

Merced College Colleagues,

As you will recall, approximately 3 years ago we completed our [Educational Master Plan \(EMP\) and Strategic Implementation Plan \(SIP\)](#). We are entering Year 3 (of 5) of the EMP/SIP implementation—and we have met or exceeded all benchmarks of our master plans to-date. We will continue to work tirelessly on the goals and objectives of the EMP as well as the SIP. At the same time, the past six months or so have shed light on some glaring holes in our current plan. As such, I am convening a task force to meet and discuss how we can best address these gaps and embed them in the remaining years of our EMP and SIP.

First, we certainly did not anticipate a worldwide pandemic when developing our current master plans. However, we would be remiss not to discuss and embed how we, as Merced College, can learn from the urgency, innovation, and adoption of technology and other practices to serve our students and community. It is incumbent on us as a College to find ways to institutionalize and operationalize the “best” of this situation and include these newest innovations in our master planning processes. Another way to think about this is when this pandemic goes away, what will we look like, what worked well, what should we adopt, how should we be prepared for the new normal? The task force will work on developing a goal with objectives and activities to help us address these questions and more.

Second, we have engaged in conversations related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racism more than ever in the past several months. These conversations stem from years of significant injustices and inequities within our society—not to mention a heightened awareness of local, state, and national incidences of racism towards people of color, cultures, and religions. As a College and institution of higher education, we have a responsibility to address inequities and do our part to end systemic racism—for our students, our employees, and within our community. As such, this task force will work on developing a goal with objectives and activities to help us address diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As you will notice from the timeline below, this is a very succinct and truncated process. The reasons for such a tight timeline are 1) if we wait until COVID-19 has passed to discuss next steps/lessons learned as an institution, then we will be forced to “react” versus “proactively” planning and implementing agreed upon activities and 2) Issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion not only should have been a part of the original master plan (admittedly a glaring oversight), but deserve our immediate attention and a defined plan of action as an institution. Simply put, these are issues and priorities that require us to prioritize them at the highest level and to work quickly to embed them into our institutionalized master planning efforts.

After reviewing the timeline below, if you are interested and able to participate in the tentatively planned meeting dates (the first one as early as this Friday), then please email me directly with your interest by 12 noon on Wednesday, October 14. The goal will be to include a diverse representation of constituency membership on the task force. I will consult with constituency leadership on all appointments Wednesday afternoon and notify the selected task force members by the end of day on Wednesday. *NOTE: All meetings of the Special EMP Task Force will be held via Zoom.*

Tentative Timeline to Draft Goals, Objectives, and Activities:

MEETING DATES	OUTCOME	NEXT STEPS
Special EMP Task Force Mtg #1 October 16, 2020 / 1:30 - 3:00 PM Special EMP Task Force Mtg #2 October 20, 2020 / 3:00 - 4:30 PM	Draft two new EMP goals and objectives developed and sent for review/discussion/feedback	Send for review to Cabinet, Leadership Team, Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and Student Leadership; Send electronically to EMPC for review/feedback
Special EMP Task Force Mtg #3 October 29, 2020 / 9:00 – 10:30 AM	Revise/update new EMP goals and objectives based on feedback from constituency groups and EMPC.	Send for second reading/review to Cabinet, Leadership Team, Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and Student and Board of Trustees
Board of Trustees November 10, 2020	First draft review of new EMP goals and objectives presented by the Special EMP Task Force	Feedback from the Board of Trustees and constituencies shared with the EMP Task Force to review, revise, update, etc. as needed
Special EMP Task Force Mtg #4 November 16, 2020 / 3:00 - 4:30 PM	Finalize new EMP goals and objectives; Develop draft activities for the SIP	Send for review to Cabinet, Leadership Team, Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and Student Leadership; Send electronically to EMPC for review/feedback
Educational Master Planning Committee (EMPC) Special Meeting to Review/Discuss <i>DATE TBD</i>	Review, discuss, and provide feedback on new EMP goals and objectives and activities for the SIP	Feedback from EMPC shared with the EMP Task Force to review, revise, update, etc. as needed
Special EMP Task Force Mtg #5 December 1, 2020 / 3:00 - 4:30 PM	Finalize new activities for the SIP	Send for final EMP goals and objectives and SIP activities to Cabinet, Leadership Team, Academic Senate, Classified Senate, and Student Leadership; Send to Board for final approval
EMPC Meeting December 5, 2020	EMPC considers approval/adoption of the new EMP goals & objectives and new SIP activities	Send to Superintendent/President for final approval and recommendation to the Board of Trustees
Board of Trustees December 15, 2020	Board considers final approval/adoption of the new EMP goals & objectives and new SIP activities	Begin implementation of new EMP goals & objectives and new SIP activities in spring 2021 and beyond

Thank you in advance for your interest and cooperation as we work to address these two important issues. Ultimately, we will have a stronger master plan and a better-prepared College to begin a new year and a new start in 2021. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Chris