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Nursing Leader Appointed to Oversee College's Mathematics and Sciences Division

PALM DESERT, CA (February 9, 2026) -- College of the Desert (COD) has appointed Sarah Fry as Acting Dean of Mathematics and Sciences, bringing data-informed leadership and extensive healthcare education experience to this pivotal role. Fry will provide oversight for the division's diverse programs, including mathematics, sciences, nursing, and allied health.

Fry will offer both instructional and administrative guidance for the division, overseeing faculty evaluation processes, curriculum development, scheduling, enrollment management, and resource allocation. Her responsibilities include ensuring accreditation and regulatory compliance while maintaining continuity during this period of transition.

A tenured faculty member who joined COD in 2012, Fry has steadily advanced through positions of increasing responsibility. Her trajectory includes service as SLO Coordinator, supporting outcomes assessment and continuous improvement initiatives; Department Chair; Assistant Director of the Registered Nursing Program; and Director of Nursing and Allied Health.

"Sarah brings a unique combination of clinical expertise and administrative acumen to her new role," said COD Superintendent/President Val Martinez Garcia. "Her proven ability to align programs with workforce needs and institutional priorities makes her exceptionally qualified to guide this vital division."

Fry earned both her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing with a concentration in nursing education from California State University, San Bernardino. Her clinical career was spent in intensive care settings, where she also served as a clinical nursing instructor, combining hands-on patient care with educational mentorship.

"I am honored to serve in this capacity and to work alongside our talented faculty and staff," said Fry. "My focus remains on supporting instructional quality and student achievement while ensuring our programs meet the evolving and growing demands of healthcare and STEM fields."

Known for her evidence-based approach to decision-making and unwavering focus on student outcomes, Fry's appointment underscores the college's commitment to placing experienced leaders in key positions that directly impact learner success and program quality throughout the Coachella Valley region.

Fry's appointment was made official at the COD Board of Trustee's regular meeting in January.

About College of the Desert

College of the Desert serves more than 20,000 students across five campuses in Palm Desert, Indio, Mecca/Thermal, Desert Hot Springs, and Palm Springs. Founded in 1958 and opened in 1962, College of the Desert is governed by the Desert Community College District Board of Trustees. Through the pLEDGE program, the college offers eligible students two years of tuition-free education, removing financial barriers and expanding access to higher education in the community. College of the Desert provides the Coachella Valley with affordable degrees, certificates, and transfer pathways, offering in-demand programs that prepare workforce leaders and strengthen the local economy.