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ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEWSLETTER

SENATEROSTRUM

THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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The Master Plan for Higher Education and the Missions of the California Community Colleges

BY JANE PATTON, PRESIDENT

In 1960 the California State Legislature adopted the Master Plan for Higher Education, which established the distinct roles of the three public segments of higher education. Its principles included a commitment to ensure Californians access and affordability to postsecondary education. Later, in 1988 the California State Assembly passed Assembly Bill (AB) 1725, which aimed to move colleges away from the K-12 system and into higher education and to professionalize the role of community college faculty. No other legislation has shaped our colleges more than these two seminal works. Yet time has shown that not all of the ideals espoused in them have been realized.

In 2009, Assembly Member Ira Ruskin introduced an Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR 65), calling for a Joint Committee on the Master Plan to review the principles of the Master Plan in light of today's circumstances. In part, the resolution says, "WHEREAS, The 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education was a precedent-setting document that envisioned a place for every Californian, regardless of background or income, and the 2009–10 Master Plan review effort seeks to continue the wisdom and opportunity included by the original framers..."

My impression has been that most people do not believe that the original Master Plan should be thrown out and a new one written, but rather that it be revisited with a fresh perspective, in light of the state's current circumstances. The sad State of the California economy has had a variety of effects on our colleges, with short- and long-term consequences. Some folks suggest reducing or even eliminating courses such as noncredit, lifelong learning, enrichment, physical education activities and local graduation requirements, while others suggest that colleges offer a great deal more of the lower division courses now being taught at the universities and even confer baccalaureate degrees. Still others have recommended that colleges greatly expand online learning and the class sizes thereof and make use of more adjunct faculty. The demographic shifts, the increased fees, the huge demand for basic skills and pre-collegiate instruction, the university "redirects" and the large number of unemployed workers have all resulted in changes in our colleges—in whom we serve and how we serve them.

The economic realities in the state, combined with all of these suggestions add up to one thing: a po-



The economic realities in the state, combined with all of these suggestions add up to one thing: a potential permanent shift in the missions of our colleges.

tential permanent shift in the missions of our colleges. With a concern about potential changes to community college missions in mind, I gave the below testimony at the hearing of the Joint Committee for the Review of the Master Plan held in the Capitol on December 7, 2009.

“Good afternoon Chair Ruskin and members of the Committee. I am Jane Patton, the President of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges and a faculty member at Mission College in Santa Clara. I represent the 60,000 faculty who serve the nearly three million Californians in our 110 community colleges.

Community college faculty are different from their colleagues in the universities. University faculty have a vital responsibility for research in addition to their teaching, while community college faculty devote 100% of their time to teaching.

We embrace our multiple missions with gusto and recognize that our role is to be nimble, adaptable and current. For example, in the last two years alone, we have developed 1,000 new associate degrees to meet changing needs. We are committed to continual improvement and to collaborating with our chancellor to strengthen our service to students and the community.

Our students have a wider array of goals and needs compared to those who are eligible for UC and CSU. Some of them need to learn English as a second language; they may have been away from school for years but discover they need to re-tool their skills to begin or advance in a career. They may not have been successful in earlier education but they have promise, and through higher education they can realize their potential and become more productive citizens. Their outcomes may not always be a degree or transfer, but rather they gain

critical job skills or develop fluency in English. These achievements are beneficial for them — and the state.

I'm sure you know that when workers are laid off in California—they return to our colleges to upgrade their skills. When firefighters and nurses need continuing education, particularly in these post-911 times, they get it in their community's college. When CSU and UC are forced to turn reduce enrollment, the students come to us for their first two years. When an industry sector changes its requirements, we adapt our curriculum. When young people whose income is low seek a higher education they know they can find affordable opportunities as well as the counseling and support services they need in our colleges.

Our missions have necessarily expanded over the years—to transform us into truly community colleges. We are no longer simply the “junior colleges” of the 1960s. We move people from illiteracy to literacy; from unskilled workers to skilled; from high school dropouts to recipients of occupational certificates and associate degrees and from lower to upper division university coursework. The returning veteran and the re-entry thirty-year-old mother or father each has a place in California's community colleges. It is vital to protect the multiple missions of the community colleges as distinct from those of the CSU and the UC. This is our niche and our strength.

Community colleges are often called “democracy's colleges” because they open their doors to all who can benefit. Our students are the most ethnically and racially diverse constituency in the state, and we are proud to serve the rich diversity that is California. We know that 2/3 of CSU graduates and 1/3 of UC's began in community colleges. We are their gateway.

The wisdom of the Master Plan was its commitment to access and affordability to higher education. Today, however, we cannot serve all those who come to us. We have more university “re-directs” than ever; at the same time that workers have been laid off and the number of 18-year-olds seeking college is greater than ever. Unfortunately, today

we are turning away many thousands of students, and the ones who get pushed out are those who most need the community college environment—low income, first generation to college, students of color. I, too, fear the de facto shift to elitism that was referred to earlier today. And, the state is already seeing the effects of a shortage of workers with college degrees. It is frightening to contemplate where we may be in ten years from now.

Patrick M. Callan (2009) at the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education said the following: “The most significant, and apparently permanent, departure from the Master Plan has been the abrogation of its foundational public policy commitment to college opportunity— that is its commitment to make higher education available for every Californian who can benefit from college.” (p. 12)

If the state can provide for the vision of the Master Plan, please know that the faculty of California's community colleges stand ready to accept the challenge: to strengthen and expand all that we can do for California and its citizens.”

