

Merced College Professional Development Plan 2025 - 2026



Supporting Growth, Excellence, and Innovation

Executive Summary

The 2025–2026 Professional Development Plan for Merced College provides a strategic framework to strengthen employee growth, institutional effectiveness, and student success. Guided by the College's mission to transform lives through education and workforce development, the plan connects professional learning with Merced College's core values of equity, collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Developed by the Professional Development Committee under the Human Resources Council, this plan fulfills state and local mandates, including compliance with the Chancellor's Office Flex Calendar program and Merced College's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. It serves as a living document informed by annual survey data and responsive to the evolving needs of faculty, classified professionals, and administrators.

Key components include:

- **Professional Development Overview:** Defines professional development as both skillbuilding and career advancement, linking all activities to student learning and institutional goals.
- **FLEX Program:** Provides time for faculty to engage in instructional, student, and employee improvement activities that enhance teaching and learning.
- **Program Model:** Outlines a holistic approach connecting individual, program, and organizational development.
- **Committee Roles:** Establishes representative governance to ensure transparency, communication, and alignment across employee groups.
- **Needs Assessment Survey:** Summarizes Fall 2024 results identifying focus areas in technology, student support, innovation, enrichment, and health and safety.

Survey findings show strong interest in areas such as artificial intelligence, open educational resources, student mental health, accessibility, and workplace well-being. These priorities reflect Merced College's ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive and innovative environment that supports employee and student success.

Overall, the 2025–2026 Professional Development Plan positions professional growth as a key component of institutional excellence, ensuring that Merced College continues to adapt, engage, and meet the educational and workforce needs of its community.

Merced College's Mission and Vision

Mission

At Merced College, students are our focus, and we are known by their success. We transform lives through education and workforce development.

Vision

Enriching our community through educational experiences and support services:

- Degree/Certificate Programs
- Transfer
- Career Technical Education
- Workforce Training
- Lifelong Learning
- Basic Skills
- Community Engagement

Merced College promotes student success through equitable access, continuous quality improvement, and institutional effectiveness, all with a focus on student achievement.

Core Values

Student Engagement & Support

Merced College prioritizes student access and success.

Trust & Communication

Merced College promotes an atmosphere of trust where communication and teamwork cultivate an environment rich for teaching and learning.

Innovation & Technology

Merced College utilizes agility, innovation, technology, and responsible risk-taking to anticipate the needs of the future.

Collaboration

Merced College actively engages with the campus community and community partners to respond to cultural, educational, economic, and technological needs.

Critical Thinking

Merced College strives for continuous improvement based on data-driven self-reflection, objective assessment, and dialogue to develop creative solutions for current and future challenges.

Inclusivity

Merced College celebrates the diversity in our community by cultivating an inclusive and equitable college environment. We value the experiences of our diverse campus community and recognize that our collective identity is strengthened by all our lived experiences.

Well-being & Happiness

Merced College fosters and values an environment supporting student and employee well-being, engagement, and happiness.

Professional Development Overview

Staff development activities should be linked to the mission and values of the college, the Educational Master Plan, and/or the Strategic Implementation Plan. The ultimate purpose of staff development is to improve and promote student learning while developing and maintaining an engaged, equipped and knowledgeable faculty and staff.

What is Professional Development?

The term "staff development" often refers generally to an institution's desire to provide generalized training to staff (job-related skills), while "professional development" often refers to the institution's desire to provide opportunities to enhance the employee's individual professional training and expertise (career-related skills). For the purposes of this plan, the District is exercising a combined approach in examining and supporting both staff and professional development opportunities.

Professional development includes a wide variety of specialized training or formal education within the workplace or through outside organizations with the intention to supporting administrators, faculty, and classified professionals in improving their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness.

The goal of the professional development program is to provide resources, training and opportunities that support the professional development needs of college employees; create a cohesive and supportive environment that recognizes and celebrates achievement; and improve institutional effectiveness with the ultimate goal of supporting student success.

Plan Purpose and Parameters

This plan is the product of the Human Resources Council's Professional Development Committee and is a living document. The plan of the annual survey results for each of the constituency groups. Surveying employees on a calendar or mid-academic year cycle allows the committee time to gauge program effectiveness and to deliver surveys during the regular faculty work year (increasing the number of responses). The plan provides guidance to the Professional Development Committee, ensures transparency to employees at large, and meets the requirements of the Chancellor's Office Flex Calendar program and Merced College's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan.

