

ASCCC  
JULY 2019

# SENATE Rostrum

DEBUNKING MYTHS

AROUND AB 705

PAGE 1

Education Changes  
Things  
page 4

Developing  
Metamajors  
page 13

DEBUNKING MYTHS AROUND AB 705	1
EDUCATION CHANGES THINGS	4
AN EQUITY CENTERED SYLLABUS JOURNEY	6
PLACEMENT OF DUAL ENROLLED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS UNDER AB 705	8
A HISTORICAL SUCCESS FOR THE ASCCC:	10
DEVELOPING METAMAJORS	13
CURRICULUM AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES	15
THE BROWN ACT AND YOUR...	17
SENATE'S FIRST ANNUAL CURR. INSTITUTE	19
A LEGACY OF HONESTY AND INTEGRITY	20

# Debunking Myths Around AB 705

by Virginia “Ginni” May, ASCCC Treasurer and 2018-19 ASCCC Curriculum Chair

**A**ssembly Bill 705 (Irwin, 2017), now written into Education Code §78213, was legislation regarding placement of students into transfer-level English, ESL, and mathematics courses and in some cases college-level mathematics courses. Colleges are allowed to place students in pre-transfer courses only if students are highly unlikely to pass the transfer-level course and if placement in the pre-transfer course would maximize the likelihood that a student would complete transfer-level English or mathematics within a one-year timeframe or for ESL within a three-year timeframe. In addition, colleges are required to use a student’s high school performance in their placement procedures when that data is reasonably available. The implementation of AB 705 mandates has led to many discussions and debates, and various aspects of the implementation continue to spark controversy.

For many years, community college faculty have been searching for ways to appropriately educate students and fill gaps, or perceived gaps, in student preparation for college coursework. The Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) that began in 2006 under the leadership of Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) had promise; however, support to bring more effective placement programs to scale needed improvement, and the responsibility for the BSI was transferred away from the ASCCC before such improvement could take place. Still, few would have denied that the placement systems used by community colleges needed improvement: data indicates that many students were under-placed by traditional placement models, while others were over-placed by those same placement processes. Incorrect placement could occur for numerous reasons, such as an extended time gap between students finishing their

K-12 education and taking an assessment test, students not understanding the significance or seriousness of the assessment test, and the assessment test simply not being accurate. As initial implementation of the Multiple Measures Assessment Project began to grow, colleges began to see improvement in their placement processes, but AB 705 was passed before many of the programs were brought to scale. Various possibilities for improved placement that were being explored throughout the state were thus collapsed into a more standardized model that offered less encouragement for local innovation.

With the passage of AB 705 came many interpretations and debates regarding the best ways in which to implement its requirements. In order to help colleges understand the expectations of the new mandates, the ASCCC and the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) created and disseminated

---

**As initial implementation of the Multiple Measures Assessment Project began to grow, colleges began to see improvement in their placement processes, but AB 705 was passed before many of the programs were brought to scale.**

guidelines for AB 705 implementation prior to the approval of new Title 5 Regulations. This early guidance was necessary due to timelines for compliance with the law and due to the amount of time required to write and approve new placement and support processes at the 114 community colleges. The first memo, authored by ASCCC President John Stanskas and CCCCO Executive Vice-Chancellor Laura Hope, was circulated to the system's colleges on July 10, 2018. An FAQ document with further clarification was disseminated in August of 2018, with additional FAQ documents distributed in December 2018 and February 2019.

Some of most pressing questions addressed in the guidance documents included the following:

- Can colleges legally place students below transfer level?
- Are colleges required to use the default placement rules published by the CCCCO?
- Are colleges required to remove basic skills or pre-transfer level prerequisites from the transfer-level English and mathematics courses or courses in other disciplines?
- How will students demonstrate that they have met mathematics competency?

AB 705 neither mandated nor encouraged the discontinuation of remedial coursework in the California Community Colleges. Education Code §66010.4 requires colleges to provide remedial instruction for those students that need it. The new mandate of §72813 states that colleges “shall not require students to enroll in remedial English or mathematics coursework that lengthens their time to complete a degree *unless placement research that includes consideration of high school grade point average and coursework shows that those students are highly unlikely to succeed in transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics*”. This requirement will necessitate new placement policies that will result in far fewer students being placed in pre-transfer or remedial coursework, but numerous students will still need or desire this preparation before they move forward with their transfer-level programs, and providing this preparation for students is in no way prohibited to colleges.

The default placement rules were established using predictive analytics on student course taking patterns from 2007 to 2014. These rules were not based on students that were placed using the rules. Essentially, these rules are not placement, but rather guidelines

on how colleges could use corequisites. Colleges have been encouraged to develop their own placement rules, evaluate those rules, and adjust them accordingly to maximize throughput and student success. In order for colleges to continue using their own multiple measures placement rules, they must show that throughput is at least as good as the throughput would be had they used the default placement rules established by the CCCCO. In other words, if colleges choose not to be innovative in their placement practices, they may simply use the default placement rules.

However, the default placement rules have been met with some criticism by faculty around the state, as they essentially recommend placing all students into transfer-level coursework. Under these rules, even students with a high school grade point average below 1.9 would be placed into a transfer-level English course, with concurrent academic support, even though the success rate for such students is predicted to be only 42.6%. The same recommendation is offered in mathematics for any liberal arts student with a GPA below 2.3 or any STEM student with a GPA below 2.6, even though the predicted success rates for these students fall below 30% with such placement. AB 705 allowed for placement of students into remedial coursework if they are “highly unlikely to succeed in transfer-level coursework,” but it did not mandate the placement of all students into transfer-level coursework, and certainly a failure rate of 60-70% could be interpreted as highly unlikely to succeed. Colleges may therefore wish to conduct their own research to justify placement rules that can more effectively serve all students in our communities.

Prerequisites serve many purposes: they are designed to provide students with the needed skills to be successful and to inform the instructor, the students, and other institutions regarding the level at which the course will be taught. In some cases, the prerequisite includes subject matter that will also be needed for coursework subsequent to the particular course to which it is a prerequisite. The language in Title 5 §55003 that allows for the establishment of prerequisites remains. While the language of AB 705 does appear to require a greater level of research or evidence to validate prerequisites, it does not prohibit the establishment or enforcement of prerequisites. Moreover, removing existing prerequisites could endanger articulation agreements with other colleges as well as C-ID approval for courses. For

these reasons, colleges have been advised to not remove the prerequisites that they have established for courses.

With many groups in the state of California interested in participating in the implementation of the AB 705 mandates, messages regarding what colleges may do versus what colleges must do often become mixed and unclear. For example, questions have been raised about what the California State University (CSU) system and the University of California (UC) can require of the California Community Colleges (CCC) in regard to course articulation. One statement that was brought to the IGETC Standards Subcommittee of the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates to qualify a question read as follows:

As you may know, CSU and UC are currently reviewing CCC courses submitted for IGETC. This includes the review of CCC courses that have been revised to align with AB 705, that mandated the elimination of prerequisites for transferable courses in English Composition, Mathematics, and Statistics.

