SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROPOSAL – Change in Control of the Mendocino Coast Campus

Request for a change in control of the Mendocino Coast Campus from the Redwoods Community College District to the Mendocino-Lake Community College District

Submitted by

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Submitted to

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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Description of Proposed Change

The Redwoods Community College District (RCCD) and the Mendocino-Lake Community College District (MLCCD) propose a change in control of the Mendocino Coast Campus located at 1211 Del Mar Drive in Fort Bragg, and other locations within the boundaries of RCCD in Mendocino County (“the Service Area”). The Service Area includes ten acres at 1211 Del Mar Drive location (exhibit of purchase attached), the location of the Fine Woodworking Program at 440 Alger Street in Fort Bragg (exhibit attached), ten acres of land at the Todd Subdivision in Fort Bragg (exhibit attached), and five acres of land at the Summerslane Spragnum Bog at the Mount Diable Meridian in Mendocino County (exhibit attached).

The Districts mutually propose that MLCCD assume control of this Service Area currently controlled by RCCD. Pending the signing of an MOU between RCCD and MLCCD, MLCCD will adhere to all applicable mandates, laws and policies pertaining to California Community Colleges, including the California Education Code and Title 5.

This proposal would result in substantive changes for both Districts. RCCD would undergo a change in control of a Service Area which is home to a Branch Campus, thereby ceasing operations in the Service Area at which students were able to complete at least 50% of an educational program. MLCCD would assume control of an additional Service Area and Branch Campus, thereby expanding their Service Area and establishing an additional Branch Campus location apart from the main campus at which MLCCD offers at least 50% of an educational program.

This proposal will detail the need for substantive change approval, and how this need relates to the District’s mission and institutional planning. This proposal will also detail how the District has made appropriate arrangements for current RCCD students to complete their programs of study, and how continuing and new students in the service area will be well served by MLCCD. It will also detail RCCD’s ability to maintain fiscal stability following the change of control, and a cooperative relationship between RCCD and MLCCD resulting in an agreed upon understanding of all foreseen issues surrounding the transfer.

Relationship to College Mission

RCCD serves students at the Mendocino Coast Campus according to its Mission that focuses on developmental, career technical, and transfer education. The Mission is also to contribute to the economic vitality of its service area.

MISSION – College of the Redwoods

College of the Redwoods puts student success first by providing outstanding developmental, career technical, and transfer education. The College partners with the community to contribute to the economic vitality and lifelong learning needs of its service area. We continually assess student learning and institutional performance and practices to improve upon the programs and services we offer.

College of the Redwoods
MLCCD also serves students according to a Mission that focuses on developmental basic skills, transfer and technical education. Similar to RCCD’s Mission of contributing to the economic vitality of its service area, MLCCD’s Mission is to embrace its role as an economic and cultural anchor for the region.

MISSION – Mendocino College
Mendocino College partners with a dynamic community of diverse students to help them achieve their educational goals. Informed by research, reflection and dialogue, the College offers programs in Basic Skills, Transfer Preparation and Career and Technical Education as well as Workforce Improvement. The College demonstrates its commitment to student success through high-quality and innovative instruction, providing individual attention to student needs in an inclusive and accessible learning environment. Mendocino College embraces its role as an intellectual, economic and cultural anchor for the region.

The similarity of the Mission statements is evidence that serving students and supporting the community surrounding the Mendocino Coast campus aligns with the Mission of MLCCD. It also conveys that the students in area served by the Mendocino Coast Campus are an appropriate intended student population for the MLCCD.

Rationale for Proposed Change

The long distance of the Mendocino Coast Campus to RCCD’s main campus has made it difficult for faculty, staff and students to travel from one location to another. RCCD’s main campus in Eureka is located 127 miles from the Mendocino Coast Campus. The drive from the Eureka to the Mendocino Coast campuses takes approximately three hours traveling over a winding mountainous highway. Collaboration and coordination of efforts across such a large service area has been resource intensive during times where RCCD has worked to make great strides towards fiscal stability. Furthermore, both distance and the relatively small size of the Mendocino Coast Campus limit the RCCD’s ability to engage the community and local and county officials in ongoing meaningful dialogue on how to best serve the students of the region.

