

**FORGING AN UNBREAKABLE BOND:
STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN CURRICULUM COMMITTEE AND THE
ACADEMIC SENATE**

Spring Plenary Session – 2013

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WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE?

- The Governing Board shall ... ensure ... the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendation in the areas of **curriculum and academic standards**.
 - *Education Code § 70902 (B)(7)*
- Academic Senate means an organization whose primary function is to make recommendations with respect to academic and professional matters.
 - *Title 5 § 53200 (B)*



TITLE 5 § 53203 - AUTHORITY

(A) Governing Board shall adopt policies for the appropriate delegation of authority and responsibility it is college and/or district academic senate.

(B) Policies in (A) shall be adopted through *collegial consultation* with the Academic Senate.

(C) Guarantees the Academic Senate the right to meet with or appear before the board.



THE “10 + 1”

SECTION § 53200 (C)

1. *Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites*
2. Degree & Certificate Requirements
3. Grading Policies
4. Educational Program Development
5. Standards & Policies regarding
Student Preparation and Success



CURRICULUM COMMITTEE AUTHORITY

Title 5 §55002:

Curriculum Committee. The college and/or district curriculum committee recommending the course shall be established by the mutual agreement of the college and/or district administration and the academic senate. The committee shall be either a committee of the academic senate or a committee that includes faculty and is otherwise comprised in a way that is mutually agreeable to the college and/or district administration and the academic senate.



ASCCC THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE: ROLE, STRUCTURE, DUTIES, AND STANDARDS OF GOOD PRACTICES

“The policies and procedures by which the committee will operate are determined by the academic senate, either solely or in partnership with the board.

Because of this required senate oversight, there must be a direct link between the curriculum committee and the senate.”



**WITH ALL THE ROLES OF CURRICULUM
AND SENATE OUTLINED, WHAT CAN
POSSIBLY GO WRONG?**



SCENARIO:


LACK OF SUPPORT BY FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT FOR CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

- The Curriculum Committee is tasked with implementing regulatory changes and mandates that apply to curriculum. The Curriculum Committee is created by the Academic Senate and the Senate provides oversight for all of its actions. The Senate President doesn't agree with the new regulations and has instructed the Curriculum Committee to ignore them.




SCENARIO:

LACK OF SUPPORT BY FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT FOR CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CONT'D.

- How much does the Senate president know about curriculum? How much should the Senate president know about curriculum?
 - What steps should the Curriculum Committee/Curriculum Chair take to deal with this situation?
 - How might the Curriculum Committee work with the Academic Senate to create a climate where the Senate President would not do this again?
 - What do you do if nothing seems to work?
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SCENARIO:

CURRICULUM CHAIR RESISTS BRINGING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SENATE

- Chair of Curriculum Committee is resisting requests from the Senate president to make more complete reports to the senate and to bring recommendations to the senate for approval
 - Curriculum Committee has been granted the authority to bring recommendations directly to the local governing board by mutual agreement between the local academic senate, college administration, and the governing board.
 - Curriculum Chair claims her committee has developed expertise in curriculum beyond that held by the average senator.
 - This expertise should be respected by allowing the Curriculum Committee to continue to work without having its decisions questioned.
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SCENARIO:

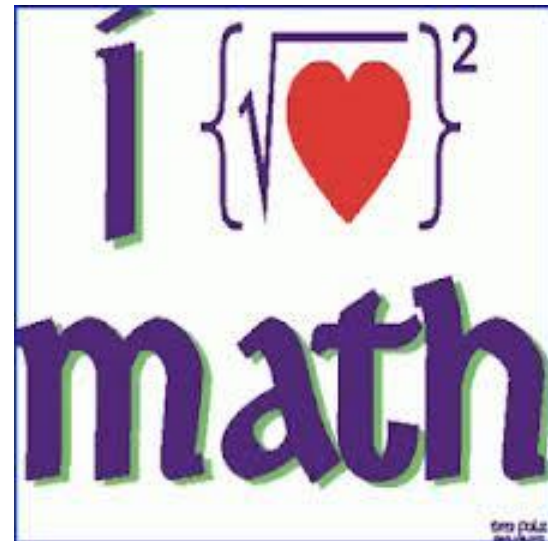
CURRICULUM CHAIR RESISTANCE CONT.