The assumption in this statement is simply false. AB 705 does not mandate the elimination of prerequisites for transferable courses in English composition, mathematics, or statistics. Colleges have been explicitly advised to not remove their prerequisites. Removing prerequisites can impact articulation agreements as well as the trust that the CCCs have with transfer institutions. Moreover, historically, students that transfer to CSU and UC have performed as well as, if not better than, their counterparts that enrolled in CSU or UC as freshman. Community colleges must not lose the level of expected course quality and integrity as they move forward with AB 705 implementation. Not only should colleges want students to take transfer-level courses, but they should also want them to succeed in the course as well as beyond the course.

These concerns have been discussed at the California Community Colleges Curriculum Committee (5C), the recommending body to the chancellor on regulations under Title 5 Division 6 Chapter 6, "Curriculum and Instruction." The members of 5C agreed that language similar to the following could be used on Course Outlines of Record:

**For courses that have no corequisite option**

Prerequisite: COURSE 123 or equivalent or by assessment through the college's multiple measures placement processes.

**For courses that have a corequisite option**

Prerequisite: COURSE 123 or equivalent or by assessment through the college multiple measures placement processes. Some assessments may result in the student being required or recommended to take COURSE 234 as a corequisite course instead of taking a prerequisite course.

Colleges and especially faculty will need to be nimble in their responses to student educational needs as they move through iterations of AB 705 implementation. Already faculty around the state are seeing the effects of AB 705 in their classrooms and have expressed frustration with the difficulty of helping students to learn material for which they simply do not have sufficient preparation. The text of AB 705 correctly notes that improperly assigning a student to remediation can result in "discouraging some students from pursuing a postsecondary education," and thus colleges should without question undertake a full review of placement processes and, under the parameters set by the new mandates, work toward more accurate placement practices that would allow all students who are prepared for transfer-level work to begin at that level. At the same time, students can be equally discouraged and are equally likely to curtail their education if they are placed into coursework for which they are not prepared and in which they experience frustration and failure. Colleges and faculty must therefore work diligently to ensure that their placement processes are truly serving the interests of students and promoting student success.

While not all in the CCC system may agree on how to improve student success, all stakeholders do agree that improving student success is their ultimate goal. The ASCCC and the CCCC are working together, following well-established processes for drafting Title 5 Regulations and clarifying guidelines, while trusting the wisdom of the collective voice which is comprised of all stakeholders in the California Community College System. Further discussion will be needed, and revision of the published guidance and ultimately perhaps even of the new mandates may be necessary. In the end, faculty throughout the state remain committed to helping students succeed through processes that are both expeditious and effective in order to allow all students to reach their educational goals.

# Education Changes Things

by Janet Fulks, Bakersfield College

*(Janet Fulks is a former member of the Academic Senate Executive Committee and has played an important role in ASCCC efforts regarding basic skills, guided pathways, and other areas. She retired this spring from Bakersfield College after twenty-five years in the classroom there. The following article, while not originally written as a farewell, offers the benefit of Janet's experience and wisdom as she moves on to new challenges.)*

## EDUCATION CHANGES THINGS.

Think about that statement for a moment. How has education changed things for you? How has it changed things for your loved ones? How is it changing things for students? Can you see what it is doing and what it has done in our world, in California, and in your home town?

Education changes things. We invest billions in our state and national education budgets. We create special loans for students, invest in buildings, and hire and support faculty. When the economy is in decline, people flock to education. Students with any college education have higher incomes than those without higher education. Even an associate degree increases the stability and level of a person's employment, and more advanced degrees strengthen that stability and flexibility for the future. Data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office shows that students starting in community colleges have average incomes below the California median, but those who complete a degree have average incomes above the California median.

Education Changes Things. A student may struggle as a single mother raising children on her own, but after attending community college she can graduate with her Licensed Vocational Nursing Certificate or Associates Degree in Registered Nursing. Her life and her family

will be elevated to a socioeconomic level that will pay forward for many generations. An unemployed oil field worker who returns to college and completes a Career Technical Education (CTE) certificate may be hired as a welder or electrician and will make a living wage and have stability through both boom and bust economic times. Other students may not know how smart they are, never having had a relative that went to college, and may arrive at a college with no direction but can get just the right information and encouragement from a counselor who listens and offers guidance. Community colleges and community college faculty help many students discover how intelligent and capable they are, encourage them along their way, and help them to graduate, transfer, and find careers. Education changes things.

But this statement has a flip side: bad education also changes things. Education built on standards that are not reviewed and standardized tests that do not reflect the real knowledge and critical thinking that students need today are examples of bad education, and they too

---

Community colleges and  
community college faculty  
help many students  
discover how intelligent  
and capable they are,  
encourage them along  
their way, and help them  
to graduate, transfer, and  
find careers.

can change things. Bad education creates a population where more and more students arrive at colleges with inadequate reading, writing, and math skills, and legislation prevents colleges' ability to respond. Bad education creates a system that deprofessionalizes the work of faculty, underestimates faculty's ability to influence individuals and the world, and does not trust faculty's grading nor understand the effort and planning needed to stimulate and foster a thinking mind. Bad education is driven by uninformed legislation to force faculty and students to do external policy makers' bidding without taking all relevant factors into consideration.

Bad education happens when outside agencies study educational institutions, do good research, and then develop proposals or recommendations without talking to educators about the efficacy or additional data needed to support these ideas. Bad education happens when good teaching and learning is traded out purely for budgetary reasons that rarely include cutting back on the rapidly growing bureaucracy. Bad education happens when colleges are more concerned about numbers that look good than really intellectually examining what they do and improving their work and service to their students and communities. Bad education happens when faculty and institutions are held responsible for students' lack of success but are never given the resources necessary to address student needs. Bad education happens when some funding is temporarily made available but the metrics to measure success expect massive changes within an unreasonable period of time, ignoring the existing barriers and variables involved in producing real and meaningful progress.

Good quality education changes things, changes lives, and changes the world. Quality education engages faculty at the heart of all decisions; after all, faculty are the permanent aspect of community colleges today, as chancellors, presidents, and vice-presidents turn over

at a far greater rate than faculty. Quality education in California supports and understands the efficacy of the collegial consultation with faculty and the 10+1 areas of academic senate responsibilities and rights under Title 5.

Education changes things in positive ways when faculty use their knowledge and skills to document high standards, teach rigorous courses, clearly communicate to the students what they need, base their teaching on evidence, and get the support they need. Good education happens when peer review is done correctly and becomes a collegial mentoring and professional development activity for all involved. Good education happens as faculty dialog across disciplines with all of their colleagues and remain focused on the goal of serving students. When these things happen, the undeniable fact in the lives of our students and our communities is that education changes things.