In addition to the legislative review of the Master Plan, the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) has convened a subcommittee on the Master Plan; our Academic Senate Futures Committee is engaged in dialog about the Plan, and our Fall Plenary Session hosted a lively discussion about the future of our colleges. The Community College League of California has convened a “Commission on the Future” which has one Senate representative. As the Academic Senate continues to monitor and participate in all of the evolving discussions, we welcome the perspectives of you and your college senate.

Reference

Callan, P. M. (2009) California's higher education, the master plan and the erosion of college opportunity. The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Retrieved January 9, 2010, from http://www.highereducation.org/reports/cal_highered/cal_highered.pdf. ■

Academic Dishonesty and the Faculty's Right to Assign a Grade: A Test of the Academic Senate's Authority

BY MARK WADE LIEU, EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMITTEE

While the Academic Senate has wished on more than one occasion that its resolutions were promptly carried out, the reality is that the will of the Academic Senate is subject to many factors. For example, in spite of its recommendation that information competency be required for obtaining an associate degree, the Department of Finance was able to usurp the Senate's authority by claiming that implementing such a requirement would be an unfunded mandate. In the area of student academic dishonesty, the Senate has adopted a resolution asking for a change in Title 5 to grant faculty the ability to fail a student in a course for "egregious acts of academic dishonesty" on individual assignments. Some have questioned why the Senate has not been more aggressive on a matter that is clearly under the purview of the Academic Senate according to Title 5 §53200. This article addresses the status of the resolution and the fact that, in this situation, the Academic Senate faces significant challenges to its authority.

To provide some background, we go back to 1995. In response to an inquiry, then Chancellor's Office Legal Counsel Ralph Black issued a legal opinion that a faculty member could not fail a student in a course for a case of plagiarism or cheating on a single assignment. He noted that each instructor must make clear his/her grading policy and was obligated to follow that policy. He also stated that issues of cheating and plagiarism appeared to be a less a matter of grading than of student conduct.

As the development of essay-writing services and the Internet has facilitated the commission of plagiarism, faculty have become increasingly concerned and outraged by violations of academic integrity on the part of students in their classes. At the same time, the ability of faculty to detect and confirm plagiarism has also increased. Thus, the likelihood of having to deal with such violations has increased as both the ability to cheat and the ability to detect cheating are greater than ever—suggesting that, without employing proper prevention mechanisms, the frequency with which faculty are faced with what they consider "egregious acts of academic dishonesty" may be on the rise.

In Fall 2005, the Academic Senate adopted a resolution to pursue this issue further. The resolves of resolution 14.02 state:

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges investigate whether or not the interpretation of Title 5 Regulations and Education Code that does not allow an instructor to fail a student for an entire course for one incident of academic dishonesty, no matter how egregious, is correct; and

Resolved, That if the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges finds this interpretation to be correct, then the Academic Senate pursue a change in regulation or law that gives full discretion to the instructor as to the penalty for a student engaging in any form of academic dishonesty.

This prompted the Senate's Educational Policies Committee to set up a meeting with then Chancellor's Office Legal Counsel Ralph Black to discuss the issues involved. Mr. Black emphasized the rights of a student to due process and reaffirmed the position he took in the legal opinion issued in 1995.

Faculty continued to question Mr. Black's opinion, and in 2007, a variation on the original inquiry was submitted to the Chancellor's Office. The legal opinion that was issued by General Counsel Steve Bruckman reaffirmed the 1995 opinion.

In response to this second opinion, the Academic Senate adopted resolution 14.01 in the fall of 2008. Of the three resolves, this one is the most pertinent to the issue at hand:

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges convene a group to review and where appropriate draft language to revise Title 5 grading regulations to allow for the failure of students for egregious acts of academic dishonesty;

The question then is what has happened since the adoption of this resolution (on top of resolution 14.02 F05) and the desire to change Title 5?

After adoption of the resolution, I, as the Academic Senate President at the time, presented the resolution to the staff at the Chancellor's Office and to its legal counsel in particular. While acknowledging that the Academic Senate has purview over grading policies, the Chancellor's Office raised points that would diminish the Academic Senate's position in arguing for such a change before the Board of Governors.

First, the Academic Senate would be fighting against two legal opinions on this issue. Given the recency of the second opinion, the Board of Governors would undoubtedly decline to adopt the Senate's position on legal grounds.

Second, while the Academic Senate is empowered under Title 5, the rights of students to due process are granted under the authority of the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution. This fundamental right trumps the powers conferred by regulation.

Therefore, at the current time, the Academic Senate finds itself unable to carry out the will of the body in resolutions 14.02 F05 and 14.01 F08. Just as with the issue of information competency, the body can bring the issue back again when it looks like the environment is more conducive to effecting such a change. In the meanwhile, I call your attention to recommendations made in the legal opinions and the Academic Senate (2007) paper *Promoting and Sustaining an Institutional Climate of Academic Integrity*.

Establish a process for the objective review of a student's academic conduct through a committee of the academic senate (ASCCC, p. 19).

Work with the associated student body to develop or refine a college honor code and related due process (ASCCC, p. 21).

Encourage the review of the weight assigned to class assignments such that acts of cheating or plagiarism on such assignments have significant effect on the final course grade (Black).

