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**DATE:** July 27, 2026
**TO:** Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC)
**FROM:** Jonathan Eldridge, Superintendent/President
**RE:** Response to PRAC FY 2026-27 Recommendations

Thank you to all members of the Planning & Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) for your work this year, culminating in your recommendations outlined in the May 27, 2026, memo to me from co-chairs Meg Pasquel and Dana Emerson (attached for reference). I appreciate the effort members put into reviewing departmental presentations, engaging in deliberation, and forwarding recommendations under PRAC's charge to link program review and strategic planning to resource allocation recommendations.

My response is organized in four parts. Part I addresses the substance of PRAC's recommendations for fiscal year 2026-27. Part II responds to requests for documentation within the co-chairs' memo to me (also attached for reference). Part III provides clarification regarding PRAC's role and responsibilities. Part IV addresses procedural and governance concerns that emerged during this year's PRAC process and that I ask PRAC to resolve as the College moves into the next academic year.

# PART I: Response to Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 Recommendations

PRAC recommended funding for the following requests, totaling $314,422 in new general fund commitments (excluding the MESA counselor units, which carry available program funding). I address each recommendation below.

## MESA Study Groups — $10,422 | ACCEPTED

I accept this recommendation. MESA's track record of serving a high volume of students, including students from historically underrepresented groups in STEM, is well documented. In 2025-2026, MESA had 110 active student members, with 21 students transferring to pursue STEM degrees at four-year universities, 20 students doing MESA-directed projects, and 8 students obtaining paid internships at the Buck Institute. MESA held 49 events, offered tutoring for 14 STEM classes, and held weekly facilitated study groups for 6 STEM classes. MESA is also actively engaged in community outreach and engagement efforts. The programming model of combining student-led and faculty-led groups across nine STEM courses is cost-effective and scalable. The $10,422 requested will be incorporated into the FY 2026-27 budget.

## MESA Counselor — 14 Units | ACCEPTED WITH PLANNING DIRECTIVE

I accept the spirit of this recommendation. The committee is correct that the current funding picture—with state base funding of approximately $280,000, a proportional share of approximately $131,000, and a projected rollover of $380,000 for FY 2026-27—means the College does not need to commit unrestricted general funds to this position in the immediate future. However, the anticipated long-term state revenue of $340,000 annually may create a gap that planning should address proactively.

I am asking Nicole McIntyre, MESA Director, Andy Zink, the new Dean of Math & Sciences, and Stormy Miller Sabia, Associate Vice President of Counseling and Student Services, to develop a funding sustainability plan for the MESA counselor units by January 2027, with analysis of how this and other specific counseling assignments fit within the larger picture of general counseling (such as, whether these assignments serve students who otherwise seek general counseling). The funding sustainability plan should have a clear trigger point for when general fund support would need to be phased in. This work should involve faculty and Fiscal Services staff and be shared with PRAC, which can then incorporate into future recommendations as needed.

## Library Tech and Library Director | DEFERRED FOR NOW

While I understand and appreciate the rationale for these requests, further considerations are needed to fully appreciate the potential implications of hiring an additional library tech and a library director in particular. The current Library Chair and Coordinator roles were created when the director role was eliminated and would become obsolete or significantly limited if a director were hired. Given these roles are now codified within the faculty collective bargaining agreement, the Interim Dean of Arts & Humanities will need to engage UPM in conversation about the implications of this shift. Additionally, the qualifications and specific duties of a library director (should that person be a librarian), need to be thought through to avoid any issues about whether their work is appropriately the work of the faculty or classified staff under the collective bargaining unit(s). If so, the District would have to negotiate the transfer of duties from the bargaining unit to management. The answers to these questions may also have an impact on whether there is a need for the additional library tech and whether there is a need for one or two full-time librarians. This is why in the section below on faculty hiring I reference approving a search for up to two librarians. I expect the conversation about these considerations to be completed ahead of making offers in the faculty search.

## AbsenceSoft Leave Management Software — $14,000 one-time / $25,000 ongoing | ACCEPTED

I accept this recommendation. The current approach to case management of employee leaves by Human Resources creates unnecessary administrative burden and risk. Centralized software with automated eligibility calculations, standardized workflows, and payroll integration is a sound investment in institutional infrastructure. The one-time and ongoing costs will be incorporated into the FY 2026-27 budget.