MLCCD’s main campus is much closer to the Mendocino Coast Campus than is RCCD. With a main campus in Ukiah that is 55 miles and approximately an hour and 20 minutes away from the Mendocino Coast Campus, MLCCD’s main campus is less than half the distance from the Coast Campus than is RCCD’s main campus. This would allow MLCCD a greater capacity to meet the needs of coastal students. Also, given that MLCCD is located in Mendocino County, relationships with local and county officials are already in place. This means that the needs of students at the Mendocino Coast Campus may be better coordinated and addressed.

RCCD proposes a change in control to give coastal students better access to higher education and in order to remain fiscally stable. Because of the center's remote location and long distance from the Eureka campus, it is difficult and costly to provide instruction and support services for this coastal student population. Additionally, it is unrealistic to schedule a Eureka faculty member to teach a course in Fort Bragg. MLCCD, however, has a history of providing services at Centers and remote locations in their District in a cost-effective manner as evidenced by the success of their Lake Center
and North County Center as well as their outreach and course offerings in Covelo/Round Valley and Booneville. MLCCD will engage in a feasibility study, which will include input and review from all campus constituents, to demonstrate how services on the Mendocino Coast mesh with existing District planning.

**Description of the Change in Territory**

The Districts have already demonstrated the ability to work together to serve students at the Mendocino Coast Campus. In **October 2014**, RCCD and MLCCD entered into a mutual agreement regarding classes and services provided by MLCCD at RCCD’s Mendocino Coast Campus at the Del Mar Drive through Spring 2015 (Appendix A). The agreement outlined the instructional programs and services offered by MLCCD, rights afforded MLCCD, and transfer of FTES-generated revenue for the 2014-2015 academic year.

MLCCD offered courses at the Mendocino Coast Campus starting in Fall 2014. The agreement has worked well for both parties. Pending approval of this proposal, both parties have agreed to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the districts so that MLCCD can continue to offer courses at the Mendocino Coast Campus through June 2017. After June 2017 it is the intent of both parties that the Service Area be permanently transferred to MLCCD (Appendix B). The draft MOU will comprehensively address the issues surrounding the transfer, such as transferring a grandfathered center, and existing personnel. The MOU will provide the expected time-line for moving through the process of Community College reorganization or districts by transfer of territory (Education Code Section 74100). It will also provide the process for determining Bond indebtedness, and transfer of ownership of facilities.

**Addressing Student Needs**

**Allowing for Completion of Program of Study**

RCCD faced significant fiscal and accreditation challenges through 2013-2014. Enrollment declined while the institution was placed on Show Cause by the ACCJC in February 2012. In addition, RCCD was required to submit a Special Report to the ACCJC on the Three Year Budget Plan to Resolve OPEB Financing and Cash Flow Plan for the Next Three Years in April 2014. These challenges necessitated that RCCD temporarily restrict course offerings at the Mendocino Coast Campus. To serve current students in that area, RCCD gained Board approval to negotiate a Memorandum of Agreement with Mendocino College for Mendocino College to offer classes in the Mendocino County portion of RCCD for the academic year of 2014-2015, and to begin discussions about the potential transfer of this territory to MLCCD (Appendix C March 4 2014 Board Packet). As noted above, a Memorandum of Agreement was established in October 2014, at which point RCCD and MLCCD worked together to serve students (Appendix A).

RCCD temporarily suspended all programs at the Mendocino Coast Campus in fall 2014 except the Fine Woodworking which awards two certificates of achievement. The following degrees and certificates were temporarily suspended:
RCCD identified students enrolled at the Mendocino Coast Campus during Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 who had completed 50% of a degree or certificate. The total units completed by current students were determined. Those with a sufficient number of units to have completed 50% of a degree or certificate were identified, and Counseling and Advising staff performed a program evaluation on each student to determine the courses remaining for their specific program of study. Identified were all courses needed, and highlighted were the courses needed by the most students so that MLCCD could prioritize course offerings. MLCCD and RCCD then developed a crosswalk of the courses needed to complete a RCCD degree/certificate with the courses of similar content at MLCCD (Appendix D).