Provide professional development to support faculty in the development of assignments that are more resistant to cheating and plagiarism (ASCCC, p. 9). History and more information on this topic can be found at http://www.asccc.org/ExecCom/Committees/Prerequisite_Project.htm.

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Basic Skills Initiative Work—We Have Gone Far and Deep!

BY JANET FULKS, BASIC SKILLS COMMITTEE

The Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) project has increased and improved awareness, training, institutional organization and educational practices over the last four years. Some of the milestones accomplished by the professional grant collaborative efforts are included in the sidebar.

Curricular work and discussions, work done to craft metrics that are actionable and widely understood, specific attention to action planning and incorporation of equity plans -- these are enormously important outcomes of the Initiative. The result has been institutional reform unlike any other effort in our system. This was accomplished through collegial work where each contributor was respected for his/her expertise and a common message was forged.

The focus has been on student success and efforts have been invested in understanding the students before us in the seats; not the students we wish were in the seats. College communities have examined data and addressed issues that are essential to the future of our educational system and to California's future.

Specifically, how has this improved any basic skills issues in California?

TWO STORIES:

Story #1: Bakersfield College served as a pilot for one of the first regional BSI trainings. Miya Squires, a basic skills coordinator from Butte College, pre-

sented a breakout on Critical Academic Skills which Bakersfield College adopted and adapted to their basic skills strategies along with other strategies, such as First Year Experience, Summer Accelerated Programs, Reading Apprenticeship and learning communities. The Critical Academic Skills effort is diagnostic allowing students to address discrete basic skills needs in particular areas rather than taking entire basic skills courses. Discipline faculty developed free 50- and 80-minute workshops addressing discrete skills such as punctuation problems, thesis development, word problems in math, fractions, etc. Throughout the semester classroom faculty assess student skills in classroom assignments and then refer students to the Critical Academic Skills workshops offered multiple times throughout the semester. Students hone basic skills in short workshops while continuing on their educational trajectory. The sessions, attended by more than 1300 students in 2008-2009, were taught by 10-15 full-time and adjunct faculty from several disciplines, covering 15 topics including mathematic, English, communication, study skills, and learning strategies to help students be successful in college. Student and faculty assessment responses indicated this is a highly useful strategy supporting student success as students pursue their academic goals.

Story#2: Using the CB 21 rubric concept of levels prior to transfer developed by California community college faculty, Cabrillo College researcher Craig Hayward analyzed data from 23 colleges on the as-

assessment level of incoming students. When BSI first started, faculty and administrators found it hard to believe that more than 75% of our incoming students needed basic skills work. As colleges examined their own data some found, like one college, that 95% of their incoming students need basic skills work in English and 98% in mathematics. This is consistent with the data being reported by the California State University (CSU) for high school students that are CSU qualified taking the Early Assessment Program (EAP) in their junior year where 83% of CSU-bound students were not ready for transfer level English. Craig's research provided yet another picture that expanded our understanding of California's basic skills needs with regards to the depth of that need. Of those students assessed by the 23 colleges 42% were two or more levels below transfer in English and 64% more than two levels below transfer in mathematics. Over 70% of those assessed were three or more levels below transfer level in ESL. These data emphasize that this is not a quick fix situation; there is no magic bullet to correct the basic skills challenge. But with the extensive library of basic skills practices promoted through BSI we have a variety of methods to meet not only the breadth of the need but also the depth. We have data that helps us to understand the situation and we have educated and mobilized people in vast numbers across the state to address basic skills.

In total these activities will serve to improve student success and make institutional changes that will support student progress. This work is innovative and revolutionary; nothing like it exists in other states in terms of the number of colleges, number of students, and budget challenges. We must support and protect this basic skills work during the budget crises because we know through the downstream funding equation that it is more efficacious to start these students right and attend to their basic skills needs because our data reveal that students attending to basic skills needs are much more likely to succeed with degrees, certificates and transfer than those students that try to skip these essential skills and eventually never meet their goals. Investing in basic skills is an investment in success for our students, our system and our state. ■

Basic Skills Initiative Milestones

- ▶ The literature review of effective practices in basic skills
- ▶ A searchable online effective practice web resource at www.cccbsi.org
- ▶ The basic skills handbook, a compendium of useful pedagogical tools and information
- ▶ The CB 21 rubric project that aligned and defined basic skills levels and pathways
- ▶ The basic skills coordinator role providing a central advocate and facilitator
- ▶ New understanding of the important role of noncredit in basic skills education and accountability
- ▶ Additional literature reviews on the transition from high school and adult education to college
- ▶ An effort to examine assessment, prerequisites and other key issues to lever better student success
- ▶ Regional basic skills professional development training for thousands of faculty and administrators
- ▶ Personalized follow-up presentations at dozens of colleges
- ▶ College teams that analyzed student equity plans while addressing basic skills action plans
- ▶ Development of measures for the Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges (ARCC) Basic Skills supplemental report that better define success, progress and where intervention can be most effective
- ▶ Resources through "Workshops to go," sending tactical teams to colleges
- ▶ New papers on the essential role of equity in basic skills success ■

Basic Skills—The Front Line Faculty are Often Adjuncts; How Do we Support and Involve Them?

