

# **Professional Recognition Committee Handbook**

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## **Introduction**

### Use of this Document

This handbook is meant to document the responsibilities of the Professional Recognition Committee, to describe and clarify the various applications of the contract to individual faculty professional development, and to record the practices and axioms of the committee as developed over the last decade.

This handbook is meant to help individual faculty members exercise their rights to professional development, namely class advancement, step advancement, sabbatical leave and activity payment.

### Acknowledgements

Nearly all this handbook comes from the articles in the AFT 6157/San Jose Evergreen Community College District contract, and those articles are cited throughout the document for easy reference. In addition to this, various memos and emails produced by the Professional Recognition Committee (through its several chairs) have added clarification and detail to the workings of the PRC. While the author has served as a member, and later chair, of the PRC since 2011, he is indebted to the contributions (written and through practice) of its previous chairs, namely Professor of English as a Second Language Leslie Rice (SJCC), Professor of English (SJCC) Noe Torres and Professor Emeritus of English Sterling Warner (EVC). Their leadership has helped contribute to this handbook.

The collective editing of this handbook falls to the entire committee, drawing upon their extensive memory of membership, as well as their keen eye for details and familiarity with the routine of the committee. These members are the following:

Human Relations Specialist Elvira Valderrama, District Office  
Professor Thuy Cao, San Jose City College  
Professor Zerrin Erkal, San Jose City College  
Professor Jagrup Kahlon, San Jose City College  
Professor Manjit Kang, Evergreen Valley College  
Professor Mike Masuda, Evergreen Valley College  
Dean Robbie Kunkel, Evergreen Valley College

Vice President Lena Tran, San Jose City College  
Associate Vice Chancellor Beatriz Chaidez, District Office

## **Professional Recognition Committee**

### Purpose

The Professional Recognition Committee reviews applications submitted by faculty members for salary increments and sabbatical leaves (Article 10.1). Through time and practice, the PRC reviews and considers each application for class advancement, step advancement, sabbatical leave and activity payment. The committee relies upon the informed judgment of the members to arrive at decisions fairly, impartially and treat all applicants respectfully (Article 10.1.2).

The PRC is a District-level committee, on par with similar committees such as: the District Council, the District Policies Committee and District Academic Senate.

### Membership

The members of the PRC consist of a total of nine voting members, and one ex-officio member in the following breakdown (Article 10.1.1):

1. Three administrators, one from each college, and the Vice Chancellor of Human Resources or their designee. The two administrators are each appointed by the presidents of that college (Article 10.1.1.a).
2. Six faculty members, three from each college, appointed by their respective Academic Senates. Membership is open to any faculty member, regardless of full-time or adjunct status (Article 10.1.1.b).
3. One confidential employee from Human Resources (HR Specialist) to maintain the files and applications and assist in the creation of the meeting agendas. In 2017, the PRC decided to transfer the Associate Vice Chancellor's vote to the Confidential Employee, and make the Associate Vice Chancellor an ex-officio member.
4. The Chair of the PRC is a faculty member elected by the PRC. The Chair receives 10% released time or 0.10 reassigned load. Each semester the two colleges provide 5% released time each (Article 10.1.1.c).

### Meetings

The PRC meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, at 3:00 PM, during the regular academic year. This usually amounts to eight meetings per semester. Historically, the meeting location has alternated between Evergreen Valley College and San Jose City College, but since March of 2020, the committee has held virtual meetings through an online format. Each meeting has an agenda sent out to the members within 24 hours (or more) of the beginning of the meeting. The minutes of

each meeting is approved by the PRC at a later meeting. The PRC shall rely upon Robert's Rules of Order to conduct its meetings.

### Decisions

The PRC decides upon the following (Article 10.1.2):

1. Review and consideration of applications for class advancement.
2. Review and consideration of applications for step advancement.
3. Review and consideration of applications for sabbatical leave.
4. Review and consideration of applications for activity payment.
5. Review and consideration of modifications of professional recognition plans.
6. Review and consideration of extensions of professional recognition plans.
7. Review and consideration of evidence of completion of planned work within the application.
8. Creation of forms to accomplish the work of the PRC.
9. Creation of guidelines for judging professional recognition plans, subject to review and acceptance by AFT 6157 and the District.

## **Class Advancement**

### **What is Class?**

Class is a pay schedule based upon a faculty member's education and/or experience. There are five columns in each of the two full-time, and two adjunct salary schedules. The classes are the same in all the schedules (Article 8.2).

