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ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEWSLETTER

SENATE ROSTRUM

THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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The Rostrum is a quarterly publication of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 428 J Street, Suite 430, Sacramento, CA, 95814.

The Rostrum is distributed to all faculty through college academic senate presidents and by individual mailing. For deadline information call (916) 445-4753 or email us at julie@asccc.org

Note: The articles published in the Rostrum do not necessarily represent the adopted positions of the Academic Senate. For adopted positions and recommendations, please visit our website at <http://www.asccc.org>

You can find this and the previous issues of this publication online at: <http://www.asccc.org>

An SLO Terminology Glossary: A Draft in Progress

BY LESLEY KAWAGUCHI, CHAIR, ACCREDITATION AND SLO COMMITTEE

With the introduction of the 2002 Accreditation Standards, California community college faculty tentatively waded into the waters of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and assessment. At a Spring 2009 plenary breakout session, some preliminary results were presented from a recent survey of SLO coordinators conducted by the Academic Senate's Accreditation and SLO Committee. In the survey, which will be more fully reported in a forthcoming Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) paper, most of the respondents stated that their colleges had waded into the SLO waters by 2008. Most had reached the "development stage" of the Accrediting Commission for Junior and Community Colleges (ACCJC) rubric on Student Learning Outcomes and looked forward to reaching the proficiency stage by 2012 (see p. 3, http://www.laccd.edu/inst_effectiveness/Student_Learning/documents/ACCJCRubricTableSept2007.pdf). As faculty members have increased their participation in SLOs and assessment, some confusion has arisen in terminology, especially as they collaborated with their college institutional researchers.

At the Spring 2008 Plenary Session, a resolution was passed to address this confusion. Resolution 2.02 S08 read:

Whereas, There is some confusion regarding definitions of key terms relevant to student learning outcomes and assessment; and

Whereas, There is no consensus across the state as to what defines a "program" and this directly impacts student learning outcomes and assessment practices;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges address the confusion in the field by researching and developing a glossary of common terms for student learning outcomes and assessment.

A collaborative group comprised of members of the Academic Senate's Accreditation and SLO Committee and the Research and Planning Group for the California Community Colleges (RP Group) developed an initial draft of this glossary early in 2009. The first draft of the glossary largely reflects expertise culled from articles and books written by educators and practitioners in the fields of student learning and assessment. (A copy of the Draft Glossary is available at http://sloassessment.com/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/Glossary_rough_draft_final.61134559.pdf). Moreover, the Academic Senate has prior working definitions that were also incorporated into this draft. (See *The 2002 Accreditation Standards: Implementation* (adopted Fall 2004), pp. 5, 19-21, and *Working with the 2002 Accreditation Standards: The Faculty's Role* (adopted Spring 2005), p. 12.)

Over the course of the past year since the resolution was passed, with the turnover in SLO coordinators, the increased working relationship between SLO



coordinators and institutional researchers at many colleges, and the need for all faculty as well as entire campus communities to engage in SLO development and assessment, it has become clear that the necessity for a glossary extends to all persons engaged in these discussions.

The goal of the glossary is to provide a common language and an important resource for faculty, including the SLO coordinators, and institutional researchers. As SLO development and assessment move toward proficiency, the entire campus community needs to communicate. Thus, the glossary, while largely intended initially for the SLO coordinators and institutional researchers, becomes critical for the entire college community as a means to dialogue effectively about student learning, student learning outcomes, and assessment.

The process for refining this glossary began with the SLO coordinators and institutional researchers. The glossary has been vetted by these groups via the Senate's Accreditation and SLO Committee and at the SLO Regional meetings held in March 2009. Members of the Academic Senate Executive Committee, who approved the first reading of the draft for further discussion, and attendees at the SLO Institute in July will also be asked for their input, as well as any of you who wish to participate. During the summer and early fall, the Accreditation

and SLO Committee and the Academic Senate-RP Group collaborative will discuss and incorporate needed terms and edits, such as clarifying the use of multiple seemingly interchangeable terms. Where possible examples will be provided to help the field better understand the concepts. The glossary will return to the Academic Senate Executive Committee for a second reading in the fall and then will be shared with the field for approval at the Fall 2009

Plenary Session.

Ultimately local senates and faculty are the ones to determine which definitions they will use or modify. For instance, to clarify reports and self studies, local senates can define their own terms and reference their language to the glossary in order to make their processes clear. Thus, while the proposed glossary is in response to a resolution, choice of terminology remains locally controlled. ■

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A Tale of Two Data Elements

BY MARK WADE LIEU, PRESIDENT, AND JANET FULKS, CURRICULUM CHAIR

For a friend, it was the best of times, yet it was the worst of times. He had bought a beautiful new carpet for the living room, but rather than enjoy his new floor covering, the result was that he became uncomfortably aware of the dinginess of the paint on the walls and the shoddy condition of the baseboards.

In a similar way, when we in the community colleges work to address one issue, we often end up becoming uncomfortably aware of others. Such is the case with our work on the proper coding of our courses for MIS reporting.

When the Chancellor's Office developed the Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges (ARCC), it became clear that the coding for basic skills course progress, in a data element which is called CB21, was inaccurate and essentially useless for reporting on student advancement through basic skills courses. This problem became more acute when the Legislature made it clear that funding for the Basic Skills Initiative was linked to such reports.

What is CB21, and what is wrong with it? In brief, CB21 is a data element that shows how many levels below transfer a mathematics, English, reading, or English as a Second Language (ESL) course is. This is indicated by an "A" for one level below, "B" for two levels below, "C" for three levels below, and "Y" for anything else. The problem is that neither curriculum committees nor faculty have had much to do with MIS coding and reporting, so the assignment of a CB21 code to mathematics, English, reading, and ESL courses was generally done by someone in the MIS department, a vice-president of instruction, or a staff member, sometimes without a thorough knowledge of the curriculum and with just the college catalog and course outlines as references. Not surprisingly, since

neither of these reference sources is always clear about sequencing, this has resulted in some major errors in coding, including a preponderance of courses that are simply coded at the same level, regardless how they fit in the sequence. In addition, sequencing is relative to each college's unique course interpretations, such that aggregate system data provides little usable information. (For more information, refer to the December 2008 *Rostrum* article "What Is Basic Skills Coding About Anyway?")

How then to address this problem? In Fall 2008, the Academic Senate took the lead by bringing together faculty to first discuss how many levels below transfer each area required, and second, to provide a description of what a course at each level would comprise. Over 140 faculty were involved in the process, and as of April 2009 the rubrics had been vetted and refined by over 333 faculty experts. The final rubrics, including the improvements from the vetting, will be published for use in June 2009. Directions for recoding will be rolled out at the Curriculum Institute and through various other training opportunities. Faculty will be encouraged to work with MIS specialists, curriculum technicians, researchers, and vice presidents to use the rubrics to code their basic skills courses. The result will be greater accuracy in course coding, which will not only provide better information to assist in local program review but also comparable data across the system. In addition, there will be a much better idea of how students are progressing at each level of basic skills courses and specifically where interventions are needed.

One issue appears to now be successfully (or nearly so) addressed. However, given that chaos hates a void, it should be no surprise that the focus on CB21 has also alerted the Chancellor's Office to problematic coding of another data element, this time CB08. CB08 is a

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much simpler data element and shows whether or not a course is degree-applicable. What, you may wonder, could be the problem with such a straight-forward determination?

In actuality, there has been a problem with CB08 coding for a while. When Basic Skills Initiative moneys were first distributed, several colleges were found, based on their MIS reporting, to have no basic skills courses. Since the BSI moneys were divvied up based on basic skills course FTES, the colleges that got nothing quickly noticed something was wrong. The problem was in their coding for CB08. By definition, a basic skills course cannot be degree-applicable. Some colleges coded all credit courses as degree-applicable - hence, the lack of basic skills courses in their MIS reporting.

Not surprisingly, these colleges quickly attended to aspects of the miscoding of CB08 in order to garner their fair share of basic skills moneys. What the recent attention to CB21 has brought to light, however, is that a significant number of courses are still being miscoded under CB08. One point of confusion is the fact that the community colleges continue to have courses below transfer level that satisfy the requirement for an associate degree and are hence degree-applicable. At the current time, in English, this includes a course one level below freshman composition; and in mathematics, this includes both courses at the level of intermediate and elementary algebra. (Note: With the change in associate degree requirements in Fall 2009, more colleges will probably elect to restrict degree-applicability to Freshman composition and intermediate algebra.)

Now you may be thinking, “Well, too bad for them. If they are still miscoding courses, they deserve to lose the additional basic skills moneys they might otherwise be getting.” However, the problem is more than just money (although it’s hard to imagine any problem bigger than money at the current time). The problem is even more than compliance with Title 5. The problem is also data.

In an initial review of CB08 coding, the Academic Senate found that courses as low as third-grade arithmetic, and even noncredit courses, were being inaccurately coded as degree-applicable. In a follow up research study, the Academic Senate took the mathematics coding that was currently entered and looked to see what would happen with the data when the CB08 coding was corrected. The results showed a significant change in the success rates for basic skills mathematics. For the 11 colleges with the lowest basic skills success rates last year, the corrected coding indicated significantly higher success rates in basic skills mathematics.

With a great sigh, you are probably now asking what this tale of two data elements is leading to. The first message is to alert you to the need for basic skills faculty to work with their MIS departments and others in the review of coding for CB21 and CB08 this coming fall. The benefit of improved coding is better data that will show how our work through the Basic Skills Initiative is actually helping our students to better succeed, thereby laying the groundwork for increased funding in the future. The danger in not attending to the coding is the generation of inaccurate data that may mislead your college as to how well students are learning and succeeding.

The broader message is simply a reminder that everything we do is interconnected. Nothing really functions in isolation, and we would be foolish to ever assume so.