BY KATHY MOLLOY, SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE, BSI WORKSHOP COORDINATOR

The Issues and Solutions document below were generated at the “Involving Adjunct Faculty in Your College BSI Efforts” breakouts during the recent Fall Regional Teaching and Learning Workshops. The solutions were suggested by both the adjunct and full-time faculty attending these sessions. We all know the important role that adjunct faculty play

in teaching our basic skills classes, and if you haven’t yet had a discussion about adjunct issues in your Basic Skills Committee, I hope that this list will at least serve to get the conversation started. If any of you have other ideas that have been effective on your campuses, please send them to me so that we can add them to the list.

Getting Adjunct Faculty Involved in College BSI Efforts	
Issues	Solutions
Lack of time Lack of money Lack of information	Involvement in BSI committee: paid for through professional development Grants Adjunct contact person Administration must value adjuncts more Coordinate, combine email distributions Full time partnerships or mentoring Social activities Create website where adjuncts can contribute effective practices for flex credit Include BSI as a part of the new hire process
Adjuncts don’t meet on a regular basis with FT faculty	Create videos for the department to introduce new hires to BSI work
Motivation to come to meetings with time commitments they already have	Give flex or CEU’s (continuing education units) Use to build CV
No way to share/create cohorts	Office or lounge space, flex support, partnerships or mentoring by full-time faculty
Lack of ties/connection with school and faculty	Orientation/welcome to school
Meetings scheduled at convenient times for full time, not necessarily part time	Consistent meeting times, poll adjuncts
Lack or professional development with no pay	Grant writers need to consider part-timers as well

FT-PT building a sense of team	FT-PT partnerships and mentoring program
Lack of campus orientation and sharing of student and faculty resources	Orientation/welcome to school
Difficulty with resource access for night faculty	Orientation/welcome to school
Involvement/engagement Space Having a voice	Virtual community—BLOGS, resource links (allows faculty to see connections—the whole picture) Mixed training—full time and adjunct—“adjunct only” faculty inquiry group Increased “meaningful” professional development Union connection with adjunct
Lack of cohesive on campus efforts	Technology, CDs, emails, retreat? Adjunct experience—tap into it!
Evening classes	Online tools/newsletter, mentoring
Lack of guidance (when teaching new courses)	Partnerships and Mentoring
Time/availability	College hours that are more flexible/social Consistent/meaningful virtual connections whenever possible
Isolation	Develop partnerships and team/mentor relationships Buy-in on both sides PTers need ownership FTers must value adjunct input RESPECT vs marginalization
Adjunct faculty not offered opportunities to work on BSI	Listserv for all faculty members related to basic skills opportunities Course level mentor or partnership program Shared office space Flex credit/pay/stipends for adjunct faculty to participate Learning communities with adjunct-tenured faculty teams
Not enough training (FT get the spots)	Part of BSI \$ allocated to part-time faculty User friendly training product FAQ
Lack of awareness of BS issues, history, resources, campus efforts	Need campus Basic Skills coordinator and a Basic Skills adjunct coordinator Physical and virtual place for dissemination of teaching and learning resources, especially basic skills
Campus-wide communication of basic skills issues	More comprehensive adjunct orientation of campus resources and teaching/learning resources Campus-wide “planning hour” to allow cross-discipline coordination and faculty planning w/o teaching conflicts Compensation for adjunct participation in Basic Skills training/department meetings/professional development
Lack of connection with faculty from other disciplines	Multidisciplinary meetings on basic skills that require adjunct faculty attendance
Freeway flyers not on campus long enough to make connections w/resources and great college community Day vs night part timers Time of meetings & compensation Equity	Regional trainings: Building investment between districts nearby Flex time Retreat BSI Funding: (college success initiative—CSI) Include part-timers in leadership roles & compensate (legitimizes role)
More opportunities than adjunct realize due to lack of communication, e.g. this workshop	Credit for basic skills certification Develop network of communication to describe terms of employment at various colleges—will reveal disparities

No consistency in support for adjunct at state level	Recruit adjuncts for faculty development committees
Sense of alienation at department and college level	One adjunct email address state-wide; forward all emails to gmail Handbook for adjunct faculty re: resources, bargaining agreement, contract specifics

CB 21 Recoding for Basic Skills Courses

Your college should have a spreadsheet of all the basic skills courses and their master course file CB coding. Discipline faculty should be correcting the coding on paper until the fall data is submitted. Then between January and March 10 colleges will need to submit their newly coded basic skills courses through their MIS to the Chancellor's Office. If you do not recode in the spring, all of the basic skills course data will be rejected as errors. This is not rocket science. The training session is archived and available at the BSI website and the Academic Affairs website at the Chancellor's Office. If your college or district needs help, contact jfulks@bakfieldcollege.edu ■

Do you have your copy of the Basic Skills Handbook Yet? *Constructing a Framework for Success: A Holistic Approach to Basic Skills*

The Basic Skills Handbook is now available and being distributed. Two copies will be sent to every college library, so keep your eyes out for its arrival. Copies with the chapter summaries and entire handbook on CD are available for free upon request. Simply contact the Academic Senate Office at info@asccc.org to request a copy.

This handbook was designed to educate, empower and equip faculty, administrators and staff to better serve students with basic skills needs. Now is the time to move forward by utilizing the California community college specific resources and strategies described in the handbook. The handbook contains an abundance of downloadable classroom strategies and assessment tools produced by over 100 faculty and administrators from across the state. These include classroom strategies, effective assignments or teacher-friendly suggestions for planning, assigning and grading student work in the basic skills disciplines of English as a second language, English, mathematics, and reading. There are also chapters on the important counseling, library and other student service strategies to promote basic skills success.

