

Presented by Cuyamaca College President - Dr. Jessica Robinson, MSW

The English (Puente) position was ranked tenth on the 2025–2026 Faculty Hiring Priorities Committee list, with Humanities/Religious Studies ranked ninth. In alignment with the college's strategic priorities as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and its commitments outlined in the Strategic Plan and 2025 Student Equity Plan, the college is proceeding with the English (Puente) position. This written confirmation is grounded in demonstrated student demand, program sustainability, responsible enrollment management, and the intentional design of the Puente model, which integrates English (Puente) instruction with aligned counseling and cohort-based support.

While Humanities and Religious Studies faculty remain essential to the college's instructional mission and overall student success, the English (Puente) position is central to maintaining program fidelity and delivering the high-impact, cohort-based instruction that defines Puente. This reflects strategic prioritization in support of institutional goals and student success, not a reduction in the value of other disciplines.

Rationale for Advancing the English (Puente) Position

Demonstrated Programmatic Need

- The Puente Program currently has a waitlist, signaling unmet student demand and a clear need for additional instructional and programmatic capacity.
- The proposed English (Puente) position includes built-in coordinator support, which is essential for sustaining and expanding the program.
- National Puente guidance emphasizes the intentional alignment of Puente counseling and Puente English as a core element of the model, reinforcing the Strategic Plan's focus on integrated, pathway based academic and counseling support.
- Without this hire, the department's capacity to effectively support Puente students, sustain program fidelity, and maintain program quality is at risk.
- These responsibilities are intensive and high touch; without shared faculty coordinator support, the existing Puente Counselor faces an unsustainable workload and heightened risk of burnout.

Discipline-Specific Expertise

- The position is designed to bring expertise in Chicanx Literature, a critical academic and cultural component of Puente.
- This expertise cannot be easily substituted or absorbed by existing faculty without compromising program integrity.

Equity and Institutional Alignment

- As a Hispanic-Serving Institution, advancing the Puente counseling hire directly supports goals outlined in both the Student Equity Plan and the college's Strategic Plan, particularly those focused on Latinx student access, persistence, completion, and equity-minded student support.

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- Puente is a nationally recognized, high-impact practice with a strong evidence base for improving outcomes for historically underserved students, aligning with Strategic Plan priorities related to student success and completion.

Governance Considerations

Equity-minded decision making requires aligning resources with areas where instructional coherence, program integrity, and student persistence and completion outcomes are most directly supported. While Humanities and Religious Studies remain an important and valued part of the college's curriculum and their communicated needs through Program Review and the FHPC ranking process should not be dismissed or minimized, an examination of the totality of our campus needs and available resources point to Puente as a high impact pathway for student success that is in immediate need for long-term support.

This recommendation may raise questions regarding discipline prioritization or alignment with shared governance processes, and those considerations were taken seriously.

Cuyamaca's definition of "Shared Governance" is "inclusive and collaborative decision-making that reflects the diverse voices of our campus community" ([Cuyamaca College Participatory Governance Handbook](#)). The role of the College President is to receive the recommendations produced through effective shared governance and make final decisions based on full consideration of all interest holder feedback and the totality of the needs of the campus as they align with stated priorities and goals.

It is important to note that campus-wide shared governance processes also document the need and persistent equity gaps experienced by our Latinx students. These same processes have produced calls to action for our institution to dedicate resources to addressing these needs and closing equity gaps. These can be found documented in:

- [2025 Student Equity Plan](#) Latiné students are a strategic focus population
- [Strategic Goals](#)
 - Increase Equitable Access
 - Eliminate Equity Gaps in Course Success
 - Increase Persistence and Eliminate Equity Gaps
 - Increase Completion and Eliminate Equity Gaps
 - Increase Hiring and Retention Of Diverse Employees
- [Mission, Vision, and Values](#)
 - Vision: "Equity, Excellence, and Social Justice through Education"
 - Values:
 - Student-centered
 - Equity
 - Student Success
 - Innovation
 - Excellence
 - Social Justice

Written confirmation to hire English (Puente) vs. Humanities/Religious Studies - Spring 2026

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The above campus priorities and commitments are the product of careful and collaborative campus-wide shared governance and reflect the diverse voices of our campus community. They all speak to the need to serve students through an equity lens and document a campus-wide commitment to “work together to make systemic changes to actively dismantle the racism and inequalities ingrained in the fabric of traditional institutions in order to safeguard human rights, increase access, promote participation, and further equity [Cuyamaca’s definition of “social justice”](#)”).

Furthermore, feedback provided by faculty within shared governance spaces and through elected and appointed faculty representatives have continuously called for more pro-active approaches to problem-solving and intentional resource allocation to support our campus goals and initiatives as well as better institute cultures of care that will address and prevent burnout.

This recommendation is consistent with the college’s strategic priorities and Student Equity Plan commitments and affirms the college’s responsibility to sustain Puente as a high impact pathway for student success.