- Class II is a Master's Degree (for disciplines requiring a Master's Degree); or an Associate's Degree with six years of experience (for disciplines not requiring a Master's Degree).
- Class III is a Master's Degree plus 45 semester units beyond the Bachelor's Degree (for disciplines requiring a Master's Degree); or an Associate's Degree plus 40 semester units beyond the Associate's Degree or a Bachelor's Degree (for disciplines not requiring a Master's Degree).
- Class IV is a Master's Degree plus 60 semester units beyond the Bachelor's Degree (for disciplines requiring a Master's Degree); or an Associate's Degree plus 60 semester units beyond the Associate's Degree or a Bachelor's Degree plus 20 semester units (for disciplines not requiring a Master's Degree).
- Class V is a Master's Degree plus 81 units beyond the Bachelor's Degree (for disciplines requiring a Master's Degree); or a Master's Degree (for disciplines not requiring a Master's Degree).
- Class VI is a Doctorate Degree (for any discipline).

Upon initial hire, faculty members are placed in a Class depending upon their transcripts, and the total of semester units beyond the Bachelor's Degree or Associate's Degree, whichever is applicable to that discipline (Articles 8.3, 8.4, 8.5). There are other considerations for placement, but they are rare, and the PRC recommends that the faculty member contact HR for further details.

A faculty member may take additional courses after their hire and apply them to their accumulated total of units to satisfy the requirements for a higher class. This is called class advancement.

### Eligibility

You may begin to work on class advancement as soon as you are hired. This applies to full-time and adjunct faculty (Article 8.9.3).

### Frequency

You must finish all the work in one column before beginning work in the next column.

### Process

Fill out the official Column/Class Advancement Form and attach your proposal. Submit the two documents to the PRC for approval prior to undertaking the undergraduate units and/or non-academic experience.

Graduate units, Learning Community and Service Learning activities are automatic, and are simply acknowledged by Human Resources and the PRC (Articles 8.9.3.4 and 8.9.7.1).

### Obligations

Keep track of the classes taken and a log of non-academic activities, including publications, artwork, projects or other forms evidence of those activities.

Have your dean verify that you have participated in a Learning Community (Article 8.9.7.1.1), or get verification of Service Learning activities from your campus Service Learning coordinator (Article 8.9.7.1.2).

Modifications to a plan may be made by submitting a statement to the PRC describing the need for the modification and details of the new proposal (Article 10.2.5).

### Considerations

Quarter units will be translated into semester units for all calculations.

Wait until you are finished with your class advancement plan, and then submit all the transcripts and other evidence together at one time. In this way, the PRC can consider your plan in its entirety.

For Learning Communities, each unit of linked classroom time (not your own class) equals one semester unit of credit (Article 8.9.7.2.1).

For Service Learning, for every ten students in a project per semester equals one semester unit of credit (Article 8.9.7.2.2)

A maximum of six unit equivalents for Learning Communities and/or Service Learning may be used for any single class advancement (Articles 8.9.7.2.1 and 8.9.7.2.2).

## **Step Advancement**

### **What is a Step?**

A step is attained on the salary schedule for each year of full-time work in the District as a faculty member. Each class column has a different salary associated with each step. Adjunct faculty members have 11 steps on the salary schedule, and they are achieved automatically with each year until the faculty member stalls at Step 11 with no further advancement (Article 8.9).

Full-time faculty have a different total of steps depending upon the class that faculty member resides in.

- Class II has 13 steps.
- Class III has 13 steps.
- Class IV has 17 steps.
- Class V has 19 steps.
- Class VI has 19 steps.

At step 14, 17 and 19 the faculty member must create a step advancement plan to the PRC, and complete the approved plan before they may continue advancing down the column to the next step. Think of Steps 14, 17 and 19 as gates that must be opened before a faculty member may proceed further down the column. If a faculty member never creates a step advancement plan, or never completes that plan, then they will stall at Step 14. If there is no further professional development in the form of another step advancement plan, then that faculty member will stall at Step 17. It will require a third step advancement plan to reach beyond Step 19.

**Please note:** Step Advancement applies only to full-time faculty in Classes IV, V and VI. Adjunct faculty and faculty in Classes II and III cannot participate in Step Advancement.

### Eligibility

For Step 14: six years at Step 5 or longer.  
For Step 17: nine years at Step 5 or longer.  
For Step 19: eleven years at Step 5 or longer.

Application shall not be submitted earlier than the beginning of the first year of eligibility (Article 10.2.2).

### Frequency

Movement on the salary steps is only one step per year (Article 8.9.2.1).

### Process

Fill out the official Step Plan Form and attach your proposal. Submit the two documents to the PRC for approval prior to undertaking the undergraduate units and/or non-academic experience.

### Obligations

Keep track of the classes taken and a log of non-academic activities, including publications, artwork, projects or other forms evidence of those activities.