FLEX Program

The purpose of the flexible calendar program is to provide time for faculty to participate in development activities that are related to "staff, student, and instructional improvement" (title 5, section 55720). The flexible calendar program is a component of the staff development program and the major vehicle for faculty participation in development activities.

The flexible calendar program allows faculty (full-time, part-time, instructional and noninstructional) the time to work individually or with groups to achieve improvement in three distinct areas:

- Employee improvement
- Student improvement
- Instructional improvement

The Professional Development Program Model

Any successful model must consider the framework within which professional development occurs. Staff, program, and organization are all impacted – positively or negatively – by the professional development programs it has in place.

Our Staff

Need opportunities so they can become more effective in their college role.

Our Programs

Can benefit from activities any systems instituted at the college and departmental level with the result being better service to students.

Our Organization

Benefits from initiatives and systems while providing for the continuous improvement of our college.

Professional Development Committee

The professional development committee is composed of representatives from faculty, classified professional, and management groups. The District's Chief Human Resources Officer serves as the committee chair and is a permanent member of the committee. Meetings are scheduled quarterly and the notes and agendas are available for public viewing. Below is a list of the professional development committee functions and goals:



Committee Goal

Develop and improve professional development opportunities for each employee group



Committee Scope

1. Create a holistic, comprehensive and longitudinal staff development plan/path
2. Members communicate from/to the committee to/from constituency groups