Our friend finally repainted the walls and fixed up the base boards. Now he realizes how badly he needs to reupholster the couch. ■

Sustainability and the Academic Senate

BY DAVID BEAULIEU, EAST LA COLLEGE
DON GAUTHIER, LA VALLEY COLLEGE

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges strongly support discussions among community college faculty and with colleagues from the University of California and California State University about the development of sustainability curriculum; and

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges offer breakouts on the development of sustainability curriculum in career technical education, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and liberal arts areas at the Spring 2009 Plenary Session. (Resolution 9.04 F08)

From corporate boardrooms to the halls of Congress and the White House, sustainability has emerged as perhaps the defining issue of the decade. Growing public awareness of the consequences of global warming linked to the burning of fossil fuels (i.e., disappearing arctic sea ice, habitat loss, rising global average temperatures) have spurred calls for action around the world. Architects and engineers early on realized the impacts of buildings and cities on global climate and the environment.¹ Through the U.S. Green Building Council, a set of design and construction standards known as LEED (for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design; now entering its third version²) have been established to certify buildings that minimize their environmental impacts. In addition, architects through the 2010 Initiative and the 2030 Imperative³ have sought to mobilize a public response to global warming con-

cerns by holding online teach-ins and conferences. Leading climate experts, such as Dr. James Hanson, the Director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies,⁴ have spoken out sharply, and educational institutions, faculty, students and staff have signed on in support of efforts to curb global warming and to work for a more sustainable future. These are only a few of the many efforts under way to bring sustainability, “green” technology and environmentally-sound practices forward after decades of denial and procrastination in the guise of debate.

Sustainability has been defined as the ability “[to meet] the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This definition first emerged from the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report, entitled *Our Common Future*, which examined development issues in the less developed world.⁵ The term can now be found in discussions of sustainable cities, agriculture, resource use, renewable energy, economics and consumer goods. In many ways, the term speaks to the long-term in a manner that “green” and “environmental” do not. Sustainability makes an explicit commitment to the future by demanding that decisions we make today consider the future needs of society. In other words, future needs are as important to consider as the demands of the present.

¹ <http://www.epa.gov/greenbuilding/pubs/gbstats.pdf>

² <http://www.usgbc.org/>

³ <http://www.architecture2030.org/>

⁴ http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/2008/TwentyYears-Later_20080623.pdf

⁵ <http://www.worldinbalance.net/agreements/1987-brundtland.php>

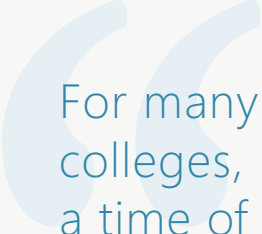
So, why is the Academic Senate involved in this issue and why have there been two resolutions and a plenary break-out session in the past year?

First and foremost, the academic and professional matters that Title 5 charges us with monitoring include curriculum, degree and certificate requirements, educational program development, and processes for institutional planning and budget development. Across the state, faculty in large and small districts, at rural and urban colleges, have begun to write new courses, develop new programs in sustainability, and design career technical education certificates for “green collar” occupations. Others have sought to infuse sustainability into a wide-range of disciplines. As part of our collective mission to address issues of concern to the communities we serve, many of us have also sponsored speakers, held workshops and seminars, and conducted community outreach and education on the issue of sustainability. These efforts call out for some degree of coordination and sharing of best practices and lessons learned. The Academic Senate is best situated to be of service in supporting and facilitating discussions, organizing workshops and conferences, and generally acting as a clearinghouse for all of this innovative and exciting activity. Along these lines, the Spring 2009 Plenary offered a well-attended breakout on sustainability under the aegis of the new Futures Committee and led by the Los Angeles Community College District.

For many of our colleges, it has been a time of rebuilding as bond dollars have poured in and allowed us to modernize infrastructure and refurbish older buildings, as well as to construct new state-of-the-art facilities. For some campuses, LEED-certified buildings have been built that offer new teaching and learning opportunities in sustainability for faculty and students. There is also the promise of lower maintenance and operating costs in future years as the result of energy-saving investments in the present. Recent and anticipated legislation promises to provide significant reductions in capital outlay for new green technologies through various invest-

ment credits and depreciation methods. In all, it’s a very exciting time for the California community colleges.

New work lies ahead for all of us as new opportunities fuel demand for our classrooms and laboratories, and the expertise of our faculty. New disciplines and programs require new faculty as well. Defining minimum qualifications for academic disciplines, new technologies and “green” jobs will be a special challenge, since the pace of change thus far has been rapid and widespread. New job opportunities will require new training programs, new curricula, new facilities and equipment. We will be speaking more to our business leaders and community partners, seeking their guidance and support. Flexibility, agility, and a constant commitment to quality will be in demand as we move forward to “build the road as we travel”⁶ ■



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⁶ Morrison, Roy. 1997. *We Build the Road as We Travel*. Essential Books.

The Sun Rises on Equity and Diversity Issues: Looking Ahead to 2009-2010

BY BETH SMITH, CHAIR, EQUITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION COMMITTEE

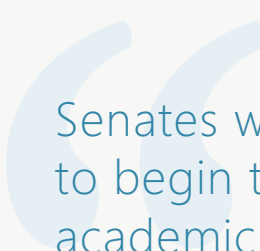
With all the activities occurring at our colleges, the ones with due dates and compliance requirements often rise and stay at the top of the to-do list. That means that issues like hiring diverse faculty, developing culturally-competent curriculum, or increasing student equity find a home on the back burners until there is motivation to move these issues to the front. The next academic year, 2009-2010, will be the right time to bring to the forefront all of those simmering, yet important discussions of equity and diversity. The reasons why next year is so opportune follow.

For the first time, the Academic Senate is planning an institute on equity and diversity. Our colleagues at the Faculty Association for California Community Colleges (FACCC) sponsored an equity and diversity conference, also for the first time, in January 2009, and it was a wonderful success. Building on FACCC's success, the Academic Senate's institute will take place February 19-20, 2010, in Anaheim, and while no planning has taken place yet, the Executive Committee is interested in keeping the cost for attendance very low. Strands and topics to be included will most likely include student equity and basic skills along with training for hiring committees and developing culturally sensitive teaching methodologies. These particular strands are important because local colleges have funding to support faculty development in these areas.

Yes, your college and district have funds to support many of your senate's activities regarding student equity and hiring diverse faculty and other equal employment opportunities. For once, senates do not have to go to begging. Basic Skills Initiative funding

may be used, depending on your local expenditure plan, for faculty to learn about student success for all cohorts of students, especially proven methodologies for some of our traditionally unsuccessful groups of students. Plus your human resources department has received funding for equal employment opportunity (EEO) activities, including training of faculty, outreach and recruiting, and other campus based activities to promote a campus climate that is welcoming and accepting of all. All these funds are included in the budget for 2009-2010! Your senate can begin planning now to use these funds appropriately for progress toward your college mission and goals.

Data on the 2007-08 expenditures of the \$1.7 million statewide for EEO activities show that only 54 districts reported expenditures of the funds, and only 10 districts of those 54 reporting spent the entire amount allocated to them. Why wasn't the total amount expended on diversity and equity training, recruiting, and development more? Not all colleges were hiring last year, but the fact that there are still carry-over funds available from the last two years in



Senates will be wise to begin the new academic year with knowledge of the amount available to be spent on these important activities.



this category seems to indicate a bigger problem than recent lack of hiring. Senates will be wise to begin the new academic year with knowledge of the amount available to be spent on these important activities. Check with your director of human resources or EEO director.

Planning must drive budgets, but in the case of EEO plans and budgets, the Chancellor's Office has provided budgets but has not collected official plans yet. Title 5 directs each district to develop an EEO plan, and the Chancellor's Office has provided a model that each district can use to create its local plan, yet the due date for submission of the EEO plans has been postponed many times. One of the key elements of Title 5 regarding EEO plans is "availability data," statewide data that was to be used as a standard for comparison to verify the diversity and composition of the pool. For any senate president who has examined the model plan, you know that all districts were directed to delay submission until the reliability of the availability data could be confirmed. Unfortunately, that confirmation could not be made for any employee group, and the recommendation is that the availability data is unreliable, and the Chancellor's Office will have to decide if there is an acceptable replacement for this data. Stay tuned because such

a determination will be made by the end of this academic year or early in the next. The EEO plans will either be submitted next year without this major component, or the due date for the plans will be postponed again until new Title 5 regulations are developed that recognize a reasonable replacement for the availability data.

Speaking of new Title 5 regulations, the 2009-2010 academic year will see revisions to all the EEO regulations. All aspects of hiring committees, availability data, processes for resolving complaints, training for members of hiring committees and more are under discussion. Since many of these regulations directly impact faculty and local senates, wise senates will assign a faculty member to work with human resources on reviewing drafts of proposed revisions next year.

In summary, there are exciting opportunities ahead for meeting your college goals of creating a more inclusive campus climate in the coming year:

- ◆ Funding is available through BSI and EEO, so dust off those Student Equity Plans and local diversity and equal employment plans. For EEO expenditures, work with your human resources staff on acceptable ways to allocate and spend these funds.
- ◆ Save the date for the Academic Senate Equity and Diversity Institute in February 2010 and encourage as many faculty to attend as possible. EEO funds (see previous bullet) could be used for such travel.
- ◆ Due dates and required elements of the EEO plans are still in flux. Watch for more information by fall. While you wait, consider implementing the required EEO Advisory Committee for your district. The committee could develop a spending plan for those EEO funds.
- ◆ New Title 5 regulations pertaining to EEO will be developed next year. Plan to provide faculty input along with your local human resources staff. ■

Anticipating the Future

BY RICHARD MAHON AND JANE PATTON, FUTURES COMMITTEE

“Putting out fires, that’s all I ever do.” This observation came, alas, not from a Fire Technology student but from an academic senate president who felt she never had time to tackle the real and pressing issues that impede educational excellence at her college. The need to be proactive as well as reactive confronts not only local senate presidents but the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges as well.

For that reason, encouraged by Executive Director Julie Adams and Academic Senate President Mark Wade Lieu, the Executive Committee authorized the creation of a new ad hoc committee in 2007-08: the “Future of California Higher Education” committee, whose charge is to get *ahead* of issues likely to confront faculty and work proactively. The approved charge of the committee reads:

The purpose of the Academic Senate’s Futures Ad Hoc committee is to provide a forum for discussions about new and emerging issues and trends regarding the California community college system and its place within California higher education. The committee will also consider trends affecting the Academic Senate in order to provide input/advice to the Executive Committee about possible courses of action. This committee is intended to be proactive—considering new directions and potential actions for the Academic Senate and its representatives. The committee serves at the direction of the president.