## Cost-Neutral Full-Time Faculty Recruitments | ACCEPTED WITH ADDITIONS

I accept PRAC's recommendation to move forward with the following cost-neutral full-time faculty recruitments:

- English — one FT position (retirement replacement)
- Art 2D — one FT position (part-time unit conversion)
- Librarians — up to two FT positions (one retirement replacement; one part-time unit conversion)

These positions carry institutional commitment given their cost-neutral basis and connection to enrollment and programmatic need. They will move through the District's recruitment prioritization process accordingly.

Additionally, two other full-time faculty recruitments will move forward based on identified departmental needs. The first is in Math, where the search this past year failed to yield a hire. The second is in Chemistry, where a retirement resignation after PRAC's deliberations puts the department—which has seen increased enrollment and success rates in recent years—in a precarious position if a search does not proceed this coming academic year. I am confident the Dean and Chair would welcome the opportunity in the fall to share more with PRAC as the committee desires.

## Items Not Recommended by PRAC

### PT Instructional Specialist for Sculpture | Concur with PRAC

I concur with PRAC's decision not to recommend this request at this time. The questions raised about whether student employment opportunities could serve the same function and whether an existing Instructional Specialist could be brought to full-time are the right ones to explore before a new hire is justified. Vice President Emerson will work with the Interim Dean of Arts & Humanities to assess these alternatives with Fine Arts faculty and report back.

## Administrative Assistant III, Marketing & Communications |Proceeding with Administrative Assistant II Recruitment under 2025-2026 PRAC Process Recommendation

PRAC recommended in 2025 an Administrative Assistant II for Marketing & Communications be hired. In my response, I indicated we would find temporary assistance for the department to gauge the scope and scale of need for administrative assistance, and whether it warrants a full-time position. Over the past year, Vidhyah Viswam, Administrative Assistant in the President's Office, has provided part-time support to Marketing & Communications and tracked the amount and type of work completed. Based on the work Vidhyah performed, Nicole Cruz, Director of Marketing & Communications, requested the department hire an Administrative Assistant III. The department should have made clear to PRAC that the request was for the increase from an Administrative Assistant II recommended in 2025-2026 to a III, and I have asked that such details be clear in future presentations. In addition, PRAC identifies outstanding questions in its memo but it is not clear to me why PRAC did not ask these questions during the presentation or as a follow up. Given the department engaged in the analysis I directed based on PRAC's 2025-2026 recommendations, and the analysis supports moving forward with a full-time position, I am proceeding with PRAC's 2025 recommendation to hire an Administrative Assistant II, which should address most, if not all, of the department's needs.

## Increase to Classified Professional Development Coordinator (Professional Learning & Development Center Co-Chair): | APPROVED

PRAC's memo reads 'It was not made clear that this was an increase from an 80% position to a 100% position, and while the body in no way objects to the position being increased, it does have further questions about the functions being added and what/who it serves.' In fact, the presentation document provided to PRAC clearly states this is a requested increase of 20%, taking the position to full-time. Additionally, the presentation document outlines the functions being added and what/who it serves. Specifically:

> *"Expands and sustains classified professional development opportunities, including coordination of the Classified Leadership Development Program and co-chair the Professional Learning & Development Center (PLDC). Additional capacity is needed to support growth in employee learning opportunities, cross-campus collaboration, EEO activities, and professional development programming. Takes position to full-time."*

As with the questions for the Marketing and Communications department Administrative Assistant III request, I am concerned that PRAC's questions about this request were not asked during or subsequent to the presentation and before PRAC made its recommendations. Because the questions stated in PRAC's memo are answered in the presentation and again here, I am approving this request despite PRAC not recommending it explicitly.

## PLDC Operating Budget ($20,000 one-time)| APPROVED

PRAC's memo reads: "The body was also concerned about the origins for the configuration of the Tri-Chair model for the PLDC and wondered by whom it had been approved, where the initiating documents are, and its passage and incorporation into PGS." I was surprised by this concern given the thorough and inclusive process by which the PLDC came into existence, including consultation with Academic and Classified Senates over an extended period.

Members of PRAC may recall that the Professional Learning Center Task Force led this effort as part of the planning for the Center for Student Success. To refresh everyone's memories, I have included an email exchange which outlines this consultation, as well as the Professional Learning Center Task Force's report. The report includes recommendations and is annotated with notes about academic and classified senate feedback.