Do you need help to better train all those on your campuses who interface with students with basic skills needs? Do you need to know how to integrate the writing and assessing of student learning outcomes with your basic skills work? Do you have questions about how to help students to reach their educational goals at the appropriate rigor? This handbook will provide you with guidance and the necessary resources for success. ■

Putting Prerequisites into Context: How We Got to Where We Are

BY MARK WADE LIEU, PREREQUISITE PILOT PROJECT TASK FORCE

The Academic Senate is currently embarked on a process to establish pilot projects whereby course prerequisite validation is based primarily on content review, without the need for statistical validation. How these pilot projects will be determined and the form they will take are to be worked out by the Prerequisite Pilot Project Task Force, under the leadership of Executive Committee member Richard Mahon, over the coming months. In the meanwhile, it seems useful to explain how the Academic Senate has arrived at this point with regards to prerequisites and to provide a context for the current activity.

Following on the passage of the Matriculation Act of 1986 (AB3) in 1988, the California Community College System began work on new regulations regarding the implementation and enforcement of matriculation processes, establishing the Matriculation Advisory Committee to assist in that work. In addition, new curricular regulations were proposed regarding the imposition and scrutiny of prerequisites on courses. Owing to concerns over how such regulations would be implemented and the disproportionate effect on select groups of students, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) filed suit in order to compel the system to address its concerns.

As a result of the filing, MALDEF was invited to participate in the process of developing the final regulations in both areas and in 1991 MALDEF dropped its suit against the system.

Among the stipulations of the new matriculation and curricular regulations were:

- ▶ A requirement that all test instruments used for assessment and as prerequisites be proven as valid, bias-free and reliable
- ▶ A requirement that matriculation plans include processes for establishing and scrutinizing prerequisites
- ▶ A requirement that placement decisions be based on multiple measures
- ▶ The creation of an approved list of assessment instruments
- ▶ Provision of timely resolution to prerequisite challenges
- ▶ Evaluation of compliance with matriculation regulations on a statewide basis.
- ▶ In addition, the following were established:
- ▶ A Matriculation Assessment Workgroup to provide the review of test instruments for inclusion on the approved test list
- ▶ The use of site evaluation for compliance with matriculation regulations.


Specific guidelines for the implementation of prerequisites were laid out in *The Model District Policy for Prerequisites, Corequisites, Advisories on Recommended Preparation, and Other Limitations on Enrollment* (Board of Governors, 1993), which outlined three levels of scrutiny for the establishment of prerequisites. Level one was required for all prerequisites and comprised a rigorous process of content review. In essence, the target course was examined to identify skills that would be necessary upon entry into the course, and these skills were correlated to the skills taught (and presumed learned) in the proposed prerequisite course. Level two applied to sequential courses and

equivalent courses already being offered through the CSU or UC. For such courses, the only requirement for the establishment of a prerequisite was content review. Level three was the most rigorous and required for courses with a communication or computation prerequisite that was outside the scope of level two. Here, prerequisite validation required statistical validation.

While the new regulatory requirements made very good sense, the practical implementation revealed significant problems—rather than implement prerequisites, colleges turned increasingly to advisories, which required no validation or content review. Why did this happen? First, many colleges simply lacked the research capacity to carry out the statistical validation required. Second, especially for higher level courses, the limited number of students enrolled meant that it was a problem simply gathering data on a sufficient number of students on which to conduct a statistical analysis. Finally, with the growing influx of under-prepared students, actual classroom practice began to diverge from requirements set out in Course Outlines of Record (COR) with the result that prerequisites could not be validated empirically. And what was the result? Students largely ignored advisories and took whatever courses they wanted to. In some cases, students failed due to inadequate preparation. In others, students wasted their time in courses below their ability level.

As colleges struggled with getting students into the right courses, the number of students requiring basic skills and English as a Second Language coursework grew. In the mid-to-late 2000s, a number of reports were published that addressed the issue of student preparation and the issues of assessment and prerequisites.

Foremost of these reports was the literature review on effective practices in basic skills, *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success* (Center for Student Success, 2007). In particular, the review cited mandatory assessment as a proven effective practice to communicate to students their need for basic skills coursework (II.1). At roughly the same time, the Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy



As colleges struggled with getting students into the right courses, the number of students requiring basic skills and English as a Second Language coursework grew.

out of Sacramento State University issued the first of several reports, *Rules of the Game* (Shulock, 2007). The report states, “Assessment should be mandatory for degree-seeking students; students with remedial needs should be placed into basic skills courses in their first term. The process for establishing prerequisites should be modified so that colleges can ensure that students have the necessary skills to succeed in their courses” (p. 15). This was later followed by *It Could Happen* (Shulock, 2008), which directly addressed the issue of prerequisite validation, “The onerous process required to establish course prerequisites leads many colleges to allow open access to courses, resulting in high rates of failure among students who are not prepared to succeed and challenges for instructors who have well-prepared and poorly-prepared students in the same class” (p. 9)

The Board of Governors held a study session on basic skills in March 2007, and following on the System Strategic Plan’s recommendation to develop “methods to more effectively assess student preparedness levels and to place students in appropriate courses,” the Board passed a motion directing the Chancellor to “begin the process of evaluating the implementation of a system-wide uniform, common assessment with multiple measures of all community college students...”.