Have your dean verify that you have participated in a Learning Community (Article 8.9.7.1.1), or get verification of Service Learning activities from your campus Service Learning coordinator (Article 8.9.7.1.2).

Modifications to a plan may be made by submitting a statement to the PRC describing the need for the modification and details of the new proposal (Article 10.2.5).

If the planned work for the step plan has not been completed within three years, you may apply to the PRC for a one-year extension (Article 10.2.6).

### Considerations

Quarter units will be translated into semester units for all calculations.

Wait until you are finished with your step plan, and then submit all the transcripts and other evidence together at one time. In this way, the PRC can consider your plan in its entirety.

In order to submit a plan for Step 17, the applicant must have completed all the activities for Step 14. In order to submit a plan for Step 19, the applicant must have completed all the activities for Step 17.

For Learning Communities, each unit of linked classroom time (not your own class) equals one semester unit of credit (Article 8.9.7.2.1).

For Service Learning, for every ten students in a project per semester equals one semester unit of credit (Article 8.9.7.2.2)

A maximum of six unit equivalents for Learning Communities and/or Service Learning may be used for any single step advancement (Articles 8.9.7.2.1 and 8.9.7.2.2).

### **What are acceptable professional recognition activities? (Article 10.3)**

The contract does not limit the imagination and creativity of the applicant, but the following are examples of typical and acceptable activities:

- Formal academic work from an accredited college or university (excluding developmental courses and lower division courses previously taken) (Article 10.3.1)
- Course work or practice in a training institute (Article 10.3.1)
- Earning credit in a workshop (Article 10.3.1)
- Formal work under a grant (Article 10.3.1)
- Appropriate correspondence courses (Article 10.3.1)
- Cross-disciplinary work leading to improving the applicant's skills for his or her assignment in the college (Article 10.3.2)
- Courses or activities to improve specific teaching techniques or methods (Article 10.3.3)
- Instructional related travel (Article 10.3.4)
- Completion of a research project or activity related the applicant's assigned field and its publication may be considered even if no college credit is given (Article 10.3.5)
- District or college sponsored in-service training workshops (Article 10.3.6)
- PRC approved workshops sponsored by other community colleges, four-year colleges or universities or professional organizations (Article 10.3.7)
- Qualifying study or activity that is directly related to the applicant's assignment provided that it bears relevance to enhancement of teaching effectiveness (Article 10.3.8)

- Participation in Learning Communities (Article 10.3.9.1)
- Participation in Service Learning supervision (Article 10.3.9.2)

## Sabbatical

### What is a Sabbatical?

A sabbatical leave provides an opportunity for professional development “through a variety of activities and/or experiences which have significant relevance to the specific assignment and/or to the retaining of the faculty member.” (Article 14.1.1) More specifically, this is time away from the classroom/office to explore a professional development plan that takes up a full semester or academic year.

**Please Note:** Sabbatical Leave only applies to full-time faculty. The PRC recommends reading all of Article 14 in the Contract for details about sabbatical.

### Eligibility

After six years of full-time employment, one may apply for a sabbatical for year seven (Article 14.2). Leaves of absence are not included as years of service for the purposes of counting the six years of eligibility (Article 14.2.1).

### Frequency

An individual faculty member cannot go on sabbatical until the seventh year after the previous sabbatical (Article 14.2).

### Process

Fill out the Sabbatical Request Form. Be sure to carefully read and address all aspects of the form (Article 14.4).

The Application must contain an Abstract with four topic headings:

1. Need for Sabbatical Growth
2. Sabbatical Activities
3. Anticipated Outcome
4. Means of Measurement

The Sabbatical Plan will have six topic headings:

1. Description of Overall Proposal
2. Objectives
3. Evidence of Completion
4. Relationship to Current Assignment and Improvement of Student Learning
5. Calendar



## 6. Need for Sabbatical

Both forms must be submitted to the Dean for comment and signature (Article 14.4.2.1). If there is need for consultation with the Dean, the applicant may amend the application to address the Dean's concerns before the Dean's signature (Article 14.4.2.2). The Dean shall forward the application to the President for review and signature. If there is need for consultation, the President shall submit their concerns through the Dean, and the applicant may amend their application to address these comments and concerns (Article 14.4.2.3).

The PRC shall review each application, and any accompanying documentation and interview the candidates. This process usually takes place during the month of October of the academic year, in order for the PRC to have time to make its decision, and advise the applicant of any modifications if needed (Article 14.4.2.4).

The PRC shall write a written recommendation of each application to the Chancellor by December of the academic year. If the PRC recommends denial of an application, the PRC shall state in writing specific reasons for doing so, and send a copy to the applicant (Article 14.4.2.4).

