First Monday Report

Focus on Hiring Faculty:

What is the FON?

Issue 30, March 7, 2016

Understanding the FON

In a recent meeting with the Faculty Position Prioritization Committee (FPPC), the Faculty Obligation Number, also known as the "FON," was one of the topics of discussion. The FON drives many of our full-time faculty hiring decisions, at least in terms of the number of positions we hire each academic year.

After the meeting concluded, it occurred to me that the FON may not be broadly understood by the campus community since it originated about 28 years ago. At that time many of you may have been working outside of community colleges, you may have been in school—some of you in elementary school or even pre-school! In fact, a few of you were not yet born! At that time, I was already teaching on an hourly basis at Glendale Community College.
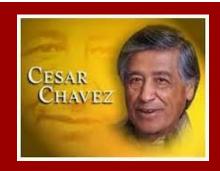
What is the origin of the FON?

The concept of the FON originated for California community colleges (CCC) in 1988 with the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 1725. This legislation established a goal of 75 percent of all *credit* instructional hours in community colleges being taught by

Events

March 7-10: Accreditation Site Visit
            Campus-wide

March 31: Cesar Chavez Day
           Campus Closed

New Administrators

Anafe Robinson

Acting Associate Dean

Ms. Anafe Robinson is responsible for supervising the department of Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS), the Health Center, and is serving as the college ombudsperson.

Anafe served as the Director of Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veterans and Foster Youth Programs at Pierce College since 2008. Prior to her position at Pierce College, she was the Director of Financial Aid & Scholarships at LA Mission College. Anafe holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration/Technology Management and a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. She has over 25 years of experience in the area of financial aid. She has been active at both CASFAA and CCCSFAAA for many years at varying capacities. Anafe is active in various campus committees and Task Forces such as Accreditation, Technology Committee, Go Days, Student Equity, and Strategic Planning. She is also active in District-wide committees and projects.

Larissa Nazarenko

Dean of Career and Technical Education

Ms. Larissa Nazarenko is responsible for overseeing the departments of CAOT, Child Development/Education, Computer Science Information Technology, Industrial Technology, Media Arts, and Nursing.

Larissa came to us from Allan Hancock College where she was a Fine Arts full time faculty member for eight years, two of those years spent as the department chair. She was appointed interim dean in 2014 then the permanent Dean of Fine Arts, Health Science, and Industrial Technology in 2015. As the dean, Larissa also supervised the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, more than 20 CTE programs, three apprenticeship programs and was involved with the South Central Coast Regional Consortium. Ms. Nazarenko received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Dance Pedagogy and Choreography from Altai State Institute of Arts and Culture; and her Master of Fine Arts from UC Irvine.

The origin of the FON

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qualified full-time faculty. To ensure compliance with the law, a specific requirement was established to hold community college districts accountable for meeting the goal, which is commonly referred to as 75/25. This requirement is the Faculty Obligation Number (FON).

Baseline compliance with the FON was established using the current full-time to part-time ratio in every CCC district during the 1988-1989 academic year. Once the baseline was established, the FON required that a district "make progress" annually on improving the full-time to part-time ratio in credit instruction. Simply put, if a "Nirvana College" had 100 full-time faculty members in a given year, it would meet its FON in the following year as long as there were 101 full-time faculty members employed by the reporting deadline. No specific percentage increase is required; however, districts are not allowed to fall below the FON except in years where there are workload reductions and *credit* instructional hours are reduced. Since workload reductions require the elimination of instructional hours, the full-time to part-time ratio generally improves due to the overall reduction in hours taught by adjunct faculty.

Initially, colleges received additional funding to add full-time faculty by assigning the required number of credit sections taught by adjunct faculty to full-time faculty loads. Such an action would increase the number of sections taught by full-time faculty in a specific discipline as long as additional hourly sections were not added to that discipline for the purposes of growth or expansion of that particular discipline due to other academic and/or institutional decisions. After a few years of increased funding to support the conversion of credit hourly sections into appropriate full-time loads, the priorities of the state shifted and the dedicated funding for those efforts was discontinued. However, the elimination of funding targeted to support the hiring of additional full-time faculty did not alleviate districts from having to meet the FON. It simply became an unfunded mandate until the current 2016 fiscal year when the CCCs received an allocation of $62.3 million dedicated to hiring full-time faculty. You may recall that this allocation translated into nine additional full-time faculty positions for Pierce College to be hired by fall 2016.

How is the FON calculated every year?