All Mendocino Coast students, except those in the Fine Woodworking program, were notified that the College of the Redwoods and Mendocino College ratified an agreement giving Mendocino College sole authority to provide all instructional and other services in the Mendocino Coast area for the Fall 2014 semester. The agreement also included the authority for MLCCD to offer courses necessary to complete RCCD’s “teach-out” to students identified as substantially completing RCCD’s programs. RCCD worked with staff from MLCCD to provide the courses needed so that students at or beyond 50% completion of a degree or certificate could complete necessary courses evaluated as similar at MLCCD, or apply completed coursework to a similar career path at Mendocino College.

Fine Woodworking Program

RCCD continues to offer the Fine Woodworking program in Fort Bragg. Fine Woodworking students have not been affected by the agreement to date, but a transfer of territory would necessitate arrangements for these students to complete their program. MLCCD is actively developing a comparable program (add time-line of curriculum/program creation once received from MLCCD) so that current students in the Fine Woodworking program would be able to transfer to MLCCD and complete their certificate with minimal disruption.

Transfer of Academic Records and Financial Aid Information

Students attending MLCCD with academic records from the RCCD Mendocino Coast Campus will be identified. Both Districts have agreed to work with these students to identify those who desire a transfer of records. Following the transfer of territory, the student records of those desiring transfer, which are electronically available for students enrolled since Fall 1985, will be provided to MLCCD from RCCD. Eligible students will be notified that their records have been permanently transferred. In addition, RCCD will work with MLCCD to obtain and provide financial aid records necessary to ensure that students are not negatively impacted.
Assessment of Fiscal Impact

RCCD has operated the Mendocino Coast Campus at a net loss over multiple years. Enrollment declines, likely impacted by accreditation sanctions, resulted in less revenue generated from the campus than was needed for operations. This necessitated the temporary suspension of most operations at the Mendocino Coast Campus during a time when RCCD was taking all possible avenues to lower expenses, including substantial reductions in force and reductions in salary across the District.

The loss of revenue from FTES due to suspended operations, however, has not hurt the college fiscally when considering the loss of overhead spent to run the campus. RCCD had operated the campus with more full-time faculty and staff than has been modeled by MLCCD’s operations at branch campuses, causing RCCD to expend more overhead.

The College’s fund balance is projected to continue to improve each year through 2016-17 without the benefit of the Mendocino Coast Campus enrollments (evidence). FTES lost from suspended operations at the Mendocino Coast Campus accounted for less than 5 percent of RCCD’s enrollments while the lost revenue is mostly offset by RCCD’s lower personnel and operating costs. RCCD will also lose approximately 60 FTES currently generated from the Fine Woodworking program if transferred to MLCCD, but it is not expected to have a noticeable impact on the budget as it accounts for only 1.5 percent of RCCD’s enrollments. Even with centrally charged overhead costs removed, RCCD’s revenue and costs for this campus including Fine Woodworking typically netted losses to small positive results. Therefore, the overall fiscal impact of removing this campus from RCCD’s books will be minimal.

MLCCD is expected to be able to operate the campus more efficiently than RCCD because of its closer proximity. Part-time faculty teaching at the Mendocino Coast Campus, for example, will have the possibility of teaching at more than one location. This was an option never available to RCCD faculty which limited the available faculty to teach sections. In addition, MLCCD is expected to generate more enrollments than RCCD because students will have the ability to attend more than one location within the District. With these and many other advantages, it is expected that MLCCD will operate at a net revenue gain.

Planning Process

RCCD is currently operating under a 2012-2017 Education Master Plan. Extensive work will be done in the 2016-2017 year to develop a new planning document for 2017-2022. With the possibility of a smaller service area, this strategic planning work will need to be done taking into consideration the possibility of a smaller service area. A reduction in size should lead to more focused planning in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

Extensive planning and collaboration has gone into the time-line and logistics of carrying out a transfer of control of the Mendocino Coast Campus and service area. (potentially add information about the time-line for petition to transfer territory here. Or at least the intent for both colleges to initiate the petition to transfer process).
Appendix A – Appendices