Cara Kreit, then Faculty Professional Learning Coordinator, in a March 7, 2025 email, confirms that, "Our take on next steps is that since this has been vetted by departments, Senates and relevant PGS committee (PLC), we don't think there is any need for further campus engagement on it. PLC can take it from here and work on implementing the recommendations."

Her message refers to the tri-chair model, noting, "The one decision the District needs to officially make is about the administrator as tri-chair...." On March 28, 2025, I responded with detailed thoughts on the tri-chair question and added Academic Senate President Maria Coulson and Vice President Dana Emerson to the email chain. In that response I wrote:

*I am happy to discuss this point further as the PLC would like. Similarly, I've copied Maria here as I want to make sure the academic senate doesn't get the impression I'm ignoring their recommendation and I'm happy to meet with the senate if there are questions about the rationale above.*

I did not receive further questions or requests for discussion from either the PLC or the Academic Senate. Based on this, the work to stand up and staff the PLDC proceeded.

I have also attached the recommendations of the Task Force that were routed through the Senates and PGS. Both Senates added language into the Task Force report about creating a budget for the PLDC. The Task Force's recommendations outline the rationale for and work of the tri-chairs and the types of professional learning to be provided.

Based on this documentation, which directly answers PRAC's questions and clearly notes the Senates' support for the PLDC to have a working budget and based on PLDC's understandable need for an operating budget, I am directing staff to establish a budget in the amount of $20,000. The funds for this budget will be taken from other accounts which have traditionally been underspent each year.

### Career & Technical Education Committee Recommendations | APPROVED

I accept the recommendations of the Career & Technical Education Committee to use Strong Workforce funding in support of these items:

- Justice League Initiative for a Comprehensive Justice Ecosystem Map — $12,500
- ESL Hospitality Workforce: Pipeline & Pathway— $12,500
- AUTO ACRT Electromechanical Certification — $25,000
- Precision Measurement Certification and Tooling for Advanced Manufacturing — $25,000

### Institutional Equipment Committee Recommendations | APPROVED

Finally, I accept the Institutional Equipment Committee's recommendations as outlined in the attached spreadsheet. Fiscal Services will work with budget managers to coordinate timely procurement of approved equipment.

## PART II: Co-Chairs' Memo Requests

The PRAC co-chairs' May 27, 2026 memo includes the following requests:

*Beginning with the next budget cycle, the President's response to PRAC recommendations should be consolidated into a single comprehensive document that will reside on the PRAC webpage and be updated annually. The document should include:*

- *All funding requests submitted by Budget Managers.*
- *PRAC's funding recommendations.*
- *Funded requests consistent with PRAC recommendations.*

- *Requests not funded despite PRAC recommendations, including institutional rationale.*
- *Requests funded contrary to PRAC recommendation, including institutional rationale.*
- *Annual updates regarding the Innovation Fund, including:*
    - *projects funded,*
    - *current project outcomes and status updates,*
    - *application and evaluation rubric,*
    - *communication process for prospective applicants.*

For historical context, the President's response to PRAC recommendations has always referenced PRAC's recommendations and responded with context for those that are accepted and those that are not. In 2025, I made a point of providing that response memo not only to PRAC, but also to College Council for the constituent group leadership to further discuss and disseminate. The 2025 memo remains published on PRAC's webpage.

As to the Innovation Fund referenced in the memo, the creation of a pool of funds to support innovative practices is not a stand-alone innovation fund to be managed out of the President's Office. Rather, institutional budgeting intentionally created space for innovation. This is not a separate fund with its own application process. My hope is that PRAC will consider requests of an innovative nature made each year in relation to program review and strategic planning and make recommendations, as you do with all other requests. These funds can then be allocated through the budgeting process to areas that will do the work. PRAC would then consider project updates and outcomes in future program reviews as with other requests and in alignment with the program review process. I hope this clarification helps. As I do not see any recommendation put forth by PRAC this year as an innovation, those funds will remain available for future requests.

Further, the memo seems to be suggesting it is the responsibility of the President to gather PRAC's materials, organize them, and publish them on PRAC's webpage. Respectfully, under the Participatory Governance Plan, governance committee chairs and co-chairs are to maintain a page on the COM website and post copies of the agenda and minutes. PRAC has always posted its memo to the President on PRAC's webpage, as well as the President's response. As of the date of this memo, PRAC's agenda and minutes webpage includes many of the PRAC presentations for 2025-2026 and previous years.