The Academic Senate took the lead in addressing the Board's motion and chaired the resultant Consultation Council Task Force on Assessment. The task force issued a report in January 2008 that provided a snapshot of assessment practices throughout the system and made estimates for the cost of implementing "system-wide uniform, common assessment." The report also made the recommendation that assessment issues such as validation of prerequisites be addressed.

In June 2008, the Legislative Analyst's Office issued a report concerning the readiness of community college students and made the recommendation that "the Legislature allow colleges to require underprepared students to take pre-collegiate coursework beginning in their first term" (p. 15). This perspective echoed Academic Senate resolution 9.05 from Spring of 2007.

Interim Chancellor Diane Woodruff called for an Action Planning Group (APG) to address the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) report. Over the course of a year, the APG explored ways to address the LAO's recommendation, and in consideration of all of the discussion and recommendations that had taken place before, it came to the conclusion that facilitating the validation of prerequisites would provide the best means of signaling to students a route of preparation needed for college work and the motivation to attend to that preparation promptly in order to gain access to college-level courses in their area of interest. This perspective was extensively discussed and debated at the Academic Senate Spring 2009 Plenary Session, and resolutions 9.02 and 9.03 were adopted to support a pilot project to rely primarily on content review for the validation of all prerequisites.

With that, we now arrive at the current day. You now have a context for how we got to where we are. We will keep you apprised of and potentially engaged in the work on the pilot projects in the months to come.

For more information, please visit the Senate website at: http://www.asccc.org/ExecCom/Committees/Curriculum-Prerequisite_Project.htm.

Acknowledgement:

Special thanks to Arnold Bojorquez, Coordinator, Matriculation Unit in the Chancellor's Office.

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Ethnic Studies Requirement: Understanding It and Fulfilling It

BY DAVID MORSE, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
AND PAMELA WATKINS, CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

The concept of ethnic studies and the Title 5 language that requires community colleges to offer courses that address the subject have caused confusion in various ways throughout the state. Two resolutions in recent years have asked the Academic Senate to look into issues surrounding this requirement and the degree to which colleges are meeting it. Resolution 9.05 S08 asked that the Academic Senate “examine Title 5... along with its original intent, and the various current statewide practices for implementing the requirement to offer Ethnic Studies and report back to the body its findings and recommendations.” Resolution 9.01, S 09 “encourage[d] local curriculum committees to review the Title 5 requirements with respect to the ethnic studies requirement and assess whether or not their practices are compliant and, if issues are found, consider ways to meet the requirements.”

In partial fulfillment of the first of these resolutions, the Academic Senate raised the question of interpreting the current Title 5 language and reached quick agreement that colleges are required to offer “ethnic studies” courses as an optional aspect of their general education requirements, but there is no Title 5 expectation that colleges require students to take these classes. Colleges may offer ethnic studies curriculum as a course or courses devoted to the topic or by embedding ethnic studies content as an aspect of existing courses. In order to provide more information to

curriculum committees around the state, this year’s Curriculum Committee organized a breakout at the 2009 Fall Plenary Session to discuss various ways in which colleges can meet this requirement and fulfill the needs of their students.

What is Ethnic Studies?

Title 5 does not define the concept of ethnic studies; instead, it simply follows its definition of the four primary areas of general education by stating, “Ethnic Studies will be offered in at least one of the areas required by subdivision (1).” Ethnic studies does appear in the Disciplines List of Minimum Qualifications required to teach in a California community college, but the wording in this document is similarly unhelpful: “Master’s in the ethnic studies field OR The equivalent OR See Interdisciplinary Studies.” Some faculty associate ethnic studies with multiculturalism or global awareness, while others insist that these are very distinct fields. The intent of the original language, some argue, is to provide opportunities in the curriculum for students to focus on the experience of those groups who have traditionally been marginalized in American culture, but such a definition is nowhere indicated in official language.

The current accreditation standards also include language that may be relevant to the concept of ethnic students as a component of general education: “A recognition of what it means to be an ethical human

being and effective citizen: qualities include an appreciation of ethical principles; civility and interpersonal skills; respect for *cultural diversity*; historical and aesthetic sensitivity; and the willingness to assume civic, political, and social responsibilities locally, nationally, and *globally*” (ACCJC 2002 Accreditation Standards, IIA.3.c, emphasis added). However, while many would argue that the terms “cultural diversity” and “globally” imply ethnic studies, the words “ethnic studies” do not actually appear in this statement. The same issues regarding a definition of the concept thus remain.

Colleges have attempted to address the vaguely defined ethnic studies requirement in various ways. Currently more than 40 colleges offer not just courses but degrees in ethnic studies, including African American, Asian, and Chicano/Latino/Mexican Studies. Other colleges, instead of developing complete and separate fields of study, have sought other methods of meeting the demands of both Title 5 and accreditation. Without clearer and more direct definition, colleges are left with various avenues for offering students an ethnic studies option that will fulfill the broad language of the Title 5 requirement.

How Should We Teach Ethnic Studies?

Individual colleges around the state have developed a variety of methods for meeting the ethnic studies requirement. Some colleges, as noted above, have developed courses and programs that explicitly and specifically address the subject. Without more specific definition of the requirement, a single course addressing a particular cultural group can serve as an appropriate option for students to meet the Title 5 language. Such an approach can allow students to focus in detail on learning about the cultural group being studied, perhaps deepening the level of their understanding in this specific area.