As the chairs of the committee for its first two years, we want to acquaint faculty with some of the discussions the committee has had so far.

How Far Ahead Are We Looking?

One wouldn’t think it so hard to define “future,” but one of the first questions the committee confronted was “how far into the future are we looking?” Are we trying to get ahead of the next “solution” to community colleges proposed by those outside our system, or ahead of the appointment of the next system chancellor, or ahead of the next budget crisis? A year ago, the challenges posed by reports such as those produced by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy as well as others loomed large. In addition, none of us knew that the state and nation were on the verge of the greatest economic setback of the last half century. The committee did spend time in its first year discussing the overall shifts in state funding for higher education and corrections that have taken place over the last decade and a half, and ways the Senate might see Californians be educated rather than better incarcerated.

Something Old...

Sometimes looking ahead means looking backwards. Despite the name of the committee, we looked backwards to address resolution 13.04 F07 and wrote the paper “California Community Colleges: Principles and Leadership in the Context of Higher Education” to provide faculty with a document to help educate or remind administrators and governing board members of some of the basic principles that guide our work as community college educators. The paper was approved at Spring Plenary, and many faculty members who have heard about the Master Plan, the Rodda Act, or AB 1725 without

quite knowing how they have shaped our colleges may also find the paper illuminating. In its first year, the committee also pondered the 1960s Master Plan for Higher Education, interestingly just before several legislators convened a series of intersegmental discussions on that very topic.

...Something New

As this academic year began, we knew that then California state senator Jack Scott (one of our keynote speakers at the Spring Plenary Session) would become our system Chancellor in January of this year. Challenges facing the Chancellor's Office have grown rapidly: seeking to maintain support in the Legislature for the system budget and knowing how to provide guidance to local colleges facing accreditation sanction (with two colleges newly placed into "show cause" earlier this year), the committee thought it would be useful to develop single-sheet briefing papers summarizing the senate's principles, resolutions, and papers on major topics, including



transfer degrees, full-time faculty, career pathways, accreditation, basic skills, and other areas. These single sheet documents would not adopt new positions, but seek to summarize the Senate's major principles and could be used to inform not only the Chancellor but the Board of Governors and legislators in areas of special concern to them.

The Crystal Ball...

...does not reveal where we're going. Perhaps the recession will have bottomed out by the time you read this, or perhaps it will be clear that efforts to address the recession have been inadequate. In any case, we as a faculty have committed ourselves to educating all Californians, no matter their income, ethnicity, academic skills, or aspirations. We believe that no system of education better reflects the democratic principles of our nation than California community colleges, and the Futures committee hopes to contribute in new ways to advance the values of the Academic Senate, the California community colleges, and the people of California as they confront the challenges of tomorrow. ■

In any case, we as a faculty have committed ourselves to educating all Californians, no matter their income, ethnicity, academic skills, or aspirations.

Grades are Valuable

BY MICHELLE GRIMES-HILLMAN WITH MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMITTEE

At the Spring 2008 Plenary Session, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges adopted the position paper *Promoting Thoughtful Faculty Conversations about Grade Distributions*. This document examined California Community College Chancellor's Office data on grades at the system level, and also in a selection of career/technical programs that have external requirements such as a licensing board. Among its conclusions is the finding that despite concern at a national level, for the California Community College (CCC) System there is no evidence of grade inflation in general. The paper also commented that it would still be valuable to hold local conversations about possible grade inflation at the level of an individual college, program or, even, faculty member. Our paper also reaffirmed that grades are an academic matter under the purview of the individual faculty member who assigns them.

The Educational Policies Committee, prompted by a resolution, has recently sought out additional information on the subject of grades. A literature review about grade inflation and student consumerism by Boretz (2004) was quick to point out that many colleges have extended their drop deadlines, thereby allowing students to drop classes and not receive the expected grade of C or below, and that factor alone can perhaps influence the grade distributions or the perception of grade distribution. Boretz asserts that grade inflation has existed but not to the degree that is perceived by the public at large. Indeed, the author concludes:

The wide acceptance of "grade inflation" has damaged the academic ethos, in general. This phrase converts knowledge or learning into com-

modity, with the grade being the currency earned in exchange for one's labors and redeemable by the payee for whatever he or she desires. As educators, we are held accountable to so many external and internal constituencies and are compelled to focus on learning outcomes. It is essential that we understand and convey to students that outcomes and grades are by no means the same thing. Grades can be fixed in place on a transcript. Learning is fluid and infinite in the wealth of returns. After college, pay is instrumental to satisfying our physical needs, but intellectual adaptability is the true determiner of success for any life long learner. (p.12)

The Academic Senate's 2008 paper took a similar position. One might argue that such a position might prove unnecessary if grade inflation could not be documented in the CCC System. However, one must also remember that because there has been increased external pressure from a variety of governmental and private sources to hold community colleges "accountable" for student learning, there is increased reliance on standardized testing for the Perkins VTEA funding, and a variety of other news articles have been published which call into question the integrity of faculty grades. Such considerations generated Academic Senate resolution 14.02 S08 "The Value of Grades". This resolution recommended that the Academic Senate create a follow-up paper to *Promoting Thoughtful Faculty Conversations about Grade Distributions* that would analyze the role of grades as a credible, valid and reliable measures of student achievement and success; share effective practices for grading, in the light of external pressures from federal and accreditation bodies; work to promote a positive public perception regarding the

integrity of grades; and oppose the replacement of traditional grades with third-party, off-the-shelf testing.

The Educational Policies Committee recently conducted an examination of the scant literature regarding the value of grades. Although faculty members can place some value on the required standardized tests that supplement the curriculum in Career and Technical Education fields, these tests do not replace the value that grades provide as a holistic view of the student's performance. The literature regarding the value of grades suggests a relationship between grade point average (GPA) and/or course grades and future positive outcomes for students. This brief examination of the literature suggests the following:

- ◆ According to research conducted by the University of California (UC), high school GPA is a better predictor for the success in the UC system and high school GPA can predict student success beyond the freshman year in four-year institutions.
- ◆ GPA can predict persistence of students past the freshman year of college.
- ◆ Grades can predict success in sequential coursework.
- ◆ GPA can predict positive outcomes for students (i.e., the likelihood of transfer and the attainment of an Associate degree).

Gieser and Studley (2002) demonstrated that high school GPA in college-prep courses was the best predictor of freshman grades. Their initial research included a sample of 80,000 students admitted to the University of California. Likewise, Gieser and Sanelices (2007) found that high school GPA is the “strongest predictor of four-year college outcomes in all disciplines, campuses, and freshman cohorts” (p.1), and that its effectiveness as a predictor increases after the freshman year; and the use of GPA has a “less negative impact than standardized tests on disadvantaged and underrepresented students” (p.1). The conclusion of the authors is that admissions policies should focus more on GPA and less on standardized tests. Further, an examination of the first year college persistence

(i.e., the movement of students from freshman to sophomore status) by Kahn and Nauta (2001) found first semester GPA was the primary predictor of freshman-to-sophomore persistence. Interestingly, the UC has recently modified its admissions criteria to reduce the importance of certain standardized tests.


In 2003, Dr. Rob Johnstone, then at Foothill College, examined the relationship between grades and success in sequential courses (non-Basic Skills), including the fields of accounting, biology, chemistry, and computer information systems among others. This study discovered that students receiving an “A” grade in the first course have the most successful outcomes in the second course compared to those students receiving a “C” grade in the first course. Dr. Johnstone proposes that grades in the first course of sequences are “clearly working” (i.e., they predict success in the second courses). He also proposes that the pre-requisites/advisories that are placed on the courses described in his study are also working. In other words, material learned in a first course as measured by a final course grade is necessary for success and a positive outcome in the second course (Johnstone, 2003).

Cejda and Rewey (1998) suggest that there are relationships among students' community college GPA, the likelihood that they obtain an associate degree or transfer, their subsequent upper division status, and the likelihood that they also persist until completion at the transfer institution. They also suggest that there is a relationship between community college GPA and four-year college GPA. They suggest that their results support previous findings in that the completion of an associate's degree increases the chances of degree completion at the transfer institution, and that a GPA of 3.0 or higher results in increased persistence and the attainment of a baccalaureate degree (p. 7). The literature presented suggests that grades **do** matter. In fact, while there is little explicitly in the literature on the value of grades, we did not find any scientific information to suggest that grades are not meaningful. Based on the sources cited in this article, it appears that grades are credible sources of information regarding the students' likelihood to persist past the first year and subsequent positive outcomes such as

the attainment of a degree or to transfer to a four-year institution.

A mention about the use of standardized tests is warranted. While standardized tests may indicate that a student has a knowledge base of specific material, there is no other measure except for the “course completion grade” that can estimate whether the student has a holistic skill set that would be necessary in the workforce. In particular, the use of standardized testing in nursing and aviation provide good examples. Students may gain the knowledge needed to perform competently on the nursing licensure examination, but that does not guarantee that nursing students have the skill set to become critical thinking and nurturing caregivers. Professional competency also requires the integration and application of knowledge in real life situations. There are also skills and attitudes inherent in the student’s ability to demonstrate total accountability for their nursing practice which are difficult to measure with written exams. Similarly, the aircraft pilot who passes a standardized test may have the technical knowledge to fly a plane, but it is the critical thinking skills assessed by faculty and reported through grading that provide a complete picture of the pilots’ decision making skills that are so vital in emergency situations. This holistic view of the student must stem from a place other than standardized tests, and that view must come from faculty.

Finally, we remind faculty to consider the diversity of students and faculty in light of effective grading practices. Students as well as faculty are diverse in their learning styles, abilities, and educational background. As such, the meeting of these diverse groups and the assignment of grades leads one to argue that the course GPA will be calculated using a wide number and variety of assignments and measurements that reflect different skills and levels of rigor. It therefore seems likely that the final grade does indeed represent a student’s ability to persist and reach his/her educational goals. Discussion about what are effective grading practices for each discipline is best left for the faculty in the discipline to decide in light of local data and local circumstances. In fact, at the Fall 2008 Plenary Session and in other previous venues, faculty made it clear that they did not want their grading practices mandated. The



Students as well as faculty are diverse in their learning styles, abilities, and educational background.

