

# Proposal for the Ohlone College Classified Flex Program

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(On September 18, 2006, Cheryl Lambert (at the request of the CSEA Chapter 490 President) replaced “a minimum of 3 hours” with “3 hours” in 4 places throughout this document.)

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## Introduction

As a Learning College, the Ohlone Community College District promotes life long learning for all. One of the Ohlone College Goals is: *Provide continuous learning for all personnel associated with the District and promote an organizational structure that is adaptable, collegial, and supportive of the Learning College Model.*

To support this goal, the Classified Flex Program was developed. The Program encourages continuous learning by classified staff employees to ensure they are equipped to meet the needs of students and the College now and in the future. Through continuous learning, employees increase their skill set, are engaged and informed, experience less stress, are happier, and enjoy an increased sense of community among co-workers and students.

To support continuous learning by classified staff employees, representatives from Human Resources worked closely with classified staff representatives to prepare this proposal for a Classified Flex Program at Ohlone College. The idea for this program is similar to the Faculty Flex Program, which was “instituted at Ohlone ... to provide opportunities for the accomplishment of instructional improvement activities.”

Classified staff employees at Ohlone College are represented by two unions: Chapter 490 of the California School Employees Association (CSEA) and Chapter 790 of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). This proposal will be negotiated with the classified unions.

Members of the committee who worked on the specifications of the Classified Flex Program proposal are: Lyle Engeldinger, Sharon Quintana, and Elva Duval of Human Resources; Allison Bly and Cheryl Lambert, CSEA representatives on the Staff Development Committee; Gwen Murphy, SEIU representative on the Staff Development Committee; and Dennis Driver, interested volunteer from the CSEA membership.

## ***What is the Classified Flex Program?***

The Ohlone College Classified Flex Program provides opportunities to classified staff employees to attend a variety of mandatory and voluntary learning activities held **during or after** their regular work hours. (Classified Flex activities are explained below.)

Learning is an involved process that requires planning and goal setting. Each employee must take responsibility for his/her own learning and is encouraged to work with his/her manager to develop a learning plan to assist the employee with achieving his/her training and education goals.

The College acknowledges that job responsibilities leave classified staff with little time for non-essential activities. As an incentive to encourage participation in learning activities during and after regular work hours, employees will earn College Knowledge Units (CKUs) through the Classified Flex Program. These CKUs may be exchanged for time off with pay or other “exchange items.” (College Knowledge Units and exchange items are explained below.)

The Classified Flex Program encourages personal and professional learning. It is separate from the employer-provided job education process of job training.

## ***How the Program Works in a Nutshell***

- Each classified staff employee participates in Classified Flex activities.
- Each classified staff employee will be paid his/her regular wage to participate in Classified Flex activities held during his/her regular work hours, up to 12 hours per fiscal year.
- In addition, one (1) College Knowledge Unit (CKU) will be accrued for each one (1) hour of Classified Flex activity in which that employee participates.
- A maximum of 12 CKUs per fiscal year can be accrued by each employee.
- Each employee participates in 3 hours of mandatory Classified Flex activities during his/her regular work hours each fiscal year for which s/he will accrue 3 CKUs.
- Each employee may participate in up to 9 additional hours of voluntary Classified Flex activities each fiscal year for which s/he may accrue up to 9 CKUs.
- CKU credit is given once per activity per employee per fiscal year.
- Accrued CKUs are exchangeable with the District for time off with pay at the exchange rate defined below or for other “exchange items” that may later be identified.
- Summary: CKUs are accrued each fiscal year by participating in:
  - 3 Mandatory Classified Flex activities
  - up to 9 Classified Flex activities related to the business of the college
  - up to 3 Elective activities

## ***What is a Classified Flex Activity?***

A Classified Flex activity is an activity that supports one or more of the College Goals and/or promotes the Learning College Model and the District's Strategic Plan. This very broad description encompasses a wide variety of learning opportunities, including those related to the business of the College (supporting and educating students), employee job responsibilities, career goals, and even personal interests.