---

**Bad education happens  
when outside agencies  
study educational  
institutions, do good  
research, and then  
develop proposals or  
recommendations without  
talking to educators  
about the efficacy or  
additional data needed  
to support these ideas.**



# An Equity Centered Syllabus Journey

by Mayra Cruz, ASCCC Area B Representative

*The following article is not an official statement of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. The article is intended to engender discussion and consideration by local colleges.*

In 2014, Dr. Estela Bensimon and Dr. Veronica Neal presented a session on becoming equity minded that discussed how to develop a course syllabus, course curriculum, and the teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom with a focus on equity. Through the *Syllabus Review Protocol*, faculty were taught to reflect on how practices, class policies, and approaches addressed equity and equity mindedness.

Some questions suggested for faculty to consider under the *Syllabus Review Protocol* are as follows:

1. What would students care most about when they read the syllabus?
2. How effectively are course expectations communicated?
3. How do I think critically about why equity does not exist?
4. Why do discrimination and racism exist?
5. How would I respond to the lived experiences of students of color and reflect them in the curriculum?

After reflecting on these questions, faculty can analyze their syllabi using the following three strategies:

- Make observations on the course, capturing what they see and do not see in the syllabus that potentially can facilitate or hinder the success of students.
- Drawing from observations, describe how students might read and interpret what is included or perhaps not included.
- Based on the observations and interpretations, determine the constructive changes to be made.

The process of syllabus revision can begin through reflection on the course description, course goals, and expectations. Faculty may look over the content

to determine whether information is clear regarding how they ask students to be responsible for their own success in the class through active and respectful engagement. They may then proceed to review how well they articulate information and resources to achieve course goals and expectations, asking questions such as whether the syllabus utilizes language that conveys a commitment to help students succeed, whether the syllabus incorporates content that fosters equity, diversity, and inclusivity, and whether the assignments take into consideration the student story and experiences and promote critical thinking. The syllabus should be designed to provide opportunities for students to share cultural knowledge, engage students in the discussion of real-world problems from diverse perspectives, and involve students through collaborative work. It should also clearly outline a mechanism for receiving meaningful feedback on student performance and classroom engagement.

I was an attendee at Bensimon and Neal's presentation and later applied the information they offered in the development of the syllabus for my CD 12 course, Child Family and Community Interrelationships. The following examples illustrate some of the changes made to the CD 12 syllabus.

---

**The syllabus should also clearly outline a mechanism for receiving meaningful feedback on student performance and classroom engagement.**

1. A Course Driving Question was added: “How does our cultural schema promote respectful and reciprocal relationships that support and empower families? How do these relationships nurture young children’s development and learning?”
2. The Fostering Inclusivity and Empowerment statement was designed to convey values and guiding principles: “The values that guide this course are those similar to the concept of ‘Familias (Family).’ In CD 12, we value
  - Mutual respect
  - Shared responsibility (between student and instructor, student to student, all of us and our communities that we represent)
  - Opportunities to share meaningful experiences (your knowledge, motivation, effort and my efforts to support your learning)
  - Effective communication
  - Supportive relationships that are comfortable, honest, committed and fun
3. The course was designed with cultural humility as a framework: “The framework for our course is cultural humility, a lifelong process to increase our self-awareness of our own biases and perceptions and engage in a life-long self-reflection process about how to put these aside and learn from the children and families we serve (Tervalon & Murray-

Garcia, 1998). Through this course, students have the opportunity to learn from others, understand where they are, and embrace learning about each other with a reflective lens. The course addresses real-world problems faced by our surrounding communities, and the challenges of inequities along the lines of race, gender, class and other. The framework aligns and integrates well with the bio-ecological model, a model that is part of the Child Development and Education conceptual framework.”

4. The course methodology and method for evaluating students was re-shaped: “The course will provide you with opportunities to share your cultural knowledge. Didactics will be through lecture, engaging in discussions of real-world situations experienced by diverse children and families, individual and group activities, collaborative work and project-based learning, role-play and media audio/visual aids.

“Student’s progress will be evaluated through both oral and/or written reports, reading assignments, collaborative work and project- based learning, critical thinking discussions on the ecologies that impact your development, the development of the child, the family and community. You will be receiving feedback on your performance in class in an ongoing basis through formal and informal interactions (one-on-one meetings, email, phone).”

Revisions of this type can help a syllabus to convey a very important message: Learning is a shared responsibility.

RESOURCES:

Center for Urban Education. (2014) Syllabus Review Protocol. USC Rossier: School of Education, CA.  
 Tervalon, M. and Murray-Garcia, J. Cultural Humility Vs. Cultural Competence. Retrieved from [http://melanietervalon.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/CulturalHumility\\_Tervalon-and-Murray-Garcia-Article.pdf](http://melanietervalon.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/CulturalHumility_Tervalon-and-Murray-Garcia-Article.pdf)

---

**Revisions can help a syllabus to convey a very important message: Learning is a shared responsibility.**



# Placement of Dual Enrolled High School Students Under AB 705

by Craig Rutan, Santiago Canyon College

**P**ermitting high school students to take college courses while they are still enrolled in high school is nothing new. In the past, these students would go through a college's established assessment and placement method, which usually included a placement test. With the passage of Assembly Bill 705 (Irwin, 2017), colleges no longer have access to placement tests for mathematics and English and have to develop new placement procedures based on high school performance data such as overall GPA, courses taken, and specific course grades. These newly adopted placement models may apply to some dual enrollment students, but for other high school students seeking to take mathematics or English courses, the new processes may not be appropriate.

On April 18, 2019, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office released memo AA 19-21 to provide colleges with guidance regarding how to place current high school students into English and mathematics courses while complying with the requirements of AB 705, which are outlined in the revised §55522 of Title 5 that was adopted by the Board of Governors in March 2019. The memo breaks dual enrollment students into three different groups: special admits, College and Career Access Pathways students, and students enrolled in a middle college high school. Students in each of these groups are eligible to take mathematics or English courses, but the placement models for the groups may be different.

Education Code 48800(a) gives K-12 districts the ability to determine whether a high school student is eligible for "advanced scholastic or vocational work." Eligible students are able to apply to community colleges as special admits, but they are not guaranteed admission

into a college or access to any specific courses. On April 24, 2015, the Chancellor's Office released an FAQ document related to changes to legal advisory 05-01 that defined advanced scholastic and vocational work as degree applicable courses. Therefore, special admit students are only permitted to enroll in degree applicable math and English courses, and the placement model that each college has adopted using high school data should be applied to these students as well. Many of these students are seeking access to advanced courses that are not offered at their high schools, like calculus, so their placements may need to be based on more than high school GPA and could include criteria such as highest course completed.

AB 288 (Holden, 2015) created a new type of dual enrollment student group, known as College and Career Advancement Program (CCAP) students. Some CCAP students could be in the same category as a special admit, an advanced student that is seeking to complete an educational pathway that requires an advanced

---

**Many of these students are seeking access to advanced courses that are not offered at their high schools, like calculus, so their placements may need to be based on more than high school GPA.**

course in mathematics or English, but not every CCAP student will fall into this category. Education Code §76004(n) states,

The CCAP partnership agreement shall certify that any remedial course taught by community college faculty at a partnering high school campus shall be offered only to high school students who do not meet their grade level standard in math, English, or both on an interim assessment in grade 10 or 11, as determined by the partnering school district, and shall involve a collaborative effort between high school and community college faculty to deliver an innovative remediation course as an intervention in the student's junior or senior year to ensure the student is prepared for college-level work upon graduation.