Academic Senate’s Spring 2008 document *Promoting Thoughtful Faculty Conversations about Grade Distributions* provides recommendations regarding how those discussions might take place on the community college campus. Is there evidence of grade inflation on our campuses or in our disciplines? Or is this really a myth? Local senates and discipline faculty are encouraged to engage in those local or discipline-specific discussions!

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How Not to Hire a Chancellor and Succeed Through Trying

BY VIRGINIA BLUMENTHAL, PRESIDENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES, RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
RICHARD MAHON, ACADEMIC SENATE PRESIDENT, RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE

In the 2005-06 academic year, longtime Riverside Community College (RCC) District president/chancellor Salvatore Rotella announced his intention to retire on June 30, 2006. Three years, three searches, three search consultants, two interim chancellors, and nine public finalists later, the RCC District appointed Dr. Gregory Gray as chancellor. Faculty and staff got used to being greeted off campus with, “oh, you’re the people who can’t hire a chancellor.” Though it may seem counterintuitive, many faculty, staff, administrators, and board of trustee members believe that waiting for the right candidate is just what the district needed to provide leadership for the district. Here are some of the lessons we learned that might be helpful to other districts struggling with leadership gaps.

Know what you’re looking for

It will be easier to find the right finalist if the college or district is clear about what it needs. If a college has strong academic leadership, then perhaps candidates with strong budget, planning, or fund raising credentials will best serve the college. Is the college looking for new vision or to consolidate existing initiatives? Is the institution looking to change its institutional culture, and to provide more central direction or to allow more decentralization of decision making within the institution? The more discussion that takes place before beginning the formal search, the more smoothly the search will proceed.

Ensure the participation of all constituencies

It had been a decade and a half since the district had last hired a CEO; only one trustee remained on the board from that era, and two new trustees were elected while the paper application portion of the first chancellor search was in process. Each trustee believed that the selection of chancellor was their most important responsibility as a trustee, and each was hesitant to yield that responsibility to others. Some constituency groups rejected all finalists in the first year because there had been no constituent group participation in the search process at all. Thus when the search began again in the second year, there

“If a college has strong academic leadership, then perhaps candidates with strong budget, planning, or fund raising credentials will best serve the college.”

was vigorous discussion about the proper shape of the search committee. The trustees still wanted to be involved, but acknowledged that faculty, union, administrative, student, and community participation were necessary to a successful outcome. Some trustees worried about a search committee that was so large as to be unwieldy or to raise concerns about maintaining confidentiality. Ultimately the board was pleased to establish a committee of about 15 members, chaired by a trustee and including faculty appointed by the senate and both a full-time and part-time faculty member appointed by the bargaining agent. Even though the second year's search also proved unsuccessful, all agreed that the change in process had been a beneficial accomplishment in itself.

Know the virtues and limitations of search firms

Part of the problem that arose in the first year's search was ambiguity about the role of the search consultant, which led the board into exercising a greater role early in the process than eventually proved to be effective. A second organization led the board's second search, and mixed feelings about that process led the board to choose a third and final search organization to guide the third and suc-

“It should go without saying that making a number of phone calls is important, since even terrific administrators don't get along with everyone.”

cessful search. No search process will be successful if the right candidates do not apply, and finding a consultant who will invest the attention and energy into getting to know the needs of the district and to finding the right candidates to meet that need is no small accomplishment. Some search consultants will be well connected to other California community college districts while other search firms will be more effective producing out-of-state candidates. Some boards may wish to find “out of the box” candidates with expertise in areas other than community college education. Taking the time to find the right *consultant* is a crucial aspect of finding the right *candidates*.

Faculty need to conduct background checks

It's a given that every candidate will present themselves in the most effective fashion, and most community college districts have experience with administrators who talk the talk but don't walk so well. Thus it is important for someone to seek a range of views about the strengths and weaknesses of final candidates from others who have worked with them. For various reasons, neither search consultants nor human resource departments are anxious to probe too deeply, and discrete phone calls from senate officers or union leaders are likely to provide the most useful information. The Academic Senate directory can provide contact information for senate leadership in California community colleges, but for out-of-state candidates it may be necessary to use Google and some Internet exploration to find faculty leaders from outside of California. It should go without saying that making a *number* of phone calls is important, since even terrific administrators don't get along with everyone. It's also important to have a long enough conversation to get a general picture of finalists in order to guard against the temptation to endorse an unpopular administrator in the hopes that someone else will take them. Having such conversations before public forums can be especially helpful in providing insight on what areas to ask candidates about in a public setting.

Don't intimidate finalists; don't shy away from tough questions

Speaking of forums, be respectful of finalists, but don't be afraid to ask tough questions. Each of the finalists in our first search and two of the finalists in our third year had very public votes of no confidence (as discovered via simple Google searches, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Education*, and elsewhere). A candidate might make a good president or chancellor despite being a poor fit elsewhere. Ideally the facts that led to votes of no confidence will be accurately stated though one should expect that the interpretation of events will vary. Be attentive to the larger setting within which a vote of no confidence took place: was an administrator compromised by demands of higher administrators or the board of trustees? More than one of the finalists that came to our district had difficulties that arose from budget problems out of their control. Don't assume that individuals who have received a vote of no confidence haven't learned from their experience.

Don't just endorse—support your recommendation

While it's certain that every constituency wants the best possible president or chancellor, it's likely that each constituency sees "best" in a different light. Faculty are likely to want leaders who recognize the centrality of the educational mission of a college or district, but faculty don't have to balance the books. Elected trustees know that community colleges are teaching institutions, but they need to be able to reassure the voters that public monies are spent in the most prudent possible way. Bargaining units are likely to want college and district chief administrators to be open to considering the needs of employee groups. Because the final selection of a president (in a single-college district) or chancellor (in a multi-college district) will be made by the locally elected governing board, it is crucial that leaders in different constituency groups indicate *why* they consider a particular finalist best suited to next lead the institution. Faculty expect students to learn how to

support an interpretation or argument in the classes they teach. It makes sense that each campus constituency should articulate the *reasons* why it considers a particular administrative finalist best suited to lead the college or district.

Don't rush—timing is everything

Finally, insist on the best. It was difficult when the first year's search did not yield a new chancellor, and even more so when the second year search again failed to produce a permanent chancellor—even if a dramatically improved search process resulted from the second year's deliberations. Trustees debated whether they had *failed* in their efforts or only earned an *incomplete*. At the end of the process, however, when near universal unanimity emerged across the district that a particular candidate was the most promising next chancellor for the district, having waited for the *right* candidate to be available was clearly the right decision to have made. The Riverside Community College District had excellent college and district administrators and two extremely capable interim chancellors that made it possible to be patient, though by the end of two years without a permanent chancellor in place, it was clear that even a district with very strong college and district leadership needs someone permanent at the helm.

The most important lesson we learned is that finding the right president or chancellor requires time, hard work, and extensive dialogue, but it is also the case that the process that is put into place in finding a college or district CEO can set a precedent for the kind of working relationship constituency groups will experience as that new president or chancellor comes to work in the district. Taking the time not only to find the best leader but also to establish a credible search and selection process will reward a district immeasurably as it welcomes its new leader. ■

SLO Regional Meetings Address Collaborating for High Standards in Program Review

BY JANET FULKS, ACADEMIC SENATE AND MARC BEAM, RESEARCH AND PLANNING GROUP

The Academic Senate and Research and Planning Group (RP) collaborative group on Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Assessment sponsored four regional meetings in March where researchers and faculty shared dialog on their working relationships and how they can address common issues of improving student success, supporting evidence-based decision making, and moving toward a culture of inquiry. Meetings were held at Mt. San Antonio College, Merritt College, Sierra College, and Mesa College. Research facilitators were Keith Wurtz (Chaffey), Linda Umbdenstock (Long Beach ret.), Bob Pacheco (Barstow) and Rob Johnstone (Skyline). Faculty facilitators were Gary Williams (Crafton Hills), Maggie Davis (Fresno), Janet Fulks (Bakersfield), and Lesley Kawaguchi (Santa Monica).

These regional meetings have been addressing SLO assessment issues from the field for the last three years, growing from about 75 to over 175 participants this year. The regional meetings are the product of collaborative work between researchers and faculty committed to improving student success. This year the focus of the workshops was on clarifying faculty and researcher roles in SLO assessment and program review. Registration for the workshop included participant input concerning their most pressing issues. From their responses it was evident that the key concerns had to do with program review. This formed the focus of the activities. Participants looked at faculty and researcher roles, discussed the types of data needed for program review, and examined program review case studies from basic skills, career technical education and student services. Discussions also focused on using program level student learning outcomes to drive program review and linking program review data to planning and budgeting. As participants dug into case studies they learned

each other's language, better understood roles, and shared observations on what works, or doesn't.

One function of the meetings was to clarify the expertise and contributions of researchers and SLO coordinators from their own domains as described in the National Research Council's (NRC) book *Knowing What Students Know: The Science and Design of Educational Assessment*.¹ The NRC reported that the educational assessment design process must be collaborative, cross-disciplinary and iterative. Classroom educators, subject matter experts, cognitive scientists, and researchers all play an important role in designing effective assessments and they take time to develop. The table on the following page indicates some of the roles and strengths identified by SLO coordinators and researchers.

Further discussions identified concern over who the research function reports to, since the demand for accountability and operational data often supersede the need for research on basic skills, course success, or student learning outcomes. Prioritization of research should include college-wide discussions based on mission and goals. Research should enable better teaching and learning, not just be used to count beans.

Participants and event planners called this a "marriage made in heaven"—indicating the synergy and advantage of collaboration between research and the classroom.