Many Classified Flex activities are available during regular work hours; for example:

- Activities designated as "Mandatory Classified Flex Activity" by the Dean of Human Resources.
- Activities that qualify as Flex time for Ohlone College faculty.
- Workshops presented by the Online Education department.
- Desktop seminars, web conferences, and online courses by @ONE, the CCC, or other organizations.
- Demonstrations of new technologies and/or software.
- Brown Bag Lunches, guest speakers, Artist Workshops held at the Louie-Meager Art Gallery.
- Activities not included in an employee's regular job responsibilities but which contribute toward student learning or enrichment (for example, assisting with Welcome Day, Graduation, or the annual EOPS Awards Ceremony and Fashion Show).

There are a great many opportunities to attend activities outside an employee's regular work hours. These include online and on-ground (classroom) courses through Ohlone College, Community Education, adult school, and other educational institutions; technology or other job-related conferences or workshops. Example topics may include American Sign Language, Microsoft Office, Internet Research, Website Design, Accounting, Air Conditioning and Heating Maintenance, California History, World Religions, Spanish, and Arabic.

Additional ideas for Classified Flex activities could include the following if formal programs to support them are developed:

- Mentoring another classified staff employee
- Student mentoring

## ***College Knowledge Units Explained***

### **How are CKUs Accrued?**

Each classified staff employee will accrue one (1) College Knowledge Unit (CKU) for each one (1) hour s/he participates in Classified Flex activities during or after his/her regular work hours, up to 12 hours (12 CKUs) per fiscal year (3 mandatory, up to 9 voluntary). An employee may participate in more than 12 hours of Classified Flex activities each fiscal year, but will accrue at most 12 CKUs.

In addition to participating in Classified Flex activities held during regular work hours, a classified staff employee may participate in Classified Flex activities outside his/her regular work hours. The employee **will not** be paid his/her regular wage for participating in activities outside his/her regular work hours, but **will** accrue one (1) CKU for each hour to a maximum of 6 CKUs for any single activity per fiscal year.

The employee must complete the Classified Flex activity before the corresponding CKUs are accrued.

### **Credit for Mandatory Classified Flex Activities**

Three (3) of the maximum 12 CKUs per fiscal year are accrued by participating in 3 hours of mandatory Classified Flex activities.

The Dean of Human Resources will designate 3 hours of “Mandatory Classified Flex Activities” each fiscal year. More than 3 hours may be offered, but only 3 are mandatory for each employee.

Examples of mandatory activities may include Customer Service Skills, Conflict Resolution, Basic ASL, Time Management, What to Do in an Emergency, Tips for Great Telephone Skills, Helpful Email Management Tricks, Using Email Filters to Reduce Spam in Your Inbox, and Better Management of Your Electronic Files.

#### ***Mandatory Classified Flex Activities: Extended Absences from Work***

A Classified staff employee who returns to part-time or full-time employment after an approved extended absence from his/her job may miss the dates on which mandatory Classified Flex activities were offered. In this case, the employee, employee’s manager, and Dean of Human Resources will work together to determine alternative Classified Flex activities that will count toward the employee’s yearly mandatory Classified Flex requirement.

#### ***Mandatory Classified Flex Activities: New Employees, Repeated Activities, and Refreshers***

New mandatory activities will be offered each fiscal year. Previously offered mandatory activities will be rotated to allow newer employees the opportunity to participate.

A mandatory Classified Flex activity may be repeated for CKU credit every 3 years, unless it is offered as a “Refresher” (an example might be Customer Service Skills) in which case it can be repeated once each fiscal year for CKU credit. The Dean of Human Resources will determine which activities qualify as “Refresher” activities.