Unlike special admit students, CCAP students might be below grade level and need to access basic skills courses to achieve grade level and be prepared to graduate from high school on time. At first glance, this section of Education Code might appear to conflict with the changes implemented by AB 705, but AB 705 is about the placement of college students, and CCAP students are high school students that are taking college courses. If a CCAP student is placed into a basic skills mathematics or English course, that placement is being done by the high school, not the college. The college is simply allowing students to enroll in these classes to help students graduate from high school on time. If placement models such as the default rules published by the Chancellor's Office<sup>1</sup> were applied to these students, the results could be devastating. This group of students is already struggling to finish high school, and placing them into transfer-level mathematics or English courses would likely make their situations worse. Instead of supporting the high schools and helping more students graduate from high school on time, such placements could lead to more students dropping out of high school when they become overwhelmed by transfer-level coursework.

The final group of high school students taking college courses includes students enrolled in middle college high schools. Students enrolled in a middle college are taking high school courses and college courses at the same time,

with many students completing the requirements for an associate degree while completing their high school diplomas. Students that have completed the eleventh grade would automatically be placed into degree applicable math and English courses using the college's approved placement model. If a student has only completed the ninth or tenth grade, the college would need to evaluate the student's transcript to determine if he or she is eligible for degree applicable courses in math or English. In many cases, middle college students will fall into the same category as special admits, and the college's default placement model will apply.

When AB 705 was passed, it was intended to transform placement and curricular structures to increase the number of students completing degree applicable mathematics and English courses within one year. As the new placement models for college students are developed and revised, colleges must remember that high school students are also taking these courses. While AB 705 was not created for high school students, the restrictions on what placement tools may be used directly impact high school students seeking to take math or English courses. As colleges continue to implement AB 705, they must not create placement models that undermine the importance of high school courses or that could negatively impact high school students and discourage them from pursuing their educational goals. Additionally, colleges will want to collect data about the performance of high school students that compares the performance of special admits, CCAP, and middle college students to determine whether all high school students would benefit from the same placement model or whether different models need to be developed. The mandated implementation of AB 705 in fall of 2019 is upon us, and every college will have established curriculum and placement that complies with the bill's requirements, but the effort to ensure that the new placement models are fair and beneficial to students has just begun. Faculty will have to work together to collect and analyze data in order to determine what is effective, what is not, and how colleges can continue to meet the needs of all students.

---

<sup>1</sup> The memo regarding the default placement guidelines can be found at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a565796692ebefb3ec5526e/t/5b6ccfc46d2a73e48620d759/1533857732982/07.18+AB+705+Implementation+Memorandum.pdf>.

# A Historical and Historic Success for the ASCCC:

## The 2007 Raising of the English and Math Requirements

by David Morse, History of the ASCCC Project Chair

*(In 2013, the Academic Senate Executive Committee approved a project to record and preserve the history of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. The April 2017 Rostrum contains an article that explains the intent and structure of this project. The project has been stalled several times, but it has not been abandoned. The following article was written as an aspect of the history project.)*

The passage of Assembly Bill 705 in 2017 raised many questions among faculty regarding the preparation of students in the areas of communication and computation and what we expect of them. Such debates are not new: issues involving placement, prerequisites, the definition of basic skills, and other related topics have been common in the California Community College System for many years. One particularly difficult and prolonged debate connected to these issues involved the raising of the associate degree requirements in English and mathematics, a contentious discussion that was finally resolved with the passage of new Title 5 language in 2007 but that occupied the attention of faculty for many years prior to that event.

One of the earliest Rostrum articles on this topic was published in October 2003, when ASCCC Executive Committee member Mark Snowwhite noted, “During the last two Senate plenary sessions, there has been spirited debate over whether to raise statewide requirements (Title 5) in mathematics and English for the associates degrees.”<sup>1</sup> At the time, the graduation requirements

for an associate degree included a course in elementary algebra and a course no more than one level below transfer-level English composition.

Snowwhite noted that those who favored raising the requirements argued, among other points, that “elementary algebra and English composition one level below transfer-level English composition are unquestionably high-school-level courses and that to offer a college degree for high-school level work undermines the value of that degree” and that “offering a two-year college degree that appears to require less than college-level course work could vitiate our efforts to convince the public that we deserve to be considered a full partner in post-secondary education.” Today, most members of California’s higher education community tend to take as a given the important role of the community colleges in post-secondary education, but in 2003, just fifteen years after the passage of AB 1725 in

---

offering a two-year college degree that appears to require less than college-level course work could vitiate our efforts to be considered a full partner in post-secondary education.

<sup>1</sup> Snowwhite, Mark. “Revisiting Associates Degree Standards.” *Rostrum* October 2003. <https://www.asccc.org/content/revisiting-associates-degree-standards>.

1988 that sought in part to professionalize community colleges and prior to the cooperative intersegmental efforts of C-ID, that status was, as Snowwhite indicated, far less fully established.

On the other side of the debate, Snowwhite noted, those in opposition to raising the requirements maintained, among other arguments, that “raising standards could, in some cases, remove the likelihood that many overburdened and underprepared students would obtain their degrees, especially important to people who are the first in their families to attend college” and that “without far better support systems in all of our colleges, those with limited English proficiencies would be unfairly impeded in reaching their goals, as would those who have struggled with mathematics.” These concerns regarding underprepared and underrepresented students and insufficient resources to support them, which have been significant aspects of more recent debates over AB 705, were thus no less a concern in 2003 as the system struggled with what should be expected of its students who were most vulnerable and in greatest need of extra assistance and how best to help them reach their goals.

Mark Wade Lieu, president of the ASCCC from 2007 to 2009, recalls the debate similarly but with some additional details: “The real discussions occurred around raising mathematics to intermediate algebra. There were actually two camps. One camp was the group that didn’t see that students needed mathematics beyond elementary algebra; it was also frequently brought up that intermediate algebra would disproportionately affect certain groups of students and prevent them from completing degrees. The other camp actually wanted to push for a transfer-level mathematics graduation requirement such as statistics. Their argument was two-fold—that higher levels of mathematics fostered the analytical skills needed for a wide range of studies, and that a college degree should include transfer-level mathematics.”<sup>2</sup>

In order to guide local academic senates in their discussions of these issues, the 2003-2004 ASCCC Curriculum Committee compiled a document titled *Issues and Options for Associate Degree Levels in Mathematics*

---

<sup>2</sup> Email to the author may 21, 2019.

and English, which was published in Fall 2004.<sup>3</sup> Richard Mahon, a member of that Curriculum Committee, described the process by saying, “We sought to better inform our research through hearings held in Glendale and Oakland in January and February. We organized discussions among faculty and delegates at the fall and spring Plenary Sessions as well as at the summer Curriculum Institute. From very early in our process, we recognized that our greatest challenge would be assembling quantitative data that would help local senates and delegates reflect on the issue in an informed and thoughtful manner.”<sup>4</sup> This thoughtful and careful effort to frame the issues fairly led an additional year of further debate, perhaps more informed but no less contentious.