Another outcome of the RP/ASCCC collaboration on SLO assessment is an ongoing process to create an SLO assessment glossary (See article on page 2 of this Rostrum for more information) and an online course for SLO assessment that faculty and researchers can participate in for certification and continuing education. ■

¹ Pellegrino, Chudowsky, & Glaser ed. 2001. *Knowing what students know: The science and design of educational assessment*. Washington DC: National Academy Press

SLO Coordinators Roles & Strength	Researchers Roles & Strengths
<p>As self-identified by SLO coordinators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplify the assessment process for faculty Work with adjuncts Get buy-in Make the link between outcomes assessment, program review, and planning Make a student centered culture on campus Train faculty Understand formative and summative assessment – assess to assist and assess to advance Facilitate dialog Help faculty translate what they do and how they assess into SLO language and formalized structures Make explicit what faculty are already doing implicitly Work with Senates advocating with state, WASC, and federal level to ensure that we avoid NCLB-like approach 	<p>As self -identified by researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate, and make available, data Identify and help establish relevant benchmarks Present data to non-technical audiences Create data explanations and visuals that make sense to non-researchers Interpret results in layman terms Assist with evidence based decision making Analyze and use of data Explain and determine sampling Clarify research questions Validate assessment instrument Designing research methods and surveys Facilitate discussions about data and evidence Facilitate discussions to define goals so they are measurable and objective Provide statistical analysis – selecting appropriate and implementing
<p>As identified by researchers about SLO coordinators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring student connection to the entire process Motivate Bridge faculty, research, and administration Create ways to bring people along with the process Responding to resistance Be aware of different views and bring those forward Convey the value of the process in providing feedback to faculty Help remove the technical barriers to facilitate understanding Parse language – proper terminology for faculty Lead and facilitate conversations Respond to skepticism Understand and articulate faculty and student needs and issues Describe the assessment cycle to skeptics in non-technical language Develop timelines for assessment Navigate the intricacies of different disciplines and the political intricacies of divisions Know who the key campus faculty are for success / failure of a project Interact with faculty unions, understand shared governance 	<p>As identified by SLO coordinators about researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the overall picture and open up different ways of looking at things, Work with people who are non-technical Bring WASC requirements to Student Services and Instruction Collaborate Describe persistence and evidence based change and backed by data Bring forth compelling questions Stimulate questions about the context and meaning of the data Ask important questions to see if we are actually measuring what want to measure Facilitate creative problem solving Help others who aren't as comfortable with data Work with details, staying on task, documenting results Provide an institutional level view Identify and gather data about what faculty think is interesting to know Help faculty develop surveys Help with ensuring validity Defend the proper use of data and resist the improper use of data Always ask – will this improve teaching and learning Direct studies and surveys that answer good questions and provide relevant and useful data

A is for Accreditation: The New Scarlet Letter

BY MARK WADE LIEU, PRESIDENT

This article is adapted from remarks delivered at the Academic Senate Plenary Session on Thursday, April 16, 2009.

Accreditation. There is palpable fear among community colleges when they encounter the word, and this is hardly surprising given our current experience. Twenty percent of all California community colleges are now on sanction. We have a college that has gone from reaffirmation to the penultimate level of sanction, “show cause,” in one visit. While we understand that only colleges are accredited, not districts, we face the inconstancy of having lone colleges in a multi-college district being cited for district deficiencies. We have heard from several colleges that the accreditation visiting team ended its visit with a positive exit summary only to have those colleges later find that they had been put on sanction.

Accreditation is not supposed to be like this. Accreditation has at its roots the power of a professional peer review process by which academic quality can be judged and improvements can be made. Judith S. Eaton, President of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, reaffirmed the centrality of peer review in the accreditation process in the January 2009 edition of *Inside Accreditation*:

Peer review is acknowledged throughout the world as the most appropriate and desirable approach to the evaluation of such a complex area as higher education. Peer review serves as a rich and diverse resource for quality improvement for a college or university. It is a vital asset to institu-

tional leaders as they carry out their responsibility for academic quality, continuing the longstanding tradition of institutional leadership as central to the success of higher education.

Sadly, the accreditation process that community college faculty in California and their institutions face today has been reduced to compliance monitoring of the worst kind. It is no longer a thoughtful, reflective process. The value inherent in the process of accreditation still exists in theory, but given this climate of fear, it’s hard for many to see value in accreditation in light of the actions of our regional accrediting body, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC).

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has always valued both the principles and the process of accreditation, and during my tenure as your president, we have focused on the inherent value of peer-review based accreditation. The role of student learning outcomes (SLOs) in accreditation remains a contentious issue, but the Academic Senate has strived to take SLOs and make them our own, placing the development, evaluation, and revision of SLOs firmly in the hands of faculty and casting the process in the context of peer review. In addition, the Academic Senate has been cognizant of the move to federal accreditation and the importance of our regional accrediting body in keeping a college-level version of No Child Left Behind at bay.

Accreditation has at its roots the power of a professional peer review process by which academic quality can be judged and improvements can be made.

It is annoying and exasperating to report that the work of the Academic Senate is not supported by ACCJC. Much of the work of the Academic Senate has come about to fill the vacuum left by the paucity of guidance provided by ACCJC as our colleges struggle with the 2002 Standards. However, in more than one conversation, ACCJC has told the Academic Senate that it cannot endorse or support the Senate's work. What is left is a regional accrediting body that provides guidance that most would characterize as simply a thumbs-down or a thumbs-up, with little to show you how to get from the former to the latter.

However, the approbation of ACCJC matters little to the Academic Senate. What is painful for the Academic Senate is the growing perception by our faculty and colleges that in our support for the process of accreditation we have become apologists for ACCJC and its actions.

We realize that we must make a clear distinction between the theory and purpose of accreditation and the actions and behavior of our accrediting commission. While we may support the first, we can no longer sit by and allow the latter to employ a dysfunctional process that is destroying the quality of the institutions it purports to support.

What we need to do next is not yet clear. Fortunately, we are not alone. At the March Consultation Council meeting, the board which represents college presidents and district chancellors joined with the Academic Senate in bringing forward concerns about the system's relationship with ACCJC. As a result, the Consultation Council will be conducting a facilitated discussion at its May meeting to come up with a strategy for how to respond to the challenges of working with ACCJC.

It is definitely time to figure out how to bring our colleges out from under an increasingly arbitrary and unresponsive regional accrediting body. The urgency with which we need to act cannot be overstated as colleges expend large sums of money, not to mention time, from our ever-dwindling resources to respond to accreditation sanctions.

At the same time, the Academic Senate will not and can not relinquish its responsibility to provide guidance and support for our colleges in their pursuit of a meaningful and powerful accreditation process. Therefore, we will continue to offer institutes, workshops, and college visits, even as we contemplate actions with regards to our regional accrediting body.

Today, accreditation is a dirty word, a mark of shame for 20% of our colleges, much like the scarlet letter in Hawthorne's famous short story. Working with our colleagues—our union partners, college presidents, the Chancellor's Office, administrators, staff, and students—we can restore accreditation to its valued place in the life of any quality institution of higher education. ■

Who Gets to Play: Elections and the Executive Committee

BY PHILLIP MAYNARD, ELECTIONS CHAIR, AND CATHY COX, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

The Academic Senate has a strong commitment to diversity, and the Executive Committee is committed to fostering diversity among faculty leaders. We're always on the lookout for new college leaders and strive to improve access and equity. Each year, the Academic Senate holds elections for the Executive Committee and for officers at the Spring Plenary Session. These elections are held in conjunction with the voting on resolutions, on the last day of the session, and normally the main focus of delegate attention is on the (frequently intense) discussion surrounding resolutions rather than the (relatively smooth) process of elections.

This year proved somewhat different. An unusually large number of candidates were nominated to run for open positions and due to the Senate's election process, which allows nominees not winning a position to "trickle" downward as nominees for lower positions, there was much more excitement than usual. After several ballots in various races, four new faculty were elected to sit on the Executive Committee, John Drinnon of Merritt College as Area B representative, Stephanie Dumont of Golden West College and David Morse of Long Beach City College as South Representatives, and Richard Tahvil-daran-Jesswein of Santa Monica College as At-Large Representative.



During Session, however, in conversations with delegates and attendees, it became apparent that there is some confusion over eligibility for the executive committee positions. Some people believe that only full-time faculty are eligible to run. Others seemed to think that only a voting delegate at Session could be a nominee. And still others thought a candidate must have served as a local senate president.

All of those are incorrect.

Then who is eligible for nomination? Eligibility is determined by the *Constitution and Bylaws* of the Academic Senate (available online at <http://www.asccc.org/ExecCom/Bylaws.htm>). Article IV, section 2, states: All candidates for election to the Executive Committee shall meet at least one of these criteria:

- 1) is a Delegate or a local senate president
- 2) has within the last three years immediately preceding the election been a local senate president or an Executive Committee member or officer or
- 3) has been nominated by a resolution of a Member Senate. The minutes of the meeting at which that resolution was adopted must be submitted to the Elections Committee chair with the nomination of the individual.

“Delegates” are further defined in Article II, Section 2:

Each Member Senate is entitled to designate any of its faculty members, in whatever manner it wishes, to be its one Delegate, who shall have full voting rights at each plenary session.

While a senate usually appoints the local senate president as its delegate, in many cases another faculty member is appointed instead, and that delegate may be nominated “from the floor” during open nominations on the first day of Session. Note that any faculty member of a member senate may be designated as that senate’s delegate—including both part-time and non-tenured faculty.

Moving into any leadership role requires the ability to take advantage of opportunities and respond strategically to challenges as they arise.

Furthermore, candidacy for the Executive Committee is also open to any faculty member who is nominated by a resolution of a local senate. Again, this includes both part-time and non-tenured faculty. There is no requirement that a nominee must be a local senate president, or indeed have ever served on a local senate in any capacity whatsoever. (However, this does require more advance planning on the part of the potential candidate, as they must be able to provide minutes showing the adoption of the resolution, thus precluding their last-minute nomination from the floor during Session.)

When is someone ready to make a move to the next level? Moving into any leadership role requires the ability to take advantage of opportunities and respond strategically to challenges as they arise. Local senate experience is undeniably good experience for a seat on the Executive Committee. So is experience with statewide issues and committees, since a member of the Executive Committee must be able to consider these matters as they apply to colleges, faculty, and students throughout the state. But there are many ways in which a faculty member can obtain this experience. If you are interested in playing a more active role in the Academic Senate, whether you are part-time, a newly hired faculty member at your college, or a long-time faculty member who is looking for new challenges, you might consider volunteering to serve on one of the Academic Senate committees as a first step.