I suggest PRAC continue to share its agendas, minutes, presentations to PRAC, its memoranda, and responses from the President on its webpage and via other methods that would increase clarity and transparency. I further recommend that PRAC develop and distribute a single, comprehensive document for Budget Managers that outlines PRAC's expectations for information, presentations, connections to program review documents, etc. The current PGS Plan has an older version of this outline on pages 32-33. Perhaps PRAC can recommend updates to this as a way of accomplishing what was asked in the May 27, 2026 memo. Regardless, updating this information will improve clarity, ensure consistency in communication, and provide Budget Managers with a reliable reference point as they prepare for and present to PRAC as part of their decision-making and planning.

For my part, I will not only copy all budget managers and constituent leaders on this memo but will also draft an abridged version to share College-wide, with a link to the PRAC website for more details. I will wait to distribute that until PRAC's website is updated with this memo and its attachments.

I would also welcome the opportunity to visit PRAC in the fall to receive additional clarification with the intent of the memo's recommendations. I know we have the shared goal of promoting transparency and understanding of institutional processes and decisions and I look forward to working with you.

## PART III: PRAC's Role and Responsibilities

I also want to comment here about PRAC's role and responsibilities.

PRAC's formal charge states that the committee "provides oversight and makes recommendations for institutional planning and resource allocation, linking program reviews and strategic planning to the resources needed to accomplish College goals." That charge does not include controlling a discretionary budget pool. Consistent with established practice as outlined in the April 2024 memo from then-Interim Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Mia Robertshaw, PRAC's role is to evaluate resource requests in alignment with institutional priorities, not to function as a budget allocation body working from a defined dollar target.

The recurring expectation this year that PRAC would be given a specific funding ceiling to guide its recommendations does not align with the committee's charge. When PRAC conflates its evaluative function with budget authority, it creates unrealistic expectations among presenters and distorts the committee's deliberations. In the 2026 memo from PRAC, program review was not mentioned, and strategic plan priorities were referenced only cursorily in the opening paragraph. There was no mention of, nor indication of, PRAC's guiding principles or any objective method of review and deliberation. I have attached the April 2024 memo, PRAC's 2026 memo, and PRAC's guiding principles for reference, as I think they will be helpful as PRAC members review the charge and discuss norms this fall.

Going forward, the Vice President of Finance & Operations will continue to provide PRAC with appropriate budget context—specifically, the Board's fiscal direction, reserve targets, and any constraints on new ongoing commitments—so that PRAC can look to future needs in out years in the context of the College's overall commitments and frame its recommendations responsibly. However, the Vice President of Finance & Operations will not be providing a dollar allocation for PRAC to "spend."

Finally, I want to be transparent about a structural question discussed this past year in several settings. PRAC is a participatory governance committee. The co-chair arrangement is designed to ensure that faculty and administrative perspectives share responsibility for facilitating the committee's work. The faculty majority on the committee is designed to respect the faculty role under 10+1, specifically under Title 5, section 53200(c)(10).

As you likely know, during the 2025–2026 academic year, questions have arisen about how the 10+1 areas of academic and professional matters defined in Title 5 §53200(c) relate to the PGS Plan and to specific practices within PRAC. The Academic Senate adopted a resolution raising concerns about co-chair communication and collaboration within PRAC, and about the intersection of senate authority and administrative responsibility in PRAC's processes. We have engaged in direct dialogue and written exchange about these questions and are in the process of consulting with the statewide Academic Senate (ASCCC) and the Community College League of California (CCLC) to help us find consensus.

At the heart of the issue as it relates to PRAC is the Senate resolution's core request—that the administrative co-chair of PRAC be replaced. Our disagreement is whether this administrative appointment is a 10+1 matter. I maintain the identity and appointment of PRAC's administrative co-chair is an administrative function established through the PGS Plan and that the PGS Plan was the proper subject of collegial consultation when it was developed and adopted, and the Senate participated meaningfully in that process. Also, because of this, the implementation of the plan is an administrative responsibility within my delegated authority under Board Policy 2430 and following our PGS Plan as written fulfills this responsibility. Regardless, I acknowledge this interpretation—that collegial consultation applies to the design of our governance processes but doesn't extend to ongoing administrative appointments within those processes on an ad hoc basis—does not fully align with that of the Academic Senate.

