



Mikayla Ortega- Earth Science and Biology
(Academic Senate Part-Time Faculty Representative candidate)

I have been teaching at Cuyamaca for two years and have been teaching as an Adjunct at San Diego community colleges for just under three years. This past year, I served as the part-time Faculty Academic Senator At-Large. I spoke up often in our meetings, advocating directly for adjuncts and part time faculty, especially when it came to drafting documents and voting to support various policies that address faculty needs. I work as an adjunct at three different colleges in San Diego and have a clear, empathetic, understanding of the adjunct experience, rhythms and routines. I care greatly about making sure the realities of the adjunct-life are kept in mind and directly acknowledged when policies are being designed, especially as we prepare to return to face-to-face instruction. My goal this past year was to ensure the Academic Senate serves all faculty and that we, as adjuncts, don't just have to rely on our union to negotiate conditions for us, but that our realities are understood and considered from the beginning. This would continue to be my goal should I be re-elected as one of your part-time faculty Academic Senators. If I were to be re-elected, I understand that I would be one of the representatives of the incredibly large community of part-time faculty at Cuyamaca, therefore, I commit to maintaining a pathway of open communication in order to accurately represent these voices with my own. I commit to sharing all perspectives and to actively engage in conversation and decision-making surrounding issues that arise, expressing how they may affect the institution and the part-time faculty community.

More about me!:

I started teaching directly after completing my Master's degree at Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO), where I also worked as a Teaching Assistant for two years. I have been collaborating closely with faculty and staff in the Physical Science and Earth Science departments at Cuyamaca to revive various Earth Science classes and increase student interest and enrollment in these classes. This work has sparked my desire to promote the development and maintenance of educational excellence at the university level. I have taught a variety of classes including Anatomy and Physiology lecture and lab, Physiology lecture and lab, General Biology, Oceanography, and Marine Biology. I also work to foster relationships with scientists at SIO by coordinating guest lectures, increasing student involvement in research, and introducing students to all the opportunities available to them. I have demonstrated my abilities to create collaborative relationships between part-time and full-time faculty through my involvement and attendance at multiple conferences, curriculum planning meetings, and, particularly, through my involvement with the Cuyamaca Course Design Workshop and the Equity-Minded Teaching and Learning Institute. I value public communication and science interpretation and still work with local high schools and community

groups, presenting information about coral, the environment, climate change and more. I also present at various high school conferences, speaking about my first-generation college student experience and resources available to students that can help them achieve their goals. I have a strong passion for nature and the environment around us, for creating accessibility and equity for all students in the classroom, and for using my stories and academic experience as a part-time faculty to continue to create a welcoming and productive academic atmosphere at Cuyamaca College.