Former ASCCC President Jane Patton was the chair of the 2003-04 Curriculum Committee that researched the issue and wrote the paper. In March 2004, Patton wrote a *Rostrum* article summarizing the committee’s findings and noting, “Faculty’s views are as mixed as ever. Individual faculty within specific disciplines (including math and English) and across disciplines ring in on both sides, although regional and state English and math organizations have taken positions in favor of changing the regulations.” The article concludes by saying, “It is not surprising that these discussions have lasted for several years. The issues are important and faculty feelings are passionate.”<sup>5</sup> These observations demonstrate the difficult task that the committee, the ASCCC, and faculty as a whole faced in working through the many concerns and perspectives that were raised in the debate. Nevertheless, at the Spring 2005 ASCCC Plenary Session the delegates passed resolutions 9.01 and 9.02 to recommend raising the requirements.

Reflecting back more recently on the experience of exploring the changes, Patton recalls, “There were faculty—individuals or groups—and some administrators who worked against the efforts. And the

---

<sup>3</sup> This document is available at <https://www.asccc.org/papers/issues-and-options-associate-degree-levels-mathematics-and-english>.

<sup>4</sup> Mahon, Richard. “Graduation Requirements in English and Mathematics with Apologies to Andrew Marvell.” *Rostrum March 2005*. <https://www.asccc.org/content/graduation-requirements-english-and-mathematics-apologies-andrew-marvell>

<sup>5</sup> Patton, Jane. “AA/AS Degree Requirements.” *Rostrum March 2004*. <https://www.asccc.org/content/aaas-degree-requirements>.

Campaign for College Opportunity. It was a challenge too working with the Chancellor's Office, but we were able to reason with them. And the same with the Board of Governors.”<sup>6</sup> In August 2007, years of effort finally came to fruition, as the Board of Governors approved changes to Title 5 §55063 that raised the requirements for an associates degree to successful completion of “an English course at the level of the course typically known as freshman composition” and “a mathematics course at the level of the course typically known as Intermediate Algebra.”

The impacts of these changes could be characterized in various ways. Many would claim that they increased the integrity and credibility of associates degrees and that they made students better prepared for the workplace. Lieu also notes that “clearly the raising of the graduation requirements resulted in a greater focus on basic skills in order to help students succeed in the associated classes. This, in turn, prompted a greater focus on what people did in response (and the Poppy Copy) and how these efforts did, or did not, help students. This led to an interest in acceleration, the creation of alternative classes in mathematics, and co-requisite classes.”

During this period, I began attending ASCCC plenary sessions and events. I recall the debate over the English and math requirements as the first truly vigorous and sometimes combative state-level issue that I experienced. We have all seen many other controversial issues in the years since, some perhaps even more contentious, but these discussions were the first time that I was able to see the degree to which the truly committed, capable faculty that attend Academic Senate events can and do fight for what they see as the best interests of students, how they can reach such very different positions in an

6 Email to the author May 21, 2019

issue, and how they can eventually come together to make an informed and collegial decision.

The raising of the English and mathematics requirements reflects on ASCCC history in various ways. The lengthy period over which the changes were debated and the extensive process that was involved demonstrate the Academic Senate's tradition and practice of careful, deliberative, and inclusive discussion before reaching decisions. The changes were initiated and driven by faculty effort and input, and thus they also demonstrate one of the ASCCC's many successes in impacting state-level policy and standards on behalf of faculty. The debates were difficult and extensive, but in the end the Academic Senate's recommendation was implemented and became regulatory language to the benefit of the community college system and the many students it serves.

---

... these discussions were the first time that I was able to see the degree to which the truly committed, capable faculty that attend Academic Senate events can and do fight for what they see as the best interests of students

# Developing Metamajors: Important Dialogue, Significant Process Evaluation, and Iterative Work

by Jeff Burdick, Clovis College

Julie Bruno, Sierra College

Janet Fulks, Bakersfield College

Carrie Roberson, Butte College

**G**uided Pathways is about changing the work, culture, organization, and evaluation of institutions by shifting from an institutional perspective to a student perspective. In doing so, faculty and colleges recognize that metamajors, if properly constructed, can provide students clarity in reaching their educational goals, and colleges can adjust student support, advising, and messaging, thereby reconceptualizing the journey from enrollment to educational plan completion.

To ensure success, the following questions can assist colleges in setting goals for their metamajor efforts:

- What are the barriers a student faces in choosing an appropriate major (student knowledge, application process, clarity of the major choices)?
- Are majors aligned to the job market, and does the student have easy access to understanding that alignment? Does the student have a way to envision and achieve life goals through this major?
- Do students know what it takes to be successful in their specific majors (metacognition, skills acquisition, content knowledge, and self-evaluation)?
- Are the time to completion and the cost of the major clear? Is the time factor realistic? Are the scheduling and enrollment management pieces in place to ensure velocity as well as success?

Clarifying program maps and organizing pathways by metamajors is only the beginning of work that will be iteratively improved for years to come. Faculty should not fall into the trap of thinking that the mission is accomplished simply because a sorting exercise has begun the process.

Creating metamajors requires that planning and implementation are based on new conversations. Not only is the effort grounded in the self-reflection of faculty and student support professionals within their individual disciplines and departments, but the foundation is broad: the dialogue and reflection involves virtually everyone on campus, including classified professionals, student services and instructional faculty, administrators, institutional researchers, and students. Although this larger conversation may be difficult, it is also one of the most valuable parts of the guided pathways effort where siloes are broken down and thinking and planning become more complex but more integrated.

---

**Creating metamajors  
requires that planning and  
implementation are based  
on new conversations.**



In order to begin this difficult dialogue, colleges may use the following three useful observations with questions to spark inquiry:

1. Creating metamajors is not the silver bullet that changes everything. It is a process to discuss how to reorganize a college based on programs and pathways in contrast to courses or departments. It is an opportunity to break down departmental silos.

- Are you planning program or metamajor meetings across disciplines and across services? Do not forget the counselors, student support professionals, financial aid, and other relevant departments.
- Are you establishing clear goals for your metamajor work? Will you, for example, begin with employment opportunity data and work backward? Or will you begin with student interests and work forward?
- Have you considered that some disciplines may be split into different metamajors based on the end, such as biology—allied health prerequisites versus biology—STEM majors?

2. Do first things first: Jumping into metamajors without preparation is a recipe for frustration.

- Have you cleaned up your curriculum so that unoffered classes have been removed and co-requisites and pre-requisites are clearly delineated and included in the program paths?
- Should additional transfer or CTE degrees be considered in order to serve student needs? How does the college know that the degrees and certificates, or majors, offered by the institution are serving your current students?
- Determine your existing structure: Do your departments represent pathways or content areas? For example, is the economics department more aligned with math or with political or social sciences? Is the computer studies area aligned with CTE, business, or STEM? How might a department relate to two or more metamajors?