That said, Board Policy 3260 ensures the District provides written rationale when it does not follow the Academic Senate's recommendations on academic and professional matters—the 10+1 areas enumerated in Title 5, Section 53200, subdivision (c). Those ten areas include, among others, the processes for program review and for institutional planning and budget development. The Senate's right to have its advice and judgment relied upon in those areas is real and I honor it unreservedly. As stated above, I am confident our collaborative work with the ASCCC and CCLC and continued dialogue after will help us find consensus.

I am raising this not to relitigate past disputes but because PRAC is at the center of participatory governance and the Governance Review Council and College Council's work to strengthen the Participatory Governance System depends on an honest assessment of where the system is under stress. PRAC works best when it is a genuine, collaborative space where faculty, staff, student, and administrative voices objectively contribute to shared recommendations grounded in institutional data, student needs, and strategic priorities. I believe we all remain committed to that vision.

I recognize that many of the frustrations surfacing at PRAC this year were not generated by PRAC itself—they reflect tensions that are being worked through across multiple governance spaces. That context is real, but it does not excuse conduct that falls short of our shared standards. To assist with PRAC's effectiveness moving forward, I encourage you to revisit the guiding principles regularly. These rules, adopted by the committee itself and attached here for reference, require among other things that members "check our professional and personal biases" and maintain a collaborative, problem-solving orientation.

Bigger picture, College Council and the Governance Review Council have been working collaboratively to prepare for a Participatory Governance System review based on feedback from governance committee members and designed to both strengthen the system and provide more explicit support for effective committee functioning. While that work unfolds this coming year, I do hope the membership of PRAC can reflect on the issues from this past year and take proactive steps to ensure PRAC is fulfilling its charge and doing so in a collegial and productive fashion.

# PART IV: Process and Decorum Concerns

PRAC's memo and reports I received from PRAC members indicate that this year's PRAC process did not function as designed for a significant portion of the academic year. In the spirit of strengthening PRAC's effectiveness going forward, I am raising the following concerns constructively. I ask that PRAC actively address and resolve these concerns about its operations.

First, PRAC's memo raises questions which could and should have been asked during PRAC's process, either during presentations or as follow-up questions after presentations. A few examples are noted above. PRAC's responsibility is to obtain information it needs to reach its recommendations thoughtfully, or to identify when the requesting department was unable to provide the necessary information despite being asked to do so.

Second, and more importantly, several members of PRAC, across constituent groups, reached out to me indicating their discomfort with what was described as a 'process behind the process.' Those who shared this perception also indicated they were afraid to say anything in the meetings or to the people involved for fear of certain PRAC members harming their reputations in retribution.

Whether these concerns are based in fact or perception, that multiple members of PRAC felt compelled independently to report their concerns to me—but only in confidence after PRAC's last meeting out of fear of reprisal—demonstrates the issue is worth discussing. As such, I will be meeting with the co-chairs and senate presidents to talk further about how we can ensure a more functional environment moving forward. Given additional issues during this past year, including the absence of faculty PRAC members during much of spring semester, the concerns leading to the senate resolution, and others, we collectively have a responsibility to identify a positive and productive path forward.

I also ask all members of PRAC to work together to address and resolve these concerns in the 2026-2027 academic year so that PRAC can fulfill its charge objectively and in service to the College and our students.

Disagreement is expected and healthy in a participatory governance committee. But membership specifically requires the capacity to model the kind of professional conduct we expect of all members of our College community. No member should be afraid to speak up. At the same time, no member should use the committee as a platform to make recommendations based on personal feelings or issues with others.

If a facilitated discussion about decorum, communication, or other matters is helpful, we can arrange that at any point, and I will be discussing this option in the meeting noted above.

Despite these issues, PRAC is an important body, and I know we can work together to help it function as intended and in a way that promotes understanding and transparency for the benefit of all. Thank you again to the members of PRAC, IEC, and CTEC for your service this year. The work you do matters for our students and our College. I look forward to a stronger, more functional process with improved communication and collaboration in the coming year.

Attachments:

May 27, 2026, PRAC Memo
May 2026 Institutional Equipment Committee Recommendations
April 2024 Memo to PRAC from Robertshaw
PRAC Guiding Principles
March 2025 Emails re: Professional Learning & Development Center
Professional Learning Center Task Force Report