### **Credit for Voluntary Classified Flex Activities**

Each employee may choose to participate in up to 9 hours of voluntary Classified Flex activities each fiscal year for which s/he will accrue one (1) CKU per hour up to 9 CKUs, to a maximum of 6 CKUs for any single activity per fiscal year.

#### **Double CKU Credit**

Double CKU credit can be accrued for a classified staff employee who creates and presents a Classified Flex activity to the Ohlone College community. For example, an employee presenting a 1-hour workshop will accrue 2 CKUs. The employee accrues double credit only for the first time that activity is presented per fiscal year to a maximum of 6 CKUs. No CKU credit is given for future presentations of that activity in that fiscal year.

## **Exchange Items: What can CKUs be used for?**

At this time, there is only one available “exchange item”: Time off with pay. Additional CKU exchange items may be offered as the Classified Flex Program grows, but “time off with pay” will always be an available exchange item. When more than one exchange item is offered, each employee chooses his/her desired exchange item.

Accrued CKUs are exchangeable with the District for time off with pay at the exchange rate of 6 CKUs for 4 hours time off (taken at one time) or can be left to accumulate until 12 CKUs are accrued. 12 accrued CKUs can be exchanged for two 4-hour periods of time off or one 8-hour period of time off. CKUs cannot be exchanged for shorter pieces of time off (such as 2 hours for 3 CKUs).

Employees are encouraged to exchange their accrued CKUs once they have accumulated 6 or 12 CKUs. Accrued CKUs stay “on the books” for an employee and can accumulate until 24 CKUs have been accrued but not exchanged. When a total of 12 CKUs have been accrued for an employee, the corresponding time off with pay (8 hours) must be taken within 12 months. An employee may accrue additional unused CKUs until s/he reaches a total of 24 CKUs. Once an employee has accumulated 24 CKUs, s/he will not accrue additional CKUs until at least 6 of those CKUs are exchanged for time off with pay (which is at least 4 hours).

CKUs have no cash value, cannot be paid to an employee in lieu of taking time off with pay, and can be exchanged only during the employee's time of service with the District. CKUs may not be used to extend or enhance any benefit provided by the District, State of California, or United States Government. They are not transferable to another organization. An employee cannot give or donate accrued CKUs to or accrue CKUs for another employee.

## ***Release Time for Classified Staff***

Release time to participate in Classified Flex activities will be granted to a classified staff employee by his/her manager. Should the manager determine that an employee's absence from his/her job duties will be disruptive to critical department services, the employee will be given release time at another time or date for the same or for another Classified Flex activity.

An employee granted release time to attend a Classified Flex activity during his/her regular work hours must attend the full activity for which s/he was given release time.

## ***Definitions***

- **CKU** – College Knowledge Unit.
- **Classified Flex activity** - An activity which supports one or more of the College Goals and/or promotes the Learning College model and the District's Strategic Plan.
- **Classified Flex Program** – A program that provides classified staff employees the opportunity to attend a variety of learning activities during and after their regular work hours.
- **Elective Classified Flex activity** – Elective activities are those that may not relate to the business of the College, such as an oil painting or ceramics class, learning to crochet or knit, or taking a physical conditioning course. Each employee may accrue a maximum of 3 CKUs per fiscal year from elective activities.
- **Exchange item** – An item for which an employee may exchange his/her accrued CKUs.

- **Exchange rate for time off with pay** – 6 CKUs equals 4 hours of time off. 12 CKUs equals 8 hours of time off.
- **Fiscal year** – July 1 through June 30. (Not calendar year.)
- **Mandatory Classified Flex activity** – The Dean of Human Resources will designate 3 hours of “Mandatory Classified Flex Activities” each fiscal year. More than 3 hours may be offered, but only 3 are mandatory for each employee.
- **Mandatory Classified Flex requirement** - Each classified staff employee must fulfill 3 hours of mandatory Classified Flex activities each fiscal year. These activities will be designated as a “Mandatory Classified Flex Activity” by the Dean of Human Resources.