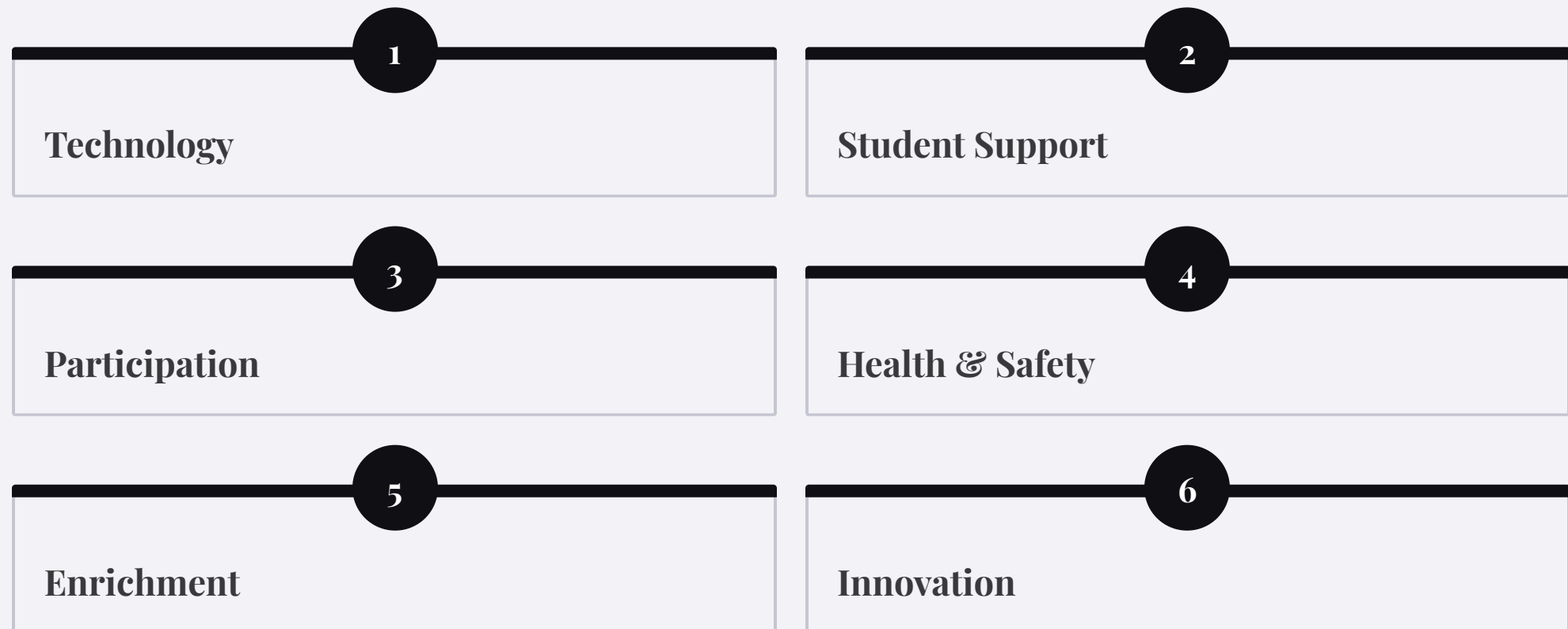
Committee Functions

1. Facilitate and encourage skill development/training and employee retention
2. Develop processes for the creation and development of staff training and professional development opportunities
3. Identify skills development and cross-training needs and assist in meeting those needs
4. Conduct needs assessment surveys to determine training needs and effectiveness
5. Perform regular reviews/evaluations of training activities

Staff Development Needs Assessment Survey

Survey methodology: The survey was conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Merced College employees were invited via email to participate in the survey on November 22, 2024, with a general link sent to all current permanent and probationary employees as well as adjunct faculty. The survey closed on December 13, 2024.

Survey Topic Areas



FALL 2024 RESULTS



Professional Development Survey, ~ Fall 2024 ~

Results for:

Overall Responses



Fall 2024 - Overall

Respondents

A total of

216

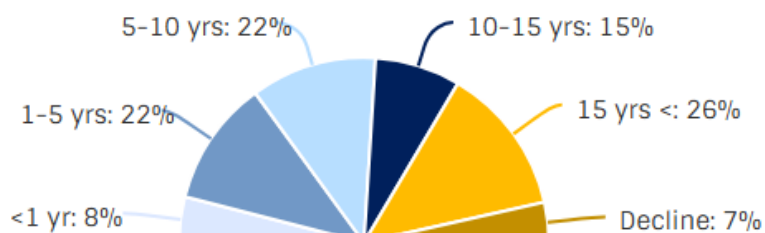
employees
entered the
survey

Top Interests

High interest in:
1) learning more
about community
resources to
support students
& 2) artificial
intelligence



Years Employed at the College (N: 144)



Division Participation (N: 143)

- 13% Administrative Services
- 44% Instructional
- 24% Student Services
- 10% HR, IA ,ITS & President's Office
- 9% Declined to State

Association (N: 146)

- 19% Leadership Team
- 48% Classified Professional
- 21% FT Faculty
- 12% PT Faculty

Fall 2024 - Overall

Enrichment

DECISION- & MAKING & ENGAGEMENT



were top themes in the professional enrichment categories

Comments

- Responding to academic dishonesty and AI
- AI and the law

Top 3 Selections

Classified Professional:

- 1 - Creative problem solving (92%)
- 2 - Involvement in Decision-Making Process (85%)
- 3 - Tied: Conflict Management Skills & Dealing with Challenging Customers (83%)



FT Faculty:

- 1 - Optimizing Learning Resources (87%)
- 2 - Maximizing Canvas (79%)
- 3 - Involvement in Decision-Making Processes (76%, Tie)



PT Faculty:

- 1 - Addressing Achievement Gap (100%)
- 2 - Tied: Classroom Technology/ Engaging Online Students (86%)
- 3 - Optimizing Learning Resources (79%)



Leadership Team:

- 1 - Conflict Management (97%)
- 2 - Tied: Employee Engagement (94%)
- 3 - Tied: Supervisory Skills, Recruitment/Retention, & Budget (93%)

Fall 2024 - Overall

Innovation

#1 Selection

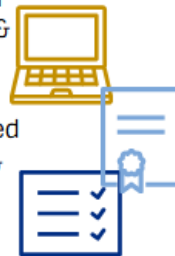
83% Interested in **Artificial Intelligence.**



- #1 selection for all employee groups
- 53% introductory & 30% advanced

Other Innovative Topics:

- 75% interested in Open Educational Resources (OER): 55% introductory & 20% advanced
- 74% interested in Competency Based Education (CBE): 55% introductory & 19% advanced
- 67% interested in Credit for Prior Learning (CPL): 51% introductory & 16% advanced



Fall 2024 - Overall

Technology



Creating Accessible Documents

made the top 3 selections across all employee groups

Comments

- Editing MC webpages
- AI
- Tableau
- Photoshop
- Class Climate

Top 3 Selections

Classified Professional:

- 1 - Accessible Documents (85%)
- 2 - Adobe (83%)
- 3 - Microsoft 365 (79%)



FT Faculty:

- 1 - Accessible Documents (89%)
- 2 - Microsoft Teams (79%)
- 3 - Adobe (75%)



PT Faculty:

- 1 - Tied: Accessible Documents & Adobe (93%)
- 2 - eLumen (79%)
- 3 - Tied: Canvas, Laserfische, Navigate (71%)



Leadership Team:

- 1 - Colleague (94%)
- 2 - Tied: Teams, Smartsheet, & Accessible Documents (90%)
- 3 - Microsoft 365 (87%)

Fall 2024 - Overall

Student Support

Over

80%

interested in learning more about all 7 topics listed for student support



Learning more community resources was in the top 3 across all classifications

Comments

- Best practices for better serving Hispanic students
- Provide combined training for all 7 topics listed in this question
- Support for undocumented students and other special populations

Top 3 Selections

Classified Professional:

- 1 - Community Resources (90%)
- 2 - Housing Insecurity Resources (83%)
- 3 - Food Insecurity Resources (81%)



FT Faculty:

- 1 - Tied: Mental Health & Students with Disabilities (86%)
- 2 - Community Resources (83%)
- 3 - Academic Support (81%)



PT Faculty:

- 1 - Tied: Student Mental Health/ Community Resources (100%)
- 2 - Tied: Students with Disabilities, Academic Support, Food/ Housing Resources, Anti-Violence (93%)



Leadership Team:

- 1 - Community Resources (87%)
- 2 - Tied: Anti-Violence & Mental Health Resources (84%)
- 3 - Anti-Violence Support & Resources (88%)

Fall 2024 - Overall

Participation

Participating in current MC Offerings

(N: 147)



61% have completed WBI

54% Interested in ELI

51% Interested in PLA



Comments

- High satisfaction with WBI and ELI programs
- More workshops in late afternoon

Top 3 Reasons Preventing Participation

(N: 133)

70% Poor Timing/Scheduling

54% Too Busy

37% Lack of Relevant Offerings



Top 3 Preferred Modality

(N: 146)

78% In-Person workshops

60% Online, self-paced

53% Online, group workshops



What else would you like the MC Staff Development Committee to consider?

Comments:

- Standardized mandatory training for new managers
- Interview best practices
- More support for handling academic dishonesty through AI
- Make sure rooms are large enough for group size
- Consider PT employee constraints
- Support/promote more external training opportunities



Fall 2024 - Overall

Health & Safety

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES



were in the top 3 selections
for most classifications

Comments

- More offerings like Well-Being

Top 3 Selections

Classified Professional:

- 1 - Tied: First Aid/CPR & Dept. Emergency Procedures (88%)
- 2 - Campus Emergency Procedures (86%)
- 3 - Creating Healthy Workspace (85%)



FT Faculty:

- 1 - Tied: Active Shooter & Workplace Violence (89%)
- 2 - Mental Health Resources (76%)
- 3 - Tied: Emergency Procedures & Healthy Workspace (74%)

PT Faculty:

- 1 - Mental Health Resources (93%)
- 2 - Tied: Dept. Emergency Procedures & Healthy Workspace (86%)
- 3 - Campus Emergency Procedures (79%)



Leadership Team:

- 1 - Active Shooter Training (97%)
- 2 - Campus Emergency Procedures (94%)
- 3 - Dept. Emergency Procedures (91%)



Summary

The categories surveyed revealed the following areas of focus:

Innovation

Artificial Intelligence, Open Educational Resources (OER), Competency Based Education (CBE) and Credit for Prior Learning (CPL).

Student Support

Community Resources, Housing and Food Insecurity Resources, Student Mental Health, Support for Students with Disabilities

Technology

Accessible Documents, Adobe Tools, Microsoft 365 Teams, Learning Platforms (Canvas, eLumen, Navigate)

Enrichment

Creative Problem-Solving, Conflict Management, Decision-Making & Employee Engagement, Optimizing Teaching & Learning Resources

Health and Safety

Emergency Procedures, Mental Health Resources, Creating Healthy Workspaces, Anti-Violence Training

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Classified PD Survey Results

Appendix B: FT Faculty PD Survey Results

Appendix C: PT Faculty PD Survey Results

Appendix D: Overall PD Survey Results