Applications to serve on a statewide committee are distributed to attendees at Session as part of the packets received at registration, and are also available on the Academic Senate web site at <http://www.asccc.org/ExecCom/Nomin.htm>. ■

What Do Students Think About Prerequisites? Give a Listen to Their Views!

BY JANET FULKS, CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIR

At the 2009 Spring Plenary Session, faculty passed two important resolutions concerning prerequisites. One of them asks the Academic Senate to recommend changes to Title 5 requirements for the validation of computational and communication prerequisites from the current statistical requirements to content review only. It also requires that local senates should have a valid challenge process and conduct research to analyze the effects of this change. Another resolution on prerequisites asked the Academic Senate to research a pilot for general application of basic skills prerequisites to general education courses. An example of this might be a specific reading or writing level or course applied to those courses requiring college level reading, college-level texts or ample writing. For those of you who did not attend the Spring Plenary Session, you may be surprised to hear about this new approach to prerequisites. Knowing a little history may help to explain the resolutions.

In 1991, a suit was lodged by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) against the California community colleges. It was this suit, settled out of court, that created an agreement under which we have operated for the last 15 years. The agreement signed into law requires content review, statistical analyses, and disproportionate impact studies to validate and apply a prerequisite. Title 5 §55003(e) (e) states

A course in communication or computation skills may be established as a prerequisite or corequisite for any course other than another course in communication or computation skills only if, in addition to conducting a content review, the district gathers data according to sound research practices and shows that a student is highly unlikely to succeed in the course unless the student has met the proposed prerequisite or corequisite.

These validation techniques are required course by course, program by program, college by college. Additional requirements and instructions for applying prerequisites are found in *The Model District Policy on Prerequisites, Corequisites, and Advisories on Recommended Preparation* (Board of Governors) and *Good Practice for the Implementation of Prerequisites* (Academic Senate). The upshot of these requirements, which are not required in other states, is that California community colleges have very few prerequisites for courses outside of the specific disciplines and very few basic skills prerequisites for transfer level courses. The Basic Skills Initiative work and external reports have cited lack of clearly delineated student pathways as a major reason for poor success.

The Academic Senate has collected data looking at student success in courses from colleges that have this research capability. We have also collected feedback and qualitative data from the CIOs, CSSOs and the Student Council for the Student Senate for California Community College. During the 2009 Spring Plenary, we also collected faculty input and plan to have more thorough discussions at the Student Senate General Assembly in May and the Curriculum Institute in July this year.

So far, we have heard from everyone but the students. As faculty, we all consider the professional meaning of prerequisites, and our administrative colleagues are concerned about the funding and enrollment implications that go along with these discussions. But as we move forward, it seems invaluable to consider the articulate and very useful input we have gathered from the ones who will be most affected by the changes—our students.

Here are the views of the statewide Student Senate, as summarized by Richael Young, its president, at the Spring 2009 Plenary Session:

1. Student defense for prerequisites: Prerequisites + Guidance = Better Preparedness = Higher Success Rates

Students often enroll in courses for which we are not academically prepared, which hurts us individually and cohesively as a student population in the short-term and long-term. Instituting mandatory placement will increase the likelihood of our success.

2. Equalizing the “playing field” in the classroom. Assessing and placing us according to our preparedness will ensure that our class skill sets and the curriculum are compatible. It’s otherwise difficult for us to all equally benefit from the instruction when we’re at different levels and our professor is splitting time to meet our various needs.

3. Basic skills courses are not seen as relevant to our choices of study; no one goes to school to study “Basic Skills” or conduct remedial coursework. Taking non-transferable prerequisites is perceived as a waste of time and money; this could delay our completion of transfer or of a certificate or degree program.

Our colleges’ supply of such courses hasn’t met student need and demand. Mandatory placement is going to prove difficult not only to us, but to instructors and our colleges, should availability of these classes not change.

4. Our Questions and Our Recommendations:

- ◆ *What’s “Assessment and Placement” and what does it mean to me?*

Not only do we need to learn this at orientation or matriculation, but our classes must be made relevant to our majors or the skills we seek to acquire also.

- ◆ *So I’ve taken the Assessment Test; what do my scores mean?*

We need deliberate counseling on moving from assessment to placement, which means an **integration** of student services and instruction.

- ◆ *Where are the classes?*

We recommend that should mandatory place-

ment be enacted, that colleges are granted sufficient funds to make available these courses we need.

- ◆ *Will these additional units hurt me when I apply for EOPS?*

In implementation, we think it’s crucial to exclude basic skills coursework from eligibility for EOPS and other aid programs.

And here’s a personal testimony from Cristela Ruiz-Solorio, student representative on the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee, Rio Hondo College student and Student Senate Representative:

Ask any number of students about their opinion on prerequisites, and you will get a number of different responses. I come from a background of prerequisites; I happen to have assessed in a very basic math class and had to work my way up. From elementary math, to taking an honors statistics class, and finally, currently taking finite math. It was difficult to deal with the fact that I had to take math that dealt with simple addition, subtraction and multiplication when in high school I was in geometry but nonetheless, I knew I was there because I had not tested to where I needed to be in order to qualify for the higher math courses. Assessing into those courses helped me acquire the basics I missed the first time around and it helped me along my journey in my later classes. I will not argue, it did take longer than one would hope and sometimes I felt like I was not being challenged but that was just for a few chapters. This was not the feeling for the whole class. Looking back at my college career I saw a huge improvement. I had progressed so much. It never crossed my mind that I would have the capability to take an honors math course. I owe a huge part of my successes to taking the prerequisites because it provided me with the tools I needed to succeed. Constantly stressing over simple math homework or upcoming tests is a thing of the past. Another unforeseen positive consequence was that I was able to focus on my other courses. Taking the prerequisites gave me confidence not only inside the classroom but outside as well. I am amazed to see where I began and where I currently stand; it really gives me something to be proud of myself.

As the Academic Senate moves forward with prerequisites, we will value input from all of our community college partners in an attempt to create well designed pathways for students that contribute to student success. ■

Casting Call for Occupational Education: Producing Blockbuster Leaders

BY DAN CRUMP, CHAIR, 2008-09 OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The 2009 Vocational Education Leadership Institute was held March 12 through 14 at the Sheraton Universal Hotel in Universal City. The Vocational Education Leadership Institute is designed to develop and promote leadership among occupational faculty at local, regional and state levels. It is funded by a federal Vocational and Technical Education Act (VTEA) leadership grant that is administered by the Chancellor's Office for California Community Colleges and provided to the Academic Senate for implementation. The Institute provides training and a range of tools to the faculty in attendance. One of the goals of the Institute is to encourage more active participation of occupational faculty in both their local academic senates and the Academic Senate. This Institute helps to develop close relationships with statewide leaders and other occupational faculty members while informing occupational educators about the resources available to them.

The Occupational Education Committee is the planning group for the Institute. As the location for this year was in Universal City, home of Universal Studios and near to many media production sites (Disney Imagineering, Warner Bros, and NBC, to name a few), we decided to go with a movie theme. Each breakout and general session had a movie title or character in order to describe it. Yes, the temptation was to go really crazy, but I think we kept it pretty much under control.

Act I, Scene 1... We started off the Institute with an address from the Academic Senate President Mark

Lieu (*The Ten Commandments*) providing us with an overview of the Academic Senate, including a review of the "10+1," the items in Title 5 and the Education Code that provide the basis for most of the authority of academic senates in academic and professional matters at the local and state level.

The first set of three breakouts provided a variety of resources, from a presentation of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory personality test (*Spiderman, Shrek, The Terminator: Which One Are You?*) to a demonstration of contextualized learning (*Some Like it Hot*) to a discussion of funding sources from the federal VTEA and Carl Perkins grants (*Mr. Smith Goes to Washington...* and learns what is available for those back home).

A Vocational Leadership Institute would not be complete without informing career technical education leaders about the activities of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (*The Godfather*). And special populations and "nontraditional" occupations, where individuals from either gender comprise less than 25% of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work, were discussed in another general session (*Rebel Without a Cause*). It is interesting to note that three of the Occupational Education Committee members are nontraditional—males in cosmetology and library science and a female in welding technology.

We explored a special and honored category of students—returning veterans (*Platoon* and *An Officer and A Gentleman*), hearing personal accounts from two veterans with some of the challenges they

face as they adjust to the college environment. And we also heard about a series of successful programs overseen by the Academic Senate—the SB70 Career Pathways (*It's a Wonderful Life*) and how these have provided for articulation of courses between high schools, Regional Occupational Centers and Programs (ROCPs) and colleges. A strong area of commitment for faculty is in the area of curriculum development (*The Right Stuff*) as we heard more about the new Program and Course Approval Handbook and the potential application of prerequisites to career technical education courses.

It is always vitally important for leaders to be informed about funding and finances. We had a state expert in community college finances give us an overview (*Jerry Maguire—Show Me The Money!*) of the state budget and also provided us with detailed profiles of the finances of our local districts. Times of deep budget problems (hmmmm, could that be like now?!) always bring up concerns about the viability of career technical education programs. A presentation on program review and discontinuance (*The Grapes of Wrath*) focused on how one college faced these situations. It is also important to look at how different state initiatives can be combined for student success. We saw an example of an award-winning program (*The Sweet Smell of Success*) that showed how Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) funding was used to encourage career technical education faculty to refer students to college success centers as a component of their instructional program.

Many of the attendees are already leaders on their campuses, but it is always good to hear about others. We were fortunate to have a panel of career technical education faculty (*All the President's Men...and Women*) relate their experiences of hearing the call (of the wild?) and stepping forward to help their faculty colleagues at the local, regional and state level. And faculty leaders are not alone...we explored the importance of collaborative efforts (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*) between faculty and administrators on relationships in developing and maintaining programs.

As we mentioned before, federal funding is very important for vocational programs and we reviewed

the current Perkins Accountability measures and showed how they relate to effective teaching and learning (*Million Dollar Baby*). The state's Economic and Workforce Development has resources and information (*Star Trek*) to lead the way in building capacity in career technical education disciplines and professional development opportunities for faculty. Another important component for a career technical education program can be advisory committees (*Advise and Consent*). We learned how they can have a dramatic impact on enrollment, outcomes, completion placement ratios, training materials and curriculum development.