While a single three-unit course available as an option allows a college to meet the Title 5 requirement, some faculty believe students are better served by a course that allows them to analyze the experience of marginalized groups in a comparative setting. For example, Santa Monica College’s History 10, “Ethnicity in

American Culture,” examines the experience of various historically marginalized groups as well as women and different waves of European immigrants. Such an approach allows students to consider the subjects of ethnicity and culture in a broader context and to gain knowledge about a wider variety of ethnic groups.

Yet another, often invisible, option students have for learning about ethnic studies comes from course sections whose course outlines do not specify but can easily incorporate content relevant to a variety of cultures and ethnicities. Most colleges offer numerous sections of composition and literature classes whose course outlines focus on the skills to be acquired but leave to the discretion of the instructor which specific texts will be read, and some faculty take advantage of this situation to select texts that focus on the study of ethnicity and culture. For example, a typical introduction to literature course focuses on ways to discuss and understand various literary genres, but most course outlines do not specify the particular works that will be discussed. Thus, instead of studying Shakespeare as an example of drama, an instructor could choose Lorraine Hansberry or David Henry Hwang; instead of poetry by Keats and Tennyson, one could use Langston Hughes, Gary Soto, or Joy Harjo. A course section designed in this manner could easily be recognized by a local curriculum committee as meeting the ethnic studies requirement in a broad and comparative way. Instructors at many colleges may already design their courses in such a manner, and thus their class sections might be designated as qualifying to meet the ethnic studies requirement simply by alerting the local curriculum committee and changing the course description in the schedule of classes.

Faculty may assume that courses in history, sociology, or literature most readily lend themselves to incorporating ethnic studies, but during the Fall 2009 Plenary Session breakout Beverly Shue of Harbor College discussed the value of spending time in science classes discussing the contributions to scientific knowledge made by Asian-American, African-American, and other traditionally marginalized American groups. When the classroom includes many students from these cultural backgrounds, the value of such an ap-

proach is not only that it informs all students about the diverse contributors to scientific knowledge, but also that it encourages the students' belief that they too can contribute to the ongoing development of knowledge in their field of study.

A final technique discussed during the plenary session breakout is the development of an ethnic studies component in learning communities. Learning communities can be defined as any group of students who share and collaborate in a linked set of two or more courses for a common purpose. The purpose, of course, is enhanced student success. Learning communities often lead to increased student success because of the social bonding that occurs when a cohort of students take multiple classes together, but the opportunity for a deepened understanding of the issues in ethnic studies is also enhanced when students are asked to examine the ways that different disciplines examine questions of exclusion and marginality. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and Taylor Branch's history of the Civil Rights movement provide different but equally valuable perspectives on a crucial period in American history, and in a learning community setting students can learn more about history, autobiography, and the civil rights movement all at the same time.

While English and history seem to be courses whose content and outcomes could link naturally, other learning community links are also possible and valuable, such as psychology and sociology. In this link students not only learn the psychology of different ethnic groups, but also the sociology of those groups in the current society. They begin to understand how the psychology of a group shapes its socialization. The Academic Senate encourages faculty to consider possibilities for linking all types of courses in order to enhance student success.

Clearly colleges and faculty have many options through which they can educate students about ethnic studies while meeting the requirements of Title 5 language. These options should be considered and adopted as appropriate to the specific missions and communities served by our colleges across the state. ■

The 2010—2011 Disciplines List

by Wheeler North, Standards and Practices Chair

Officially known as the "Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges" the disciplines list is maintained by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges on a two-year cycle. This cycle has just ended and the 2010 version is expected to be released sometime soon. This also means that we are restarting the review and revision process anew through 2010 and 2011. All proposals must be approved by your local senate or by a Chancellor's Office recognized state discipline group.

The proposed calendar is as follows:

- ▶ **February 2010**
Download, fill out, get approval for, and submit revision applications/proposals
- ▶ **April 2010**
First Hearings, Academic Senate Spring Plenary Session
- ▶ **September 2010**
Deadline for submissions September 30th
- ▶ **November 2010**
Second Hearings, Academic Senate Fall Plenary Session
- ▶ **April 2011**
Final Hearings, Academic Spring Plenary Session, Delegates Vote
- ▶ **May- September 2011**
Consultation and BOG consideration of revisions

Expect to see the forms and supporting documents on the Academic Senate website by the end of January (<http://www.asccc.org/LocalSenates/Discipline-list.htm>). We will also send out a notice on the Academic Senate listservs when they are available. ■

Local Control—Who Needs It

BY DIANNA CHIABOTTI, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Who needs it? Our students do.

When I attended my first Senate Leadership Institute, not only was I a new Senate President, I had also never heard of Assembly Bill (AB) 1725. I was also surprised to learn that the Academic Senate existed!! Needless to say, I wasn't quite sure what all the excitement over local control was about. But it was clear that this concept was a huge issue, an issue that continued to surface at plenary sessions. Other local senate presidents and the Academic Senate kept referring to it. On top of this, many outside sources and articles I was reading stressed the need for uniformity and sameness among community colleges. I remember thinking that sure would make my life easier as I was trying to figure all this out. Then one day, I woke up. A light turned on (as my high school Calculus teacher would say). I got it. Local control was essential for our students!

Effective pedagogy dictates that we meet the needs of our students. In addition, the literature consistently suggests that we meet the diverse learning needs of our students and that we teach using multiple modalities. The answer to good education within the classroom is instructor control of the learning environment. An extension of this outside of the classroom walls is local control by community colleges.

