



ALAMO
COLLEGES
DISTRICT

Presidents and Vice Chancellors

To: Executive Faculty Council (EFC)

From: PVC

RE: **Response to Lab Loading Proposal**

Date: May 7, 2018

Thank you for the continuous efforts of the EFC committee to respond to the original charge by United Faculty Senate to identify and recommend solutions for lab loading across the Alamo Colleges District:

- The history of lab loading at each of the five colleges
- How the current lab loading ratio impacts student instruction
- Identify other college or university models for lab loading
- Recommend an appropriate model for lab loading
- Recommend funding solution
- Providing a report outlining the budget and staffing impact at each of the five colleges

The presentation was well received. However, the estimated cost of full implementation of the original proposal in its current status is ultimately cost prohibitive and does not address strategies to redesign lab instruction. Therefore, further research of best practices is needed and must include plans to mitigate costs.

The PVC is aware that engaging students in workforce, science, technology, engineering, and math fields has emerged as a national priority, and the economic forecasts have shown the need for millions of workers. In the realm of higher education, we expect rapid growth of workforce and STEM fields which will only exacerbate the funding challenges that Alamo Colleges District is currently experiencing.

To assist in the further development of thoughtful, innovative solutions that include strategies, not only to reduce costs but address fundamental pedagogy elements of lab loading, we recommend additional analysis. We realize this will require extensive work from various stakeholders, but we feel this extra effort would be of value. We have identified three categories that will need further analysis:

1. **Faculty Promotion** – We encourage the EFC to change the current promotion and develop a model that values the effort by workforce faculty. Consider a model that





moves toward mastery of teaching and student learning and forward to PVC your proposal.

2. **Workforce lab-ratio** – Since the workforce has a long-standing history of trying to realize equitable load of lab fees, we will support the creations of an ad-hoc committee that has at least 50% membership of workforce faculty and representatives. This committee should be charged to begin analysis of any workforce program that has outside program certification requirements and develops a timeline for solutions for the remainder of the workforce programs. The research should address the following:
 - a. What is the number of full-time and adjunct faculty (FTE's) including benefits that will be impacted by discipline? Identify the number of potential faculty that will need to be hired to backfill for labs by discipline?
 - b. Complete a landscape analysis by discipline that may impact decisions on the lab load environment.
 - c. Describe how peer institutions within the proposal handled their lab load transition, what changes in pedagogy resulted? What retraining occurred and what funding sources were utilized to achieve improved lab ratio equity?
 - d. What alternative resources could be leveraged to provide relief to faculty that can improve the pedagogy and significantly cut instructional costs while improving student outcomes.

3. **Academic Lab-ratio** – Prioritize by Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines
 - a. What are the number of full-time and adjunct faculty (FTE's) including benefits that will be impacted by discipline? Identify the number of potential faculty that will need to be hired to backfill for labs by discipline?
 - b. Complete a landscape analysis by discipline that may impact decisions on the lab load environment.
 - c. Describe how peer institutions within the proposal handled their lab load transition, what changes in pedagogy resulted, what retraining occurred and what funding sources were utilized to achieve improved lab ratio equity?
 - d. What alternative resources could be leveraged to provide relief to faculty that can improve the pedagogy and significantly cut instructional costs while improving student outcomes. Solving for other forms of “active learning.” And having “labs” that could be open day and night that use tutors and interactive software to provide individualized instruction in math and writing until the desired competency is achieved.



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We are committed to investing in the diversity of education, as we feel this is a long-term investment. We also recommend that the ad-hoc committee send several representatives to the AFIT summer institute to begin their work on this proposal. A maximum number of 6 faculty/representatives across Alamo Colleges (1 per College and 1 DSO) attend the AFIT summer institute to begin this analysis
<https://afithighered.com/events/summer-institute/>:

When: August 1–4, 2018

Where: Country Club Plaza – Kansas City, MO

Learning Theme: Business Model Transformation

We request that the EFC prioritize and develop a timeline for a redesign that have significant cut in instructional costs while improving student outcomes that spans across three funding cycles.

We would like to thank the committee for the preliminary analysis and look forward to continuing to improve student success.

Regards,

The Alamo Colleges Presidents and Vice Chancellors