External matters can deeply affect career technical education programs and nothing more than legislation. We learned what is happening in Sacramento and Washington D.C. (*Around the World in Eighty Days*—didn't it take longer than that to get the budget passed?) on issues of interest, including Perkins accountability, VTEA funding, economic development and workforce preparation. Of special interest was hearing about issues in regards to concurrent enrollment (*The Best Years of Our Lives*) of students in both high school and community colleges—many of whom are in career technical education programs.

We finished off the Institute with a presentation of certificates of completion for the attendees and wished everyone a safe journey home (*The Sound of Music*—“So long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Goodbye!”). I feel that the Institute was a wonderful experience for all. A load of thanks to the award-winning efforts of the members of the Occupational Education Committee (Carol Beck, Mission College; Dianna Chiabotti, Napa Valley College; Lisa Legohn, Los Angeles Trade Tech College; Sal Veas, Santa Monica College; and Peter Westbrook, Riverside College) and a Best Producer Oscar[®] to Jen Gross (Academic Senate Event Coordinator) for all her work in coordinating this Institute.

Make plans for the 2010 Vocational Education Leadership Institute, which will be held March 11 to 13 in the Napa Valley area. See you there! ■

On the Occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Academic Senate

BY JANE PATTON, INCOMING PRESIDENT

(This was presented during the Election Speeches at Spring Plenary Session)

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Academic Senate, it is appropriate to look back at our accomplishments and the founding principles of academic senates in California's community colleges, both locally and statewide. Taking stock of our achievements and our core values is a useful and informative exercise, and it helps us set the course for our future.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a turbulent time in the United States and out of that rebellious, take-charge time was born the Academic Senate for California Community College. Thanks to the courage of our founding fathers and mothers, the solid foundation for the faculty leadership in academic and professional matters was laid. Because we are teachers, let's consider a few of the lessons we have learned in the last forty years.

We have learned that the 1960s California Master Plan for Higher Education got it right when it proposed tuition-free higher education, although we know the dream was never realized, and we continue to argue that there are tremendous benefits to California as well as the individual when we have state-supported post-secondary education.

We have learned that through AB 1725 and the resulting changes to law and regulation, the faculty roles have been strengthened; but we must remember that it is insufficient to *have* the powers if we don't *use* them.

We have learned that the resolution process and committee structure of the Academic Senate serve us well. The resolutions encourage animated and thoughtful debate and drive the work of our committees. The

committee structure provides sufficient breadth to permit progress on the varied tasks, and we have the flexibility to add new committees or put some on hiatus periodically.

We have learned to be adaptable: to review graduation requirements when needed, to adjust our focus in light of the tremendous increase in need for basic skills, to recommend changes to Title 5 in our 10+1 areas.

We have learned (and continue to try to teach others) that when faculty are involved in planning and decision-making from day **one**, not only are the results improved, but the commitment for implementation is strengthened. I am fond of quoting my USC professor as follows. (If you can get past the allusion to industry, the point of this excerpt is valuable).

*The teacher in an institution of higher learning is an officer of the corporation...and **not** an employee or hired person in the usual sense. To misconceive the basic nature and role of the college or university faculty member threatens the whole concept and function of the higher learning...The college or university is fundamentally different from business, military or governmental organizations.*

In a college or university, the faculty members are responsible members of a self-governing community whose relative autonomy is crucial to the nature and process of the higher learning.

This point is extremely complex and very difficult to make clear, yet on its acceptance may hang the welfare and perhaps even the survival of institutions of higher learning. ...the individual faculty member is a self-respecting officer of the organization who after proper evaluation by senior members of the community becomes a permanent part of the organization.¹

¹ Pulias and Wilbur, *Principles and Values for College and University Administrators*, 1983.

AB 1725 put those very values into law—professionalizing California community college faculty and moving them into higher education.

So, we've looked a bit at our past; how about our present? I have wondered: wouldn't it be helpful if the job of Academic Senate president came with high beam headlights and rear view mirrors? Senate leaders need to provide the vision to see where we're headed (or *should* be heading) as well as the rear view mirrors to understand our past.

I got a call last week from a senate president. At her college, the current practice is for the union to set class size limits, without the participation of the senate or the curriculum committee. The challenge for the senate was in determining what should be done and the best strategy for revisiting a practice that was instituted in the past but that may not be the best approach today.

I spoke to another senate president last week who was consumed with trying to help administrators understand why the senate was concerned about the implementation of a new administrative software system. She indicated that students were not receiving timely information about when and how to register and such processes as wait lists and pre-requisite enforcement were compromised with the new software. This senate president's challenge was in convincing administrators that these issues *are* a part of academic and professional matters, and not merely administrative matters. If students weren't getting into their classes and if prerequisites were not enforced, the senate did (and should) care.

These two cases exemplify local senates in their daily duties of asserting the academic senate's 10+1 responsibilities. I have no doubt that these two, very healthy senates under their capable leadership will resolve these situations. While local senates wrestle with many internal challenges, there are also pressures that affect our colleges from the state level. Here are a few of my concerns.

I am concerned about outsiders charting our course for us, and making policy decisions that rightly belong in the hands of those *within* the colleges and the system. (We will address a new resolution about nonprofit foundations, which raises this concern).

I am concerned about competing demands and stresses put on our colleges that stretch us beyond our means. Ideally, community colleges can set their own local

priorities about which of the allowable missions will be their focus, depending on their local community's needs. The new Enrollment Management paper presents some strategies for senates to engage in a dialog about its institutional priorities or its balance of curriculum.

I am concerned about the end becoming more important than the means; the outcomes more important than the process; the destination more important than the journey. Education cannot always be measured and weighed, and if faculty do not keep clear about this, no one else will. General education helps to develop the student as an informed, thinking member of society, and the student's new awareness, new synapses, improved critical thinking skills cannot be measured by standardized tests.

I am concerned about shift towards using more contingent faculty—a trend that not only affects community colleges in California but all higher education in the country, as reported by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). It is not the people who teach part time that is the concern. The issue is ensuring the number of full-time faculty that is required to ensure the academic and professional responsibilities are completed, including advising students, writing curriculum, conducting program reviews and full participation in governance activities.

What are the solutions to challenges such as these? Likely because of my background in group communication theory, I believe along with Robert Frost that "The best way *out* is always *through*." Working through our governance structures is essential—both locally and at the state level. And if we don't like the governance structure, we should change it.

So on the occasion of our 40th anniversary, I conclude that we should be thankful for the institution of the Academic Senate—local and state. I suggest that if basic skills are the foundation for student success in California community colleges, then the academic senate is the foundation for faculty success in academic and professional matters.

I am energized by you, the faculty leaders in California's community colleges, and look forward to continuing our work together for the good of students, faculty and our colleges. ■

To Be MCD Or Not To Be MCD—That Was The Question

BY WHEELER NORTH, CHAIR, RELATIONS WITH LOCAL SENATES COMMITTEE

Introduction

Multi-College Districts (MCDs) comprise approximately 65 of our 110 colleges in 22 districts, with Riverside District being the latest variable as they attempt transition into the world of MCDs. With the recent overhaul of community college funding regulations by SB 361 (2007), there is even more pressure for districts to go this route because converting a center into college status yields a multi-million dollar annual increase for the district. So, some faculty have wondered if there really are enough benefits from the MCD model to justify the additional challenges not found in single-college districts (SCD).

A Brief History

In the Spring of 2006 there were several frustrated MCD faculty pondering their respective MCD woes when the idea arose to see if it would be possible to improve MCDs by learning more about them through research and investigation. They wondered if it would be possible to show they truly cost more or less to operate in terms of actual cost, undue dysfunction, wasted time, morale, debilitating frustration, and duplication of effort.

Surveying as a Tool

Thus resolution 13.05 S06 was the genesis for producing a survey that ended up being very complex. At the same time the Academic Senate Executive

Both in the quantitative and narrative responses, respondents overwhelmingly indicated that MCDs are perceived to treat their colleges inequitably with respect to resource allocation (65%).

Committee had been exploring the idea of using a survey consultant to collect this kind of data. The survey was distributed in February and March of 2009 to faculty senate presidents, curriculum chairs, and planning/budget co-chairs, receiving input from 59 respondents representing approximately half of the MCD colleges. Due to the complexity of the survey and the hard fact that surveys generally only produce data reflecting respondent *perceptions* it was decided that input from the single-college districts would not significantly add enough to this data set to a degree that warrants putting them through the time to complete the survey.

Basic Survey Results

Both in the quantitative and narrative responses, respondents overwhelmingly indicated that MCDs are perceived to treat their colleges inequitably with respect to resource allocation (65%). To counter this though, when queried if respondents personally felt this was true there was a 25% increase in the cohort believing there is equity or they just weren't certain.

Another question asked about the effectiveness of district oversight in a variety of decision-making processes. There seemed to be much more confidence in the integrity of processes where decision-making authority remained at the campus level.

Breakout conversations

At the 2009 Spring Plenary Session the Relations with Local Senates Committee held a breakout to further discuss the results, to solicit more input, and to ascertain future directions for this effort. This resulted in several trains of thought, not the least of which was the idea that further investigation was both warranted and welcome. To this end the

This survey provided indications that multi-college districts have unique characteristics which could affect morale and functionality, that there is much we can do to identify and share effective practices, and there is a great deal of potential for more research.

conversation asked what quantitative data may be available that would evaluate cost efficiencies, particularly as measured over a period of time. It was pointed out that the phrase “duplication of effort” was a little tough to analyze in some areas. Inter-related to this the idea prevailed among attendees that dysfunctionality within the multi-layered processes of MCDs was often unreasonably high. The mathematicians present noted that the total number of respondents was not a significantly useful sample size, so to counter this it was suggested that more quantitative data and research is needed to validate the perceptive data if possible.

Other questions were:

Is there a higher level of satisfaction when a district senate is in place?

How can we get better and more accurate data, both reported and local?

What are the trends with respect to changes in staffing ratios, funding and other resource allocations in MCDs versus SCDs?

As the dialog shifted towards what may be useful for directing further effort, the idea arose that within the cohort of attendees' districts were pockets of functionality that fell into some rough cluster areas. These included resource allocation models, curriculum alignment, intra-district communication, a perception of effectiveness derived from leadership that values and functions easily within participatory governance, and portability of a variety of services such as assessment, student records, and technology resources.