The Chancellor shall review the application and accompanying documentation, and may even interview the candidate, if necessary. The Chancellor may add a recommendation to the Dean's, President's and PRC's recommendations when submitting the application to the Board of Trustees for approval, which takes place in February of the academic year (Article 14.4.2.5).

### Obligations

Interim reports are required at the midpoint of each semester during the sabbatical. These are submitted to the PRC, and reviewed to monitor the faculty member's progress in fulfilling the sabbatical obligations. Any significant changes in the sabbatical must be approved by the PRC (Article 14.7.1.1).

A final written report is due by the end of the first returning semester. This is submitted to the PRC for review and recommendation of completion of the sabbatical (Article 14.7.1.3). Transcripts of any coursework taken as part of the sabbatical will be included in the final report. Courses must be a grade of "B" or better to be acceptable for sabbatical (Article 14.8).

An oral presentation is made to both colleges sometime within the first academic of return after sabbatical (Article 14.7.1.3). The PRC may take into consideration the nature of sabbatical, and accept an alternative form of presentation.

After the sabbatical is completed, the faculty member will contract to serve the District for twice the sabbatical leave time just taken. In other words, if the sabbatical was for one year, then the faculty member must remain employed for at

least two years after their return from sabbatical. If the sabbatical is for one semester, then two semesters of service are required after return (Article 14.6).

### Considerations

The number of sabbaticals awarded each year is ten full-time faculty members or 4% of the total number of full-time faculty members employed by the District, whichever is higher (Article 14.3). Historically, the number of sabbaticals awarded has been ten each year for over the past 30 years.

The PRC will give stronger consideration of sabbatical applications to faculty members who have never had a sabbatical over those who have had a previous sabbatical.

## **Activity Payment**

### **What is an Activity Payment?**

Activity payments are made when a faculty member chooses not to, or cannot, apply their coursework towards class or step advancement. Instead, a faculty member may request to be paid for their costs of taking courses, up to six units and for no more than \$1050 every three years (Article 10.2.1).

### Eligibility

After the third year of satisfactory service, either as full-time or adjunct faculty member, you may apply for an activity payment (Article 10.2.1)

Application shall not be submitted earlier than the beginning of the first year of eligibility (Article 10.2.1).

### Frequency

Activity payment may be awarded once every three years (Article 10.2.1.1).

### Process

Fill out the official Activity Payment Form and attach your proposal. Submit the two documents to the PRC for approval prior to undertaking the course units. Be sure to mention the method of documenting your activities through transcripts, logs, certificates, etc., and how this activity is relevant to your professional growth.

### Obligations

Submission for activity payment must be made before April 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year. The PRC will consider and decide upon the recommendation of activity payment no later than May 10<sup>th</sup> of the school year (Article 10.2.1.2).

### Considerations

The maximum number of units allowed is six semester units at a rate of \$175 per semester unit, for a maximum of \$1050 (Article 10.2.1.1).

### **Committee Practices and Axioms**

The PRC has developed some rules of practice and axioms about details that are not addressed in the contract. This is recognized as a right of the committee (Article 10.1.2.f)

- Members of the PRC shall abstain from voting on their own applications (Article 10.1.1).
- Applicants who took courses in the immediately previous summer or intersession must file their application with the PRC within its first two meetings the following semester to be considered for professional recognition.
- Courses that the applicant has already taken (as evidenced by their transcripts) will not be considered. The PRC will take into account courses taken so long ago that the content may be considered obsolete or out-of-date. In those cases, if the applicant can demonstrate that condition, then repeating the course will be accepted.
- Applicants who meet the minimum qualifications to teach the course (regardless of whether they have filed a faculty service area with HR) can take the course, but the PRC will not consider it towards any professional recognition.

### **Appeal**

#### **What is an Appeal?**

If a faculty member disagrees with the Professional Recognition Committee's rejection of their professional development plan (in any of the above four applications), they have the right to appeal that decision to the PRC for reconsideration. The PRC recommends that in the event of an appeal by a faculty member, they contact the leadership of AFT 6157 as well as the PRC Chair to initiate the appeal.

### Eligibility

If an application has not been approved by the PRC, the applicant may appeal the decision.

### Frequency

The appeal is allowed once per case. There may not be repetitive appeals for the same application.

### Process

The process goes through two steps in listed order.

1. The application may be reconsidered by the PRC upon proper request by the applicant through a formal letter or electronic communication to the PRC Chair. The applicant may be present at the appeal meeting, and may be represented by an AFT 6157 member at the appeal meeting. (Article 10.6)
2. The applicant may appeal the committee's two decisions (first decision, and subsequent appeal) to the applicant's College President. (Article 10.6)

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