- Review the college's existing majors. Not all majors represent a transfer focus as defined in the content or discipline area. For example, a major in English, history, philosophy, or math could actually be earned by a student seeking a single subject credential, and the student may actually be an education major.

3. Metamajors are educational pathways, but they change the ways in which the entire college does business. How does the metamajor plan relate to your administrative, support, physical, organizational, and fiscal structures?

- Will the college consider a structural reorganization to support or align with the metamajors? Would such a reorganization have an effect on college governance, either through collegial consultation with the academic senate or in participatory governance with all constituency groups?
- Will counselors become case managers, embedded in metamajor areas, or will they take on some other new aspect of this important guidance role?
- Will instructional faculty become more invested in advising on specific majors and careers, and, if so, how will their advising be integrated with the counseling information on transfer and general education?
- Will job descriptions be affected such that contracts need to be adjusted?
- Will classroom utilization and assignment need to change?
- How will budgetary decisions support programs or metamajors instead of content areas or disciplines?
- How will enrollment management change? How will it be accomplished in this new environment?
- How will scheduling incorporate student education plans?

The development of metamajors is not just a re-sorting of programs; it is much more complex and more rewarding. The effort is iterative: new opportunities

will introduce new complexities so that the work remains continuous and dynamic. Even individuals who have been engaged in the effort for years will continue to discover new questions and new methods of implementation.

Ultimately, creating metamajors is an effort to break down the historical structures that were built on convenience for the institution, such as separating student services and instruction into separate silos, and refocus on the needs of students.

Colleges may not be able to answer all these considerations now, but they should not enter the metamajor discussion without an understanding of

the implications. If you have not already reviewed the existing metamajor webinar from the ASCCC (<https://asccc.org/file/guided-pathwaysmetawhat-nov-7pptx>) and determined guidelines for that process (<https://asccc.org/file/guidelines-or-principles-developing-metamajors-final-redesigned-handoutdocx-1>), you may wish to start by doing so. Above all, faculty and colleges should enter into this process realizing that it is long term, impactful, and not a one and done activity.

If you need assistance, you can call on the Guided Pathways Task Force members. They are available to visit local college campuses to help institutions develop and realize their own visions.

# Curriculum and Legislative Processes

by Dolores Davison, ASCCC Vice President and Legislative and Advocacy Committee Chair

Attendees at recent ASCCC plenary sessions may have noticed that the Academic Senate has been taking more positions about legislation than it did in previous years. While more bills in general are indeed being introduced through the legislative process, the amount of legislation that has implications for curriculum has also increased, and therefore more action is required on the part of the ASCCC and local senates. The ASCCC tracks a variety of bills ranging from those with direct academic and professional impacts on academic senate purview or local colleges to those that may be of interest to faculty.

Over the past decade, the degree of legislative involvement in curriculum has become more prevalent. Some legislators are former educators who believe

that they have a solution to fix certain issues with our system; others are advised by consultants and outside groups to create legislation designed to correct perceived problems. Bills that concern curriculum fall into several categories. Some bills may ask for the creation of model curriculum or request specific changes or additions to extant curricular models. Others may change graduation requirements for transfer institutions or otherwise alter pathways for students. These legislative involvements raise challenges that the ASCCC has been trying, with varying levels of success, to address. For example, some legislators wish to see the creation of model curriculum in disciplines that do not currently exist or that they believe need to be modified. These proposals present a variety of challenges. For one, the creation of curriculum is clearly an area of academic senate purview, as defined in both California Education

Code and Title 5. In many cases, the legislator writing a bill that requests the creation of model curriculum does not realize the necessary role of the academic senate in this work and fails to mention the academic senate in the bill. In these cases, the ASCCC attempts to work with the author of the bill to ensure that faculty primacy in these areas is respected, that the bill is workable, and that the bill does not result in unintended consequences that might be detrimental to students.

Of greater concern is that when a legislator introduces a bill that calls for curricular development, that bill may result in changes to the California Education Code. While changes to Title 5 language require action from the Board of Governors and therefore may involve multiple readings and meetings before action can be taken, changes to the Ed Code require a legislative act and are far more difficult to make. When a legislator wants to introduce specific curricular requirements into law, a bill can create even more challenges. For example, a legislator might decide to introduce a bill requesting the creation of model curriculum in a particular branch of computer science or internet technology. Given the rapidity with which these fields have changed over the past decade and continue to change, such curriculum may likely be outdated before the bill had even been put into law. In these cases, the ASCCC also attempts to work with the author of the bill to explain the implications of specific curriculum being put into Education Code.

In many cases, the ASCCC is successful in working with legislators and their staff to make the necessary changes to a bill to ensure that faculty and academic senate primacy are respected and that the bill does not have unintended consequences that might cause harm to students. The bills that led to the creation of the associate degrees for transfer provide an example of how the Academic Senate worked closely with the author and his staff to create legislation that was acceptable to both faculty and to the legislature. Occasionally, however, for a range of reasons, bills are introduced that the ASCCC cannot support. If working with the author to amend the bill does not result in an acceptable piece of legislation, those bills are opposed through formal processes—either a vote at a plenary session or, if time does not permit such a vote, an action of the ASCCC Executive Committee that results in a formal letter of opposition to the author. Such a response often results in the bill being further amended

or with legislators in one or both of the houses opposing the bill so that it does not pass.

Despite the ASCCC's efforts, bills that the Academic Senate has opposed do become law. While the ASCCC might have taken an official oppose position on a bill, if the bill is passed and becomes law, the system is obligated to follow the law, and the Academic Senate must provide information to colleges to enable the law to be enacted in a manner that is most beneficial, or at least less harmful, to students. At that point, the ASCCC works with the Chancellor's Office and other entities to ensure that guidelines and support are offered to faculty in order to enable colleges to implement the bill. In an attempt to ensure that this circumstance does not happen often, the Academic Senate has increased its communication with the legislature, including monthly—and occasionally weekly—meetings and visits with legislators, consultants, and staffers to clarify the position of the Academic Senate and to provide lawmakers with information about the roles of faculty and academic senates. The ASCCC will continue its work to support faculty in all disciplines and modalities in all 73 California community college districts regarding legislation, to educate the legislature about the reasons that faculty primacy is needed in all areas of curriculum, and to guarantee that students are not ill-served by legislation that does not provide for their best interests.

---

**The ASCCC will continue  
its work to support faculty  
in all disciplines and  
modalities in all 73  
California community  
college districts regarding  
legislation**

# The Brown Act and Your Curriculum Committee

by [Geoffrey Dyer](#), ASCCC Area A Representative  
and [Michelle Bean](#), ASCCC Area C Representative

**M**embers of curriculum committees regularly interact outside of meetings as a part of their daily routines. They may gossip in the halls about a new noncredit corequisite to be considered at the next meeting or talk around the copy machine about planned program revisions. Members also sometimes seek to add items for action to the agenda during curriculum committee meetings. Such actions as these may all be innocent, but they may nevertheless be legal violations of the Brown Act. Curriculum committees may therefore want to learn about the Brown Act and consider their relationship to it.

