

Resolution FA5.05 Reimbursement of Tuition for Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts Coursework for College President

SBVC Academic Senate Executive Committee

Whereas, Education Code Section 70902(4) states that community college district Board of Trustees “employ and assign all personnel not inconsistent with the minimum standards adopted by the board of governors and establish employment practices, salaries, and benefits for all employees not inconsistent with the laws of this state”;

Whereas, on 2/6/15 the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) cited San Bernardino Valley College (SBVC) with a deficiency noting the “The California State Chancellor previously determined that an equivalency existed for purposes of state minimum qualifications to teach at the community college level. However, the College President does not have a degree from a college recognized by a U.S. accrediting agency as is required for institutional compliance with ACCJC Accrediting Standards,” and SBVC “must ensure that the President holds an appropriate degree from an institution accredited by a recognized U.S. accrediting agency at the time the degree was awarded”;

Whereas, San Bernardino Community College District (SBCCD) AP 7250 states that management personnel are eligible for professional growth which includes tuition reimbursement from an accredited institution but according to ACCJC, College President Fisher does not meet College President minimum qualifications; and

Whereas, on 8/13/15 SBCCD Board of Trustees approved tuition reimbursement for Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts coursework at Pacific Oaks College for College President Fisher who does not hold minimum educational qualifications for the position of College President as cited by ACCJC and the SBCCD Chancellor electronically notified the campus on 4/19/15 that College President Fisher will correct the ACCJC deficiency and recommendation by completing Bachelor of Arts equivalency and Master of Arts degree in Human Development at Pacific Oaks College;

Resolved, the SBVC Academic Senate urges the SBCCD Board of Trustees to rescind the decision to reimburse tuition funds to College President Fisher and any future tuition reimbursements related to Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts coursework or until such time that College President Fisher has met the minimum educational qualifications for the position of College President as determined by ACCJC.

Appendix

EDUCATION CODE SECTION 87150-87154

87150. There is hereby established the Community College Professional Development Program, to be administered by the board of governors, the purpose of which is to provide state general funds to community colleges for supporting locally developed and implemented faculty and staff development programs.

87151. The board of governors shall annually allocate funds, when appropriated for purposes of this article, only to a community college district whose chief executive officer has submitted to the chancellor an affidavit that includes all of the following:

(a) A statement that each campus within the community college district has an advisory committee, composed of administrators, faculty, and staff representatives, which has assisted in the assessment of the faculty and staff development needs and in the design of the plan to meet those needs.

(b) A campus human development resources plan has been completed for the current and subsequent fiscal years.

(c) A report of the actual expenditures for faculty and staff development for the preceding year.

87152. (a) Any funding appropriated for purposes of this article shall be allocated to the community college districts that provide professional development opportunities to both faculty and staff. Funding shall be disbursed in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the board of governors.

(b) Community college districts that receive funding pursuant to this section shall include the employee's time used participating in the Community College Professional Development Program in the employee's contractually obligated hours.

87153. The authorized uses of funds allocated under this article shall include all of the following:

(a) Improvement of teaching.

(b) Maintenance of current academic and technical knowledge and skills.

(c) In-service training for vocational education and employment preparation programs.

(d) Retraining to meet changing institutional needs.

(e) Intersegmental exchange programs.

(f) Development of innovations in instructional and administrative techniques and program effectiveness.

(g) Computer and technological proficiency programs.

(h) Courses and training implementing affirmative action and upward mobility programs.

(i) Other activities determined to be related to educational and professional development pursuant to criteria established by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, including, but not necessarily limited to, programs designed to develop self-esteem.

87154. This article shall be operative during any fiscal year only if funds are provided therefor in the annual Budget Act for that fiscal year or other legislation.

Thu 4/9/2015 11:17 AM

Good morning:

President Gloria Fisher has informed me of the steps that she is taking to meet the ACCJC recommendation regarding her academic degree.

Background

President Gloria Fisher meets the minimum qualifications for the position of college president based on the legal opinion of the State Chancellor's Office and the California Court of Appeals. Based on the third party complaint filed with the ACCJC by SBVC instructor Leonard Lopez, the Commission included a special recommendation under the heading "Need to Satisfy Deficiencies from Third Party Complaint".

The Commission made no judgment regarding President Fisher meeting minimum qualifications for the position but rather focused on whether her degree meets accreditation standards. In the recommendation, the Commission stated:

"In order to meet standards, the college must ensure that the President holds an appropriate degree from an institution accredited by a recognized U.S. accrediting agency at the time the degree was awarded".

President Fisher's Action on the Recommendation

In response to the recommendation, President Fisher is enrolling in the Masters of Arts in Human Development Program (specializing in Educational Leadership and Human Services) at Pacific Oaks College for the fall 2015 semester that begins in September. Pacific Oaks College is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) which meets the ACCJC standard. The program is online and can take up to two years to complete with the goal of completing in less time. Over the summer, Gloria will accomplish some requirements in order to receive the Bachelor's Degree equivalency from Pacific Oaks in preparation for the Master's program.

Accreditation Reporting

The progress toward this goal will be included in SBVC's March 15, 2016 follow-up report to the ACCJC. Based on how the ACCJC responded to similar situations at other districts, we believe it is likely that the Commission will find President Fisher's progress to be satisfactory, especially given the anticipated timeline for program completion.

In conclusion

I want to remind everyone about the recruitment process that resulted in Gloria Fisher's name being forwarded to me as a finalist. The screening committee followed all required processes and procedures. The membership of the screening committee included the following individuals: Jeremiah Gilbert, Sheri Lillard, Mary Valdemar, Sarah Miller, Clyde Williams, Marco Cota, Debra Gallagher, Tiffany Guzman. Gloria Fisher's name and the names of two other candidates were forwarded to me with the understanding that the Committee felt comfortable that ANY ONE OF THE THREE candidates were qualified to hold the position of president.

Gloria Fisher was appointed as president with a two year contract. Her appointment was approved by a 7 - 0 vote of the Board of Trustees. President Fisher deserves your support and cooperation as we work together to move San Bernardino Valley College forward in its important work.

Sincerely,

Bruce Baron