk. Therefore, we stand ready to collaborate on identifying funding pathways and ensuring uninterrupted faculty support for PD, as well as stable administrative leadership for the PD department moving forward.

Sincerely,
MSJC Academic Senate