

## Omar Orihuela

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**From:** Omar Orihuela  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 14, 2019 9:07 PM  
**To:** Mohr, Rhonda  
**Subject:** Response to proposed changes to EOPS

Hello Rhonda, I had a couple of days to reflect on the dynamic of Friday's meeting with Dean, Mia Keeley. To be frank with you, we all left the meeting with a sense of lack of respect towards the work that we all do in EOPS, our staff and the mission of our program.

Although, we are interested in continuing to work with you to identify changes in our guidelines that will allow us more flexibility in our budgets, thus serving more EOPS-eligible students, I am writing to express our opposition to 4 major changes included in the draft sent to us last Thursday, April 11, 2019

- **We oppose allowing any contact (tutoring, workshop, etc.) as one of the required three-counseling contacts for EOPS students.** This proposal is simply alarming. It will not generate more student success. It will do quite the opposite.
- **We oppose eliminating the language in the EOPS Program Plan advising colleges to have a Full-Time EOPS Director.** This means that our program will not receive the attention needed to help our EOPS students succeed. We already have language that gives flexibility for colleges to work with the Chancellor's Office when a full-time Director is not available.
- **We oppose waiving minimum qualifications for EOPS Directors.** This is one of the most baffling proposals because it goes against the efforts of diversity-hiring in our system. These efforts have been recently championed by Deputy Chancellor, Dr. Daisy Gonzales. It seems to us, that with this proposal we are moving in the opposite direction in ensuring that our students are served by people that understand their path.
- **We oppose waiving minimum qualifications for EOPS Counselors.** Same as above.

As we know, what has made EOPS a successful program for 50 years, are the requirements we have in place for students to follow. With this simple model, although by definition we serve the most vulnerable population, we are able to retain and graduate students at a higher rate than non-EOPS participants. I also feel that it's important to review our history so that you and Mia can better understand the EOPS Program.

In 1969, EOPS was legislated to provide opportunities in higher education for communities that would not have traditionally attended college. EOPS has proud roots in the civil, educational, and social rights movement of the 1960s. EOPS is the longest standing social justice, educational rights, human rights, and equity program in the state. EOPS programs across the state have supported hundreds of thousands of students achieve their educational endeavors; following strict implementation, spending and eligibility guidelines since 1969. We do so proudly, unapologetically, and with the highest amount of commitment to keep the fidelity of the program as the original forefathers intended.

The allocation awarded to our district and local colleges 50 years ago is highly scrutinized and protected to ensure that we serve only those eligible with directive services and resources that increase recruitment, retention, and completion of the most vulnerable communities on our college campuses – first generation, single parents, welfare to work recipients, English language learners, foster youth, Dreamers, re-entry students, underprepared students, formerly incarcerated, poor, working poor, and our list goes on and on. We run towards all “untraditional” and “unlikely” student communities and embrace them seeing each and every one of them as a promising and future productive contributor to our communities and the California economy.

As our Vice Chancellor, I respectfully ask that you consider the following:

- EOPS' positive impact, importance, and respect was acknowledged when the Governor restored EOPS funding in 2015.
- EOPS' strong outcomes and commitment to serve vulnerable populations was further acknowledged when the Governor signed legislation adding a new program to EOPS - CAFYES/NextUp to expand services to foster youth.
- EOPS has a nearly 50-year data-driven verifiable track record of serving students with educational and economic disadvantages. It was borne in the civil rights movement and intended to further civil and educational rights.
- EOPS is a national model program.
- EOPS is a well-established statewide program with specific programmatic eligibility criteria which makes a tremendous difference when looking at our positive outcomes.
- When the EOPS budget was slashed in the last recession, there was a failed short-term experiment to fill in the gaps with the Student Success and Equity funds. Many of these programs attempted to replicate components of what EOPS offered to achieve the same outcomes. Ultimately, EOPS was restored.
- Governor Newsom has expressed his support for EOPS by proposing an ongoing COLA increase of 3.46% to the Statewide allocation.

All I'm asking from you and Mia, is to revisit the proposed-changes to our guidelines with a collaborative and equity-minded approach. I am open to changes in our guidance to allow our programs more flexibility to reach more students. But we must start with the understanding that EOPS matters more than ever, as Chancellor Oakley expressed to us during the CSSO Conference in Los Angeles a few weeks ago. We live in challenging times. Stories of racism are seen every day. These are the experiences that our students face on a daily basis. We owe it to our most vulnerable students - to keep supporting their educational journey.

Sincerely,  
Omar