What Next?

So the one question remains, what do we do next? Many of us from MCDs are often frustrated by them, while there appear to be some from SCDs who would prefer to be in an MCD (presuming the trend being established by Woodland, Norco, and Moreno Valley accurately reflects faculty sentiments). While railing at the vagaries of the MCD model might en-

gender healthy venting, a more practical use of our limited resources might be to use this data and further research to provide insights on how to be more effective in costs and use of time; on how to operate with less angst and better morale; on how to better serve our students by copying the good, avoiding the bad, and outright eliminating the ugly.


The following are two areas of future effort that are indicated by both the survey and the subsequent breakout.

Identification and dissemination of effective practices

- ◆ Cluster areas of focus can include curriculum processes and alignment, academic/educational planning across the college boundaries, intra-district communication, local and district leadership values and functions, effective use of centralization and scale, and service portability.
- ◆ The identification of a variety of MCDs and SCDs that do one or more of these cluster areas well may require additional research, although we did identify several faculty present at the breakout that seem to have developed effective practices in one or more of these cluster areas.
- ◆ Once some of these have been identified we can conduct follow-up interaction to identify and document these practices.
- ◆ Then, based upon these results, we can present findings in the manner most appropriate to them.

Further research suggestions include:

- ◆ Gather reported and local data from a variety of sources
- ◆ Validate perceptive data with quantitative data (e.g., colleges do receive inequitable resources within MCDs)
- ◆ Use comparative data to ascertain potential differences in functional patterns between MCDs and SCDs, and potential trends related to common Academic Senate issues such as funding ratios to faculty, staff and administrator ratios, accreditation challenges, technical visit requests, turnover rates, etc.



This survey provided indications that multi-college districts have unique characteristics which could affect morale and functionality, that there is much we can do to identify and share effective practices, and there is a great deal of potential for more research.

- ◆ Identify patterns validating efficiencies found within MCDs and SCDs to include some common basic costs such as the cost to operate an MCD Board of Trustees versus several SCD Boards.
- ◆ Conduct a comparative qualitative morale survey data between MCDs and SCDs.
- ◆ Collect and analyze scale effectiveness data (e.g., ability to pass bonds or influence other local issues)

In summary, while to some the multi-college district model has many shortcomings, the pragmatic reality is they are likely here to stay and may become even more prevalent. This survey provided indications that multi-college districts have unique characteristics which could affect morale and functionality, that there is much we can do to identify and share effective practices, and there is a great deal of potential for more research. Given the many uninvited external entities looking to study us in the interests of fixing us, it is a shame we can't find a way to guide their efforts to meet our efforts. ■

Academic Programs without Homes

BY WHEELER NORTH, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

Many colleges have certificate and degree programs that may be parentless in that they belong to no one department or division because they span a diverse organized range of courses across many disciplines. Some of these are: general education certificate patterns designed to fulfill transfer-institution general education (GE) requirements, interdisciplinary studies, areas of emphasis, and customizable certificates or degrees designed around a group of multiple discipline course offerings that meet community or industry needs. The purpose of this article is to initiate some local conversations to help colleges ensure all of their programs fulfill students' needs with the highest of standards.

Here are some questions to consider as you engage in these conversations about “homeless” academic programs.

- ◆ Who is responsible for implementing prerequisite, corequisite and advisory processes?
- ◆ Who is responsible for ensuring the appropriate scheduling of these courses in a manner that logically provides students access to a viable sequence of courses?
- ◆ Who is responsible for ensuring the appropriate college catalog information is maintained and updated each year?
- ◆ If assigned to a department what influence do other departments (housing the other disciplines/courses) have over these matters?
- ◆ How do you resolve course changes that impact the multiple-discipline program?
- ◆ What influence or roles should Student Services and the Articulation Officer have in these matters?
- ◆ How does the college have the broader academic conversations about these and other programs that may fall outside of the scope of the Curriculum Committee's charge?
- ◆ How are discipline faculty engaged into these processes both formally and informally?
- ◆ How are the duties and load shared among the disciplines participating in these options?
- ◆ Have you thought about how to take care of them?
- ◆ Who is their faculty advocate—their champion through times good and bad?
- ◆ Who is responsible for conducting the program reviews for these programs?
- ◆ Who is responsible for developing and assessing the achievement of program goals and outcomes?

- ◆ If the program elects to have distance education options, who ensures the additional parameters specific to distance education are met? (e.g. proper notification of accreditation entities, ensuring distance education support services are adequate to this program, which in some cases may need specialized counseling for most students)
- ◆ If the program suffers cutbacks or enrollment declines in one or more areas who is responsible for assessing and improving the program's viability? (e.g. one of the participant discipline's courses are challenged)

Here are some values we all agree on for all programs

- ◆ Academically appropriate sequences or compilations of courses must exist in every program, and these must logically lead to an end goal of a certificate or degree that is demonstrated as both useful and meaningful for the intended students. Program and Course Approval Handbook, Criteria A and C pg. 3 (CCCCO 2009)
- ◆ Program development includes discipline faculty involvement (Title 5 §53200(c)) and in fact should be driven by faculty with external influences being limited to providing support and ensuring compliance if appropriate (e.g. external accrediting requirements, articulation needs, etc.)
- ◆ Programs are reviewed regularly in periods not to exceed two years for CTE courses (CEC §78016) while all courses must have “an ongoing systematic review” which means at least once in every six year accreditation cycle (ACCJC 2004 Accreditation Standard IIA.2(e). However many colleges operate with shorter cycles, ones that may coordinate with other college planning and differing levels of review (e.g. updates versus full review)
- ◆ Program and course curriculum are recommended by Curriculum Committees and ap-

Academically appropriate sequences or compilations of courses must exist in every program, and these must logically lead to an end goal of a certificate or degree that is demonstrated as both useful and meaningful for the intended students.

proved by Boards, and ultimately the Chancellor's Office in the case of programs. (Title 5 §55002) But faculty must have primacy in the planning, development and assessment of all curriculum be they courses or programs. (Title 5 §53200(c))

- ◆ Programs meet valid student and community needs per the Program and Course Approval Handbook Criteria B pg. 3 (2009, CCCCCO)
- ◆ The college must have the resources and means to adequately offer and maintain the program. (Program and Course Approval Handbook Criteria D pg. 5 (2009, CCCCCO))
- ◆ Our programs remain compliant with all laws, regulations and other obligations. (Program and Course Approval Handbook Criteria E pg. 5 (2009, CCCCCO))

Some Options to Consider

- ◆ Host program in existing committee or department—If the program is primarily composed of

courses from one discipline, or related disciplines within one department this is a logical option in terms of functionality.

- ◆ Create new specialized committee/group – This might be a logical option for a widely diverse pattern such as a GE pattern, or variable GE pattern certificate designed to meet a variety of transfer options by allowing some selectable choices based upon the student's intended transfer choices.
- ◆ Articulation Officer and Student Services are critical players in sustaining these— For a variety of reasons far too numerous to fully elucidate in this short article, these players must be included in the development and sustainment of all programs; but in particular, these homeless programs tend to be used widely by a large cohort of students be they transfer, career or self fulfillment bound.

In summary, for a variety of recent and long-standing reasons we now have a growing sector of educational options that do not necessarily easily fit into the traditional (department = discipline = related-programs) model. But these options must be sustained to the same exact high standards that we expect of all our programs, they must remain flexible and responsive, and they must consistently and demonstrably meet our student's needs. Therefore colleges must engage in and evolve processes that will promote these goals while upholding the underlying principles inherent to all our programs.

Some references:

Program and Course Approval Handbook (2009, CCCC)

<http://www.cccco.edu/SystemOffice/Divisions/AcademicAffairs/CreditProgramandCourseApproval/ReferenceMaterials/tabid/412/Default.aspx>

The Course Outline of Record: A Curriculum Reference Guide (2008, ASCCC)

http://www.asccc.org/Publications/Papers/CourseOutline_Reference08.html

Program Review: A Faculty Driven Process (1995, ASCCC)

http://www.asccc.org/Publications/Papers/Program_review.html ■



Julie's Inbox:



The Academic Senate receives many requests from the field, and most of them come through the Senate Office into the inbox of our own Executive Director Julie Adams (hence the name of this column). As you might imagine these requests vary by topic, and the responses represent yet another resource to local senates. This column will share the questions and solutions offered by the President and the Executive Committee. Please send your thoughts or questions to Julie@asccc.org.

Dear Julie,

We just received great news—the local senate has finally been assigned a staff person to assist us with our work. Now what? What resources are available to help staff members do their job? What advice would you give us about tasks the staff should do to help establish the senate office? Are there any professional development activities that would provide our new staff with information unique to this job?

Hooray for Senate Staff!

Dear HSS-

It's funny you should ask. At our 2009 Spring Plenary Session, we held a breakout session for local senate staff where we shared recommendations about setting up a senate office. Participants discussed a number of ideas about setting up a local senate office including:

Developing a master calendar for local senate activities. Some items to include on this calendar are senate meeting dates and agenda deadlines; key college dates that affect the local senate such as faculty flex days and other events; and state Academic Senate events, award deadlines, Area meetings, and other key dates.

Creating templates of regularly used documents such as meeting agendas, correspondence, committee reports, and minutes.

Developing a master filing system, both hard copy and electronic copy, of historical documents such as agendas, minutes, resolutions, and awards.

Creating a resource binder for the local senate president and senators. The binder would include such items as the bylaws and constitution, budget, master calendar, parliamentary procedures, resolutions, as well as deadlines and who to call for specific information.

As you can see, this breakout provided a unique professional development event for local senate staff. PowerPoint presentation materials and other resources discussed during the breakout session are posted on our website at: <http://www.asccc.org/Events/sessions/spring2009/program.html>. Next year the Academic Senate will again hold staff breakouts to discuss these issues as well as other topics such as Brown Act and communication techniques, and we invite you to bring your staff person(s) with you to session next year.

In the meantime, if you or your staff member have any questions or would like any more information about the above topics, please email Julie Adams at Julie@asccc.org. Our excellent office staff and executive director are more than willing to assist you.

The Executive Committee ■