- It is a very common practice that curriculum committees are allowed to send their recommendations on curriculum directly to the governing board. Is this an effective process?
- Has the Senate been trained on what the Curriculum Committee does and their role in that process?
- Has the Curriculum Committee been trained on the role of the Senate?



SCENARIO: ELIMINATION OF COURSEWORK

- The mathematics department at your college has decided to eliminate the lowest level courses that they offer. The first time that anyone outside of the department has heard about this decision is when the course deactivations have been brought to the Curriculum Committee.



SCENARIO:

ELIMINATION OF COURSEWORK CONT'D

- What is the first step for the Curriculum Committee?
- Is this a discussion that should be held at the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Senate, or both?
- Who gets to decide what level of course is too low for the credit program?



SCENARIO:

ELIMINATION OF COURSEWORK CONT'D

- Decision of discipline faculty to eliminate lowest levels of mathematics coursework
 - Based on lack of adequate funding and department philosophy about what should be taught at the credit level
 - Strong discussion held in curriculum meeting with respect to equity and access, degree progress, philosophy of department, what constitutes “readiness” for college-level work...
- Led to larger campus-wide discussion of “Academic Floor”. How low do we go?

(This should have started in Academic Senate, but wound it's way around to it after talks in other committees.)



SCENARIO:

ELIMINATION OF COURSEWORK CONT'D

Moved to resolution because:

- Chair of Curriculum is member of Academic Senate / Executive Board
- Reporting from Curriculum standing topic on agenda
- Executive Board and campus administration meet bi-monthly to discuss campus “issues”
- Resolution on curriculum made only after all constituents' involved had their voices heard.



SO, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

- What works best for your campus and district?
- Is there established policy on campus?
 - Or is this an “informal” agreement?
 - Or a practice?
- Should process be revisited?
 - How often?
- Communication across multiple campuses in a multi-college district
 - District wide curriculum committee?
 - How do you communicate changes to curriculum?



EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

- One way to keep the lines of communication between the senate and curriculum committee open is through the curriculum chair.
- There are many possible ways of choosing your curriculum chair:
 - Current Senate President
 - Past Senate President
 - Appointed by Senate President
 - Member of Senate Exec Board (VP, Secretary, etc.)
 - Elected by the curriculum committee
 - Elected by Faculty
- However the chair is chosen, they must be at every senate meeting



EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

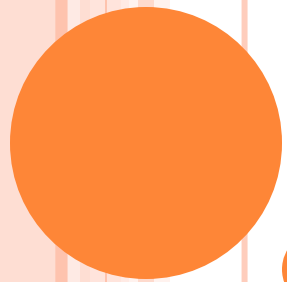
- The curriculum chair reports on the work of the committee at every senate meeting.
- Train your senate about what the role of the curriculum committee is and how the senate works with the committee to make recommendations to the governing board.
- Train the curriculum committee members to remember that the senate is the recommending body on all 10+1 items even if the committee is permitted to send things straight to the board.
 - Don't let them believe they are alone on the island.



EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

- Multi college districts have many different structures that need to be considered. No matter what your structure is, all college senates need to know what is happening and be involved in all policy recommendations.
- The policies that apply to students should not be different at the different colleges in a district.





QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

RESOURCES

- ASCCC 1996 Paper: The Curriculum Committee: Role, Structure, Duties, and Standards of Good Practices
- May 2006 Rostrum Article: Where, Oh Where Does the Curriculum Go? M. Pilati
- ASCCC Curriculum Website

