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Special Needs Positions in Health Care

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Challenges with hard-to-fill positions

Length of Vacancies

- Multiple full-time positions, especially in nursing, respiratory care, health information technology (HIT), mortuary science, and surgical technology, have remained vacant for 6 months or longer.
- Persistent vacancies jeopardize compliance with accreditation guidelines, limit program expansion and exhaust the capacity of resident faculty.

Qualified Applicant Pool

- Many qualified candidates reside outside the Chicagoland area, but residency requirements have limited the ability to hire them. This has been a significant barrier to filling vacancies across disciplines.
- For example, HIT programs report that nearly 60% of qualified applicants reside outside the required residency zone.

Operational Impact

- Reliance on adjunct faculty and overtime compromises the continuity and quality of education. In addition, recent restrictions on adjunct availability further limits expansion and eliminates departmental bandwidth.
- Critical roles such as simulation lab coordinators in nursing and clinical directors in respiratory care remain unfilled, impacting accreditation compliance and enrollment capacity.

Accreditation Standards and Staffing Concerns

1. Nursing Program (ACEN Accreditation)

- **Standard 1:** ACEN mandates "sufficient and sustainable fiscal and physical resources" to support the program at all locations (Criterion 1.8). Prolonged vacancies can be perceived as diminishing resources, risking program compliance [[ACEN Standards](#)].
- **Standard 2:** ACEN requires that full-time faculty are "sufficient in number" to meet program outcomes. Current staffing shortages directly conflict with this requirement (Criterion 2.1).

2. Respiratory Care Program (CoARC Accreditation)

- **Standard 2:** CoARC specifies that the sponsor must ensure "fiscal, academic, and physical resources are sufficient to achieve the program's goals" (Criterion 2.01). Long-term vacancies in key roles like the Director of Clinical Education pose risks to compliance [[CoARC Standards](#)].
- **Key Program Personnel:** CoARC mandates a full-time Program Director and Director of Clinical Education to maintain program integrity (Criterion 2.02). Without these roles filled, accreditation may be at risk.

Accreditation Standards and Staffing Concerns, cont'd

3. Health Information Technology (CAHIIM Accreditation)

- CAHIIM highlights that "faculty composition must reflect the needs of the program and support the quality of instruction." Prolonged vacancies may trigger a "show cause" review if they impact student outcomes [【CAHIIM Standards】](#) .

4. Surgical Technology (CAAHEP Accreditation)

- ARC/STSA requires that faculty resources "meet or exceed" minimum standards to sustain program outcomes. Vacancies in lab instruction have already led to difficulties in meeting student-to-faculty ratios, potentially risking accreditation [【Surg Tech Accreditation Standards】](#) .

5. Mortuary Science (ABFSE Accreditation)

- **Standard 6.7:** The American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE) requires that faculty members be appropriately qualified with licensure in funeral service. The program must maintain a faculty-to-student ratio sufficient for clinical and lab instruction.
- Failure to fill vacancies in embalming lab instruction and clinical coordination may lead to non-compliance with ABFSE standards, affecting accreditation renewal. [【ABFSE Standards】](#)

Accreditation Standards and Staffing Concerns, cont'd

6. Medical Laboratory Technician (NAACLS Accreditation)

- **Standard VII.C:** NAACLS mandates that programs must have sufficient full-time faculty to ensure clinical oversight and didactic instruction. Faculty shortages limit clinical placement opportunities impacting program enrollment and risking accreditation compliance due to inadequate instructional support. [[NAACLS Standards](#)].
- Accreditation standards state that "faculty availability must not impede the quality of instruction," meaning that faculty shortages could result in an accreditation review or site visit findings. Colleges have been actively recruiting
- **Hiring Challenge:** Despite an 8-month job posting, only one viable candidate applied, and that candidate resided outside of city limits, making it impossible to hire under the current residency policies.

Factors considered in selecting hard-to-fill positions

Vacancy Duration:	Applicant Availability:	Accreditation Risks:	Program Enrollment Impact:	Specialized Expertise:	Operational Dependence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positions that remain vacant for 6 months or more despite active recruitment efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fewer than three qualified candidates apply locally within the recruitment period.• A majority of qualified applicants reside outside the Chicagoland area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roles directly tied to accreditation compliance, such as simulation lab coordinators, clinical directors, or faculty in regulated fields, are prioritized.• Documented risks or citations from accrediting bodies related to staffing shortages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programs unable to expand or meet enrollment targets due to insufficient faculty or staff.• Reduced student-to-faculty ratios resulting from prolonged vacancies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positions requiring certifications, advanced degrees, or specialized training unavailable in the local candidate pool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical roles, such as program directors, whose absence impairs program operations, curriculum delivery, or student outcomes.

Legend: **Orange = Mitigating Factor**
Green = Mandatory Factor

Consistent with the factors identified, City Colleges recommends exempting the following positions from the residency requirement.

Program	Position
Basic Nursing Assistant	Training Specialist
Basic Nursing Assistant	Work-based Learning Coordinator
Basic Nursing Assistant	Director of Nursing
Health Information Technology	Full-time Faculty
Health Information Technology	Health Science Director
Mortuary Science	Full-time Faculty
Nursing	Full-time Faculty
Nursing	Simulation Lab Manager
Nursing	Nursing Education Specialist
Nursing	Work-based Learning Coordinator
Respiratory Care	Full-time Faculty
Respiratory Care	Lab Coordinator
Surgical Technology	Full-time Faculty
Surgical Technology	Work-based Learning Coordinator
Medical Lab Technology	Health Science Director