Petition for the San Mateo County Community College District to Amend its “Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators” to Meet State Standards

The Psychology Department at Skyline College would like to request that the district’s current “Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators” be aligned with those established by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. The current district requirement for a Psychology Instructor, Full-time, Tenure-Track Position is a “Master’s degree in psychology”. The state-wide requirement is a “Master’s in psychology OR Bachelor’s in psychology AND Master’s in counseling, sociology, statistics, neuroscience, or social work OR The equivalent.”

The current SMCCD requirement of a “Master’s degree in psychology” effectively disqualifies applicants with:

1. A Bachelor’s degree in psychology AND master’s degree in counseling, sociology, statistics, neuroscience, or social work;

2. A valid California Community College Instructor’s Credential in Psychology;

3. A Master’s degree in Behavioral Sciences;

4. A Master’s degree in Anthropology, AND upper division or graduate course work in at least one other constituent discipline;

5. The equivalent of an earned Master’s Degree in an interdisciplinary area from an accredited institution;

6. A Master’s Degree from an accredited institution in one of the disciplines included in the interdisciplinary area and upper division or graduate coursework in each constituent discipline

7. A fully-satisfied LIFE California Community College Instructor Credential in the appropriate interdisciplinary with master’s degrees in counseling psychology.

8. OR THE EQUIVALENT

This requirement dramatically diminishes the pool of potentially qualified candidates. It deprives us of the ability to consider otherwise qualified candidates in our pursuit of providing the best quality of instruction to our students as possible. Case in point; The College of San Mateo recently posted a position for a psychology instructor which included the following requirement: “Addiction disorders expertise is strongly desired”. Most master’s degree programs in counseling psychology and social work include an in-depth study of topics like “Substance Abuse: Analysis and Assessment”, “Substance Abuse: Treatment” and “Substance Abuse: Counseling”, which can be easily verified by a quick review of candidates’ transcripts. Yet candidates with the theoretical/academic foundation for this “expertise” and the relevant work experience were screened-out as a result of the district’s current requirements.
State-wide, all of the above-mentioned potential candidates can not only teach courses in the Psychology Department at the college level (undergrad and graduate levels), but also consult with a variety of agencies (e.g. schools, government, private organizations), do research, therapy (e.g. group, individual, family), and hold academic administrative positions (e.g. dean of a college), etc. For example, the general requirements for a Master’s degree in “Counseling Psychology” (also called “Clinical” or “Clinical/Counseling” Psychology in some schools) are similar to those for other specialized fields in psychology such as: Experimental Psychology, Forensic Psychology, Social Psychology, and Child Development, just to name a few.

Although specific course requirements can vary considerably, most of the aforementioned master’s level programs generally have, at their core, advanced courses in Experimental Methods/Research Design (which includes statistical analysis), as well as Psychology (i.e., Abnormal Psychology, Developmental Psychology/Child Development, and/or Personality Psychology). Most, if not all, bachelor programs in psychology alone also have at least one course in statistics (aka, psychometrics) as a requirement. Again, this can all be verified by a quick review of each candidate’s transcripts, and as the current district’s “Minimum Qualifications” stand, we cannot do that.

The drive behind this petition is to enable us to tap into a wider pool of potentially qualified instructors. In this time of need for quality instructors, and in our pursuit of the best qualified candidates, we believe that the current district requirements hinder our ability to meet and even exceed the standards of education we aspire to for our students.

The psychology department at Skyline College requests that the San Mateo County Community College District adopt the “Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges” established by California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, to better enable us to serve our students and communities.

Thank you,

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