

Modesto Junior College (MJC)
Academic Senate Resolution F21-A:
Reaffirming Support of our Refugee and Veteran Students
Authors: Senate Executive and English Language Instruction Department

Whereas: Due to decades of war in Afghanistan and the current departure of U.S. military forces leading to a traumatic evacuation process, many MJC students, both Afghan and former and current military, will need the support of the MJC community as they cope with the resulting trauma. According to both World Relief and IRC (International Rescue Committee), local refugee resettlement agencies, the college can expect gradually increased refugee enrollment in the next two years with most of the resettlements being students from Afghanistan who are highly traumatized individuals; and

Whereas: “As a district, we are uniquely blessed, and enriched by the talents, and contributions of all of our students and employees, regardless of their ethnicity or national origins, or immigration status. We welcome all, and we serve all” (Chancellor Yong to the Board of Trustees 9/13/17); and

Whereas: “Modesto Junior College is comprised of a diverse student population including native-born individuals, undocumented students, and immigrants and refugees from all over the world, and is a federally designated Hispanic-serving institution located in a county which is one of eight refugee-impacted counties in California and in which one out of every five residents is foreign born, and over forty-percent speak a language other than English” (S-17B); and

Whereas: “the College and District encourage, undertake, and advocate for educational opportunities for all students regardless of documentation status, racial, ethnic, language, or religious background as well as publicly and explicitly create a welcoming environment for all students” (S-17B); and

Whereas: We affirm the dignity inherent in all of us, and we strive to maintain a climate of equity and justice demonstrated by respect for one another; and

Whereas: Afghan refugee students are a valued part of the student population at MJC making up about 35% of our English Learners Program and will continue to grow in size over the coming months and years. Our veteran students impacted by the war in Afghanistan and the recent evacuation are also a valued part of the MJC community who are likely to need increased support coping with these traumatic events; and

Whereas: The Academic Senate is compelled to action as the affected refugee and veteran student populations impacted will require special consideration regarding student preparation

and success and faculty will require the professional development necessary to support that need;

Therefore, be it resolved: That we, as faculty, adopt this resolution as a means to bring attention to the plight of the campus' veteran and refugee student populations and explicitly advocate for culturally and linguistically appropriate student services as well as trauma care for veteran students and newly-arriving refugee students during this time and in the coming months.

Therefore, be it further resolved: That we, as faculty, support and recommend college-wide professional development opportunities that teach trauma-informed practices that can be applied in the classroom and throughout the college to the benefit our students at all points of contact;

Therefore: MJC's Academic Senate calls upon college and district leadership to provide a model to the community of a welcoming environment and open access to education for its veterans, Afghan students, and prospective incoming refugee students.

First Reading: September 2, 2021

Final Reading: September 16, 2021

Disposition: Carried