Each year the FON is calculated for every district in the state by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). Currently, reports are posted on the CCCCO website showing the FON calculations going back to fall 2006. This calculation is based on the language in Title 5, Section 51025, which requires districts to increase the number of full-time faculty over the prior year in proportion to the amount of funded growth in Full-time Equivalent Students (FTES). That seems fairly simple and straightforward. When have you ever known anything that we do in CCCs to be either simple or straightforward?

What is actually included in calculating the FON and what is excluded? Throughout this article, I have been careful to use the "*credit*" instructional hours. All of the district's funded growth in any given year, including summer FTES that are

Calculating the FON   *continued from page 3*

held in the current academic year, are part of calculating the district's FON. However, noncredit hours are not included in the FON only *credit* hours.

Since the FON emphasizes credit instructional hours and credit growth, are non-instructional faculty, such as counselors and librarians, included in the FON? Yes, they are! When we hire in those areas, which are also very important to the College's overall success and completion rates, they are counted as part of our FON compliance. However, full-time tenure-track noncredit instructional faculty members for colleges and districts who employ them are not counted in the FON.

What about full-time grant-funded faculty and full-time limited or long-term substitute faculty members? If the grant-funded faculty member is in a tenure-track position, she or he counts in the FON. If the grant-funded faculty member is in a limited or long-term substitute position, he or she is not counted in the FON. Only tenure-track positions count in FON compliance regardless of the funding source. In addition, full-time faculty on reassigned time count in FON compliance as do full-time faculty on sabbatical or leave, even if the leave is unpaid. These are the highlights of calculating the FON. Additional detailed descriptions of what is included in the calculation are outside the scope of this article

What happens if a district does not meet the FON, and what is the timeline for reporting compliance?

Recall that the FON is the accountability portion of the law requiring CCCs to "make progress" annually on the number of credit hours taught by full-time faculty. If "Nirvana College" had 100 full-time faculty in fall of 2013 and that number dropped to 95 full-time faculty in fall 2014, they would be fined for the number of positions they had fallen below their FON, which if you recall was 101—*one more position than the college employed in fall 2013.

Since Nirvana College fell six positions below their FON, the College would be fined for those positons, multiplied by the average replacement cost of a full-time faculty member, which is calculated on an annual basis by the State Chancellor's Office. In fall 2014, it was determined that cost was $73,057. Nirvana College's penalty for not meeting the fall 2014 FON would have been $438,342.

While the Board of Governors (BOG) has the authority to defer the payment of a penalty, they have no ability to waive the penalty. Title 5, Section 51025 (e) does not provide authority to waive the penalty for noncompliance with the FON. Whether Nirvana paid their fine in 2014 or the fine was deferred, eventually the College will have to pay the penalty. Any funds collected by the CCCCO for FON noncompliance are placed in an account to support diversity in hiring throughout the CCCs. When these dollars are allocated, they are one-time funds—not a permanent augmentation to a budget.

Timelines

Timelines in calculating and reporting the FON are somewhat flexible, but in most years the timeline is as follows:

- **September**: Advance FON is provided to districts for the following fall semester;
- **November**: The Board of Governors (BOG) determines the adequacy of funding for the current fiscal year, which impacts the following fall semester; and, Districts submit current fall semester FON compliance reports;
- **January**: Penalties are determined for the current academic year fall semester;
- **June**: Compliance FON is provided for the upcoming fall semester.

Generally, the concept of adequate funding applies in years when there are workload reductions. For example, the BOG determined that there was inadequate funding from 2008-2009 through 2012-2013. During this period the FON was frozen at the fall 2008 compliance number for all districts. A further detailed discussion of the processes around that decision-making by the BOG is outside the scope of this article. If you are interested in additional information, resources are available through the CCCCO and the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC).

The FON should not be used to create new programs.

The purpose of the FON is to increase the number of full-time faculty members teaching credit instructional hours. In order to improve the full-time to part-time ratio—the 75/25—the hours must already exist in the schedule. There is no improvement in the ratio if we hire a full-time faculty member for a discipline in which there are insufficient credit hours currently being offered. Conversely, it should not be seen as a means of preventing new programs from being considered and initiated by a college. New programs must go through a program initiation process to ensure that there is sufficient student interest in and need for the program.

In next month's First Monday Report (FMR), we will focus on program initiation from the perspective of meeting both state-wide and accreditation requirements for the creation and support of a new academic program.

*The example of adding one full position was simplified for the purposes of this article. The requirements are complex and fractional positions are applied in the actual calculations.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Andy Suleski, Kuldeep Kaur, and Mario Rodriguez, and the Association of College Business Officials (ACBO) in the preparation of this article. Their PowerPoint presentation titled "The Who, What, Where, and When of FON in California Community Colleges" was a wealth of information and data.