Faculty who are reading this publication may well be acquainted with how the Ralph M. Brown Open Meetings Act applies to academic senates, as the responsibility of senates to follow the Brown Act has been acknowledged for many years.<sup>1</sup> However, the degree to which curriculum committees must adhere to the Brown Act has been less clear and has received less discussion. The details applying to this issue may vary depending on how each curriculum committee is organized within its college's local decision-making structure, but ultimately the outcome is almost always the same: if the college's curriculum committee is a standing committee of the academic senate or of the board of trustees, then it is required to adhere to the Brown Act, also known as section 54950 et seq. of the California Government Code.

The Brown Act applies to legislative bodies of local agencies, including school districts. A "legislative body" is defined in California Government Code as follows:

"(b) A commission, committee, board, or other body of a local agency, whether permanent or temporary, decision-making or advisory, created by charter, ordinance, resolution, or formal action of a legislative body. However, advisory committees, composed solely of the members of the legislative body that are less than a quorum of the legislative body are not legislative bodies, except that standing committees of a legislative body, irrespective of their composition, which have a continuing subject matter jurisdiction, or a meeting schedule fixed by charter, ordinance, resolution, or formal action of a legislative body are legislative bodies for purposes of this chapter" (§54952(b)). Per this definition, even if the curriculum committee is a recommending body to the academic senate, since it is a standing committee with "continuing subject matter jurisdiction," it is required to follow the Brown Act. Therefore, if your curriculum committee is delineated in your academic senate's constitution or bylaws, in college policy or regulation, or in the college's formal structure as a subcommittee of the academic senate, even if the curriculum committee only makes recommendations to the senate, the committee is legally required to adhere to the Brown Act.

---

**The Brown Act applies to legislative bodies of local agencies, including school districts.**

<sup>1</sup> Those not familiar with the responsibilities of academic senates under the Brown Act can search for "Brown Act" at [asccc.org](http://asccc.org) to find a wealth of materials.

Title 5 §55200(a)(1) also allows colleges to establish curriculum committees that are not academic senate subcommittees. In instances where a college has placed the curriculum committee elsewhere, the committee will in all likelihood still be required to follow the Brown Act, because Title 5 §55200 requires governing board approval of courses. Since the board of trustees is required to conform to the Brown Act, if the curriculum committee has continuing jurisdiction on a topic or a meeting schedule set by its governing body, it is also required to adhere to the Brown Act. The explicit exception in the Brown Act is for advisory committees made up of less than a quorum of the body that do not have continuing jurisdiction on a topic or a regular meeting schedule, such as temporary task forces. Since course approval must involve the local board and the curriculum committee may be an academic senate subcommittee, in almost every imaginable scenario the curriculum committee must abide by the Brown Act.

In most cases, a college's curriculum committee should demonstrate its transparency and commitment to the people it serves by following the Brown Act in the same manner that the academic senate does: by publicly posting agendas—placing the agenda in a public space, such as outside the board room or any other accessible location, as well as on the college's website—at least seventy-two hours in advance, agendaizing public comment, and providing a brief description of agenda items to inform the public. The Brown Act prohibits serial communications or other discussions outside of announced meetings. It also requires bodies to provide copies of materials to any person in attendance, to allow for recording of meetings unless the recording would be so intrusive as to interrupt the meeting, to ensure that meeting spaces are accessible, and to treat everything that takes place during the meeting as a matter of public record.

Thus, gossiping in the hall or talking around the copy machine to sell ideas and convince colleagues to vote a certain way is not how a curriculum committee—nor any senate committee—should be operating. All standing committees of an academic senate, as well as the senate itself, should be transparent, fair, and objective, and that means having open discussion in meetings, not side conversations around a water cooler. Holding ourselves accountable to these requirements provides the space for productive meetings conducted based on distributed agendas and appropriate materials provided to all members and the public. Committee and campus community members will appreciate the routine and the effective practice. These routines, if taken up not only by the curriculum committee but by all standing committees of the academic senate, can promote more widespread understanding of and input on the senate's work on academic and professional matters on a college campus.

---

**All standing committees of an academic senate, as well as the senate itself, should be transparent, fair, and objective, and that means having open discussion in meetings, not side conversations around a water cooler.**

# Senate's First Annual Curriculum Institute

by Beverly Shue, Curriculum Committee Chair

*(The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges held its first Curriculum Institute in July of 1999. 20 years later, the institute has since grown to become an annual event with over 500 attendees. The following article, originally published in the October 1999 issue of the Rostrum, is offered to commemorate that first institute that started the tradition.)*

Over 100 faculty members, articulation officers, curriculum deans and vice-presidents attended the first annual Academic Senate Curriculum Institute held on July 28-30, 1999, at the Disneyland Pacific Hotel. The goal of the Curriculum Institute was to provide resources to colleges to run effective curriculum committees, plan curriculum and programs, and write integrated course outlines as suggested in the many statewide Academic Senate documents on curriculum. Participants were asked to bring to the Institute curriculum success stories, curriculum dilemmas and samples of course outlines.

Diane Glow, San Diego Miramar, started the hands-on workshop with an explanation of how to write course outlines in which course objectives, course content, student assignments, and methods of evaluation are aligned. Action verbs using Bloom's Taxonomy in writing objectives that span from mastery of knowledge to demonstration of critical thinking skills were explained.

Bill Scroggins discussed a potpourri of curriculum issues, including effective curriculum process, prerequisites, distance vs. traditional education, and the curriculum process. John Nixon, CIO at Santa Ana College, joined Bill in a discussion of Tech Prep and joint programs with high schools, including the issue of granting college credit for high school courses.

Jolayne Service, from the Chancellor's Office of the CSU system discussed the process of getting a course evaluated for fulfilling IGETC and CSU GE Breadth requirements. Bob Stafford, San Bernardino Valley College, discussed the articulation process and general concerns articulation officers face. Lois Yamakoshi, Los Medanos College, explained her work on the community college articulation project (CCAN). She showed how the CCAN matrix works to identify comparable math courses at different colleges.

Loretta Hernandez, Laney College, discussed some of the curriculum issues in writing up courses for occupational programs, including the requirement to address SCANS criteria. Ophelia Clark, City College of San Francisco, contributed valuable information on vocational curriculum issues. Beverly Shue, Los Angeles Harbor College, used a sample course outline form from her college to show how to include SCANS competencies in vocational courses.

Jane Sneed and Vivian Ikeda, City College of San Francisco, discussed specific curriculum issues in writing up courses for ESL and Basic Skills, and Sandra Erickson, City College of San Francisco, presented information on the TIMMS report. Craig Justice, Chaffey College, discussed the Zero-Unit Lab to meet CalWORKS requirements.

