





## Class Capacity Determination Form

### Mandate or Regulation

- Ability to comply with specific accreditation or relevant external requirements and standards

### Safety Considerations

- Ability of faculty to effectively supervise students (especially in lab related courses)
- Ability of faculty to teach, monitor, and correct student skill levels (especially in CTE related courses)
- Ability of faculty to effectively serve students in the event of an accident as a result of student performance

### Pedagogy

- Ability to effectively follow the COR as approved
- Ability to maintain appropriate rigor of course requirements
- Ability to effectively assess summative and formative level outcomes
- Ability to effectively determine the originality or authenticity of student work
- Ability to maintain effective interaction with students
- Ability to work with individual students
- Ability to monitor the collaborative work of student groups
- Ability to properly address the various skill levels of students

## English Language Department Class Capacity Rationale

Class size for all MJC and CC credit and non-credit English Language courses should not exceed the current MJC capacity of 30 students.

### 1. To meet specified course standards and AB 705 objectives

- The Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges, Resolution No. 17.03 (Spring 2018) “Resolved; that the Academic Senate for the California Community College encourage local senates, in collaboration with collective bargaining agents, to advocate for reducing course enrollment maximums exceeding discipline faculty recommendation for what is needed to maximize the probability of satisfying new state direction, such as AB 705.” A sampling of eighty-nine class caps in English classes across California demonstrates that the average class size is 29.1 students (see attached spreadsheet). Given that many colleges across the state are in the process of advocating for lower class sizes per the ASCCC resolution and the mandates of AB705, MJC EL faculty concur that any increase in class size would go against current trends in the successful implementation of AB705 and limit the ability to maintain appropriate rigor and acceleration of approved COR criteria.
- AB 705 requires that English language courses accelerate the academic acquisition of English to facilitate faster matriculation into transfer-level college courses. To that end, the EL Department has reduced the number of required offerings and units in its program to almost half of what it once was in order to offer more compressed and intensive coursework leading directly into transfer-level English. This transition has required a great deal of concerted effort and work on the part of both instructors and students to meet the goals of this legislative mandate resulting in increased workloads, time spent in preparation and grading, and working more with individual students. Any increase in class size at this time would be detrimental to the academic success and well-being of students, instructors, and the program as a whole. The assessment of student work, along with classroom teaching, course preparation, office hours, and committee work regularly forces instructors to work well beyond the contractual full-time workload of 42.5 hours per week.
- Given that EL students are essentially students studying a foreign language, organizations, such as the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL), the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) in guidelines for second-language teaching and position statements also support reasonable class caps of no more than thirty. Indeed, all suggest maximum class sizes for foreign language instruction as not exceeding more than twenty-five students (ICAS), with ADFL suggesting class caps of twenty with the ideal class size of fifteen students, and ACTFL suggesting that class sizes be as small as possible. What is important to note about foreign language instruction and EL students is that EL students are studying a foreign language in the target language, itself, producing an added cognitive load on students and challenge to instructors to meet their needs.
- In addition, professional organizations specializing in composition instruction also suggest that class caps not exceed thirty students with many suggesting class sizes of fewer than twenty (The Association of Departments of English; the Conference on College Composition and Communication). With composition instruction and assessment comprising a core part of the ELIC sequence, EL writing often requires significant time on the part of both students and

instructors in individual conferences to grapple with the understanding of a different language, culturally contrastive rhetorical organization, and culturally-laden topics and content to increase retention and success. The assessment of EL writing and the ongoing requirement of submitted revised writing is also very time-consuming given that line-by-line language error patterns must be attended to in order to increase lexical and syntactic accuracy in student writing over the long-term before transitioning into transfer-level English courses.

- EL and foreign language faculty routinely use instructional strategies that incorporate student movement and grouping strategies that facilitate increased interaction among students and teachers and address a variety of learning styles. Increased class sizes reduce the amount of physical classroom space per student and limit the ability of instructors to employ effective and varied teaching strategies (Bascia).

## 2. To meet student equity goals

- The EL Department serves a special student population, that of language learners, newcomers, refugees, immigrants, Generation 1.5 students, and long-term English language learners, many of whom come to the college with challenges that are beyond and outside of the scope of classroom instruction. Many students wrestle with family responsibilities, trauma, and a lowered sense of self-efficacy by virtue of just being language learners. As a result, EL instructors are often on the front line of student requests for help with issues beyond the realm of instruction, yet directly connected to their own academic success. Faculty spend a significant amount of time with individual students connecting them to resources that will allow them to overcome barriers that impede attainment of their academic goals. More students in a class decreases the amount of time an instructor has to assist such vulnerable students.
- Addressing equity in MJC's EL classrooms is a priority given that MJC is a Hispanic Servicing Institution with a 53% majority being of Hispanic descent. The proportion of this student demographic is significantly greater in the EL program. Given that class size has been shown to have a significant impact on minority and disadvantaged students (see references below), any increase in class size in EL classes would have an even greater and more negative and disproportionate impact on this student group, in particular.
  - "...class sizes need to reflect the competing demands on the expertise and experience of faculty who are dedicated to student success.... Excessively large class sizes can stretch faculty resources and time, causing many faculty to rely on abbreviated means of grading and spending fewer minutes per assignment per student than is effective or desirable, resulting in a less than favorable learning experience for the students" (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges).
  - "...faculty-student interactions are viewed as key to success for men of color" (Wood, et al. 21).
  - Class size significantly impacts achievement of low-income and minority students (Konstantopoulos and Chun; Krueger and Whitmore; Krueger).
  - Class size directly impacts student engagement, satisfaction, and success (Astin; Light).

### 3. To support the college's success under California's new funding formula

- Given the new Student-Centered Funding Formula for California Community Colleges, which emphasizes completion rates for college-level English courses, math courses, certificate programs, and degree programs, successful completion of course work is more important than ever. Proficiency in the English language is a foundational and essential skill for not only all college course work, but integration and engagement in the broader community. The logical conclusion is that success in EL classes translates to higher success rates in other courses and programs and greater economic prosperity in the community as a whole. Student success in English language courses depends upon the ability of the professor to meet the student at the level of his or her need. Economists agree that the investment in reasonable class sizes results in greater economic benefits to the institution and society as a whole (Krueger).

#### Works Cited

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