Finally, the Curriculum Institute included a presentation by Ric Matthews, San Diego Miramar, on teaching a course by linking two sites. In the end, the participants walked away with a binder of curriculum resources, sample course outlines, and success stories - and a headful of curriculum facts.



# A Legacy of Honesty and Integrity

by Marie Boyd, Recently Retired Curriculum Chair, Chaffey College

*(Marie Boyd served as curriculum chair at Chaffey College for many years and has actively participated in the California Community Colleges Curriculum Committee and various ASCCC committees. She retired at the end of the spring semester after twenty years as a reference librarian at Chaffey and having served the college in various leadership roles. The following article offers Marie's thoughts and wisdom for all local academic senates and curriculum committees as she moves forward into retirement and new adventures.)*

I had a thought that I would offer to write one last *Rostrum* article in order to thank the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges for my Senator Emeritus resolution at the Spring 2019 Plenary. With a tiny bit of encouragement, I began this task. I had some thoughts on what to write about and overheard a few intriguing snippets of conversation with ASCCC colleagues about topics that might work into something that, you, “the body,” might care to read about.

“A legacy of honesty and integrity” won out among my choices. Why? Because, as the originator stated, there are very few things we have control over these days. Visions for success, funding formulas, legislative mandates that trample faculty purview over curriculum—so many things are beyond our control. However, our legacy—what we leave behind for others—is one thing we can control.

And how fitting, as I prepare to retire from Chaffey College as curriculum chair for eleven years, to share a few thoughts about one's legacy. Honesty and integrity are indeed the two components I would like to leave behind as my legacy. Who wouldn't?

But just what does honesty mean? Would my definition of honesty be consistent with your definition of honesty?

How do we define integrity? Is your sense of integrity the same as my sense of integrity?

I would not even attempt to create definitions of either of these qualities. I certainly would not want to quote from an Amazon bestseller or a trendy blog. You can find that information on your own. Instead, I humbly offer to you a few observations I have gleaned during my time as a curriculum chair in analyzing honesty and integrity within the weird and wonderful world of California Community College curriculum.

My own tenets of personal honesty have been as follows:

- That I would provide an honest interpretation of Title 5, division 6. California Community Colleges. Chapter 6. Curriculum and Instruction—every single citation in that chapter dealing with curriculum and instruction—for my faculty colleagues. Yes, there are other divisions and chapters of Title 5 we should know about; however, as a Curriculum Chair, I took seriously my obligation to have a rudimentary understanding of Chapter 6. Who else reads this stuff on your campus?
- That I would never rely on the phrase “it's in Title 5” to settle a disagreement or win an argument.
- That I took seriously a responsibility to not promote curriculum which would result in the eventual return of apportionment due to poor or illegal curriculum design.
- That I would provide an honest and accurate recounting of information learned from plenary sessions and ASCCC institutes, but most especially from the Curriculum Institute.

As to integrity, I have attempted to adhere to the following principles:

- That I would take pride in doing my job to the best of my ability—even when (you can fill in this blank on your own).

- That I would take every opportunity to make the individual members of my Curriculum Committee shine and encourage them to do a good job for their departments and their programs of study.
- That I would not shirk my responsibilities to deal with discipline placement issues. Discipline placement issues are never fun. Never.
- That I would not facilitate the solving of personnel issues through curriculum design.
- That I would not facilitate the resolution of faculty load issues with curriculum design.
- That I would represent the “faculty voice” when it emanated from a place of compliance and courage.
- That all of our efforts, collaboratively, should promote student success.

I stumbled upon a marvelous poem about our collective sense of honesty and integrity by writer and activist Asali DeVan Ecclesiastes. I share it with you by way of closing a terrific career and saying “thank you” to so many of you from throughout this state.

### **Chasms**

There are some chasms so deep and so wide  
 We find it hard to imagine how we'll ever make it to the other side  
 That space between who we are and who we want to be,  
 the gaps between our high ideals and our base realities.  
 The distance between what we say and what we really mean.  
 The raging river that flows between what actually happened and our convenient memories.  
 The lies we tell ourselves are lakes, overflowing their banks,  
 flooding our speech with waters, caustic and rank.  
 The only bridge is the truth, passing through me and you, as we look one another eye to eye.  
 But so often, that look is filled with our hesitations,  
 and we can't help but glance to the side.  
 See, we've long ago let go of the language with which we describe our softer parts.  
 We learn early that those with softer hearts suffer.  
 So we allow lean emotion to reign, never noticing that only strain has been the fruit of our restraints.  
 We haven't escaped pain.  
 And our battle scars are far from faint.  
 Yet and still, despite our desire and willingness to heal,  
 we often find ourselves fighting hard in the paint,  
 holding onto false images of everything we ain't.  
 So while our dream coincide, our fears collide.  
 And we want to know one another, but think we can't.  
 The gulf between empathy and equity  
 is as unfathomable as the fissures that line our collective integrity.  
 And we spend eternal eternities trying to translate that into virtue.  
 Perhaps you have met one or two of the virtuous on your path.  
 They are only very few, and I know that I have, from time to time,  
 Mistaken pretenders for real,  
 yet still make room for the possibility that it's I who's been pretending.  
 Please, bear with me, I'm still mending,  
 but I'm no longer bending to the will of my injuries, nor my injurers.

I much prefer to stretch my arms like Nüt until I become the sky.  
I'd rather stretch my tongue with truth,  
our bridge to cross when we look one another in the eye.  
But the tongue, like the heart, gets tired.  
The weak make it hard for the strong to stay inspired,  
like the lost prevent the found from escaping the mire,  
and the degraded stop the enlightened from taking us higher.  
But no matter what you hear from the mouths of these liars,  
We are one people  
with one destiny and the common enemy,  
that's why it really stresses me to see our hearts so tattered,  
our minds so scattered  
our egos so easily flattered.  
We're enslaved, yet think of our shackles as gifts.  
Rather than resist our masters, we let them widen our rifts,  
like mindless, material junkies,  
we seek that which lowers, not lifts.  
But somewhere in our midst,  
there's been a paradigm shift.  
Justice is getting restless in its chains.  
Our youth find it useless to separate their souls from their brains,  
their truth is ingrained, their integrity insustained.  
Let me call your attention to those who serve as examples.  
Those who daily give their all, but their reserves are still ample.  
Those who battle friend and foe, yet their hope is never trampled,  
they make music, never sample, and the world's ugly could never cancel  
the fullness and the sweetness of their composition.  
Nor the unadulterated truth of their mission.  
It's time we shut our mouths and listen.  
Close our eyes and pray  
for the humility and the guidance  
to follow them to the way.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/asali\\_devan\\_ecclesiastes\\_chasms?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/asali_devan_ecclesiastes_chasms?language=en)

---

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 [INFO@ASCCC.ORG](mailto:INFO@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.

YOU CAN FIND THIS AND THE PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THIS PUBLICATION ONLINE AT: [WWW.ASCCC.ORG](http://WWW.ASCCC.ORG)

PRESIDENT: JOHN STANSKAS · EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: KRYSTINNE MICA