Community colleges, in general, serve their local communities. Each community surrounding a college has its own diverse set of cultures. The busi-

nesses in the local area have developed to serve that community or the larger area as needed. Nonetheless, each business has specific skills needed by its employees and traits that they desire in job applicants. These skills change to some degree based on the community that the business serves. These nuanced differences demand that colleges have local control in career technical education programs so that students are better prepared for entering the workforce. Community colleges are specifically organized to allow for variance among communities and respond to the needs of their populations, hence the need for local control. Uniformity would prevent this from occurring.

This same variance exists for transfer students. Four year colleges have differing requirements for transfer and different standards for entrance. This variance also requires that local colleges have control over their transferable course work as well. With local control each community college is able to work directly with the four-year colleges to develop curriculum that best meets the specific needs of their local transfer students.

Blind uniformity in curriculum that removes faculty from the decision-making pushes us in a direction away from local faculty's ability to address the diverse perspectives of students and the local culture. At a time when we are striving to value diversity in all forms, why would we revert to a practice that eliminates thoughtful responses to diversity among

Community colleges are specifically organized to allow for variance among communities and respond to the needs of their populations, hence the need for local control.

local colleges? If we truly value diversity and difference, then we must also value local control for our colleges.

But there is, of course, a contradiction. The Academic Senate has supported efforts de-

signed to find commonalities in our curriculum, so that we can ensure quality, rigor and standards (e.g. IMPAC, C-ID, Statewide Career Pathways). But no matter what, we must also ensure local faculty's academic freedom is never jeopardized. A responsive and respectful education system acknowledges that learners are unique from each other. We need colleges that allow for this uniqueness and that acknowledge through local practices that learners are diverse in their needs, communities are dissimilar from each other, and businesses are distinct in their requirements.

Local control allows for an education system that is responsive and just. Local control allows colleges to create curriculum that specifically addresses universal topics as well as local issues. It allows for curriculum, degrees, graduations requirements, and educational practices that address the interests and needs of local students, local communities, and local industry. Local control in community colleges reflects the wonderful tapestry that is California. ■



Sharing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) With Your College Community

BY LESLEY KAWAGUCHI, ACCREDITATION AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES COMMITTEE (SLO) AND JOAN SHOLARS, SLO COORDINATOR, MOUNT SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Coordinators in the California Community Colleges face the herculean task of coordinating SLO and assessment activities on their local campuses while understanding the larger context of their work and its impact on planning, program review, accreditation, and ultimately, student learning. SLO Coordinators attending the SLO Institute, the SLO Regional meetings, and the Accreditation Institute have

ample opportunities to dialog with each other and often discover that they share similar concerns, particularly in imparting the intricacies of those discussions and the issues to the faculty and others back on their local campuses.

An example of how one local college is handling one of those intricate issues, the difference between SLOs and grades, is through a campus newsletter.

Grades versus SLOs

By Joan Sholars, Mt. San Antonio College SLO Coordinator
December 2009 Whitepaper

A grade provides an overall picture of how a student performed in the entirety of the course. It does not indicate how well a student obtained various skills and concepts. Whereas grades are meant to be student-specific, SLOs are meant to be skill-specific (<http://www.mt-sac.edu/instruction/outcomes/doc/glossary.pdf>, page 11, #8).

It is very difficult to trace back the learning of specific skills from a general grade. For exam-

ple, if a student earns a “B” in the course, it is not possible to determine which skills or topics within the course were grasped well by the student simply by looking at the grade the student earned. Different faculty members teaching the same course could vary in the way they measure the combination of the different skills to produce the grade. For instance, Professor A might count the research paper for that course as 20% of the student’s overall grade, while Professor B

might count the research paper for that course as 15% of the student's overall grade.

If that same research paper was used to assess an SLO, the faculty would score the skills that the faculty determined important on a faculty-developed rubric. The faculty would have been normed on the rubric. [For information on norming, go to http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/newsletter/whitepapers/2009_assessment_norming.pdf.] Consequently, a student could earn an "A" in the course, but have scored only a 3 out of 4 on a faculty-developed rubric.

Grades are student-specific. In contrast, SLOs are meant to be skill-specific. Instead of how many students received A's or B's in the course, the SLO question is how many of them were able to demonstrate a specific skill central to the course? SLOs focus on how students perform in particular skills that are taught in a course instead of the overall performance. Moreover, they are intended to determine what students would get out of a course regardless of which section they selected or which faculty member they had. Thus the SLO should be at the course-level (e.g., ENGL 1A SLO) not at the classroom- or section-level (e.g., ENGL 1A Reference #999999 SLO).

Another example comes from the Mathematics Department. About 53% of MATH 51 students pass the course, but based on the department's SLO data, about 85% of MATH 51 students can solve a linear equation. From this example, we can see that just because a student can perform a specific skill as measured by the SLOs does not mean that the student can pass the class.

Of course, a student could also pass the class with a grade of "C" or better and not have performed well on the SLO that was being assessed that semester. That means that the student has enough knowledge of the material in the course that earns the student a passing grade in the class, but when one skill is looked at in depth, the student does not perform well.

Grades are holistic measures of multiple skills. Grades provide feedback to the student on their overall performance but do not pinpoint which skills need improvement.

SLOs are distinct measures of specific skills. SLOs provide feedback on student learning of the specific skills and pinpoint which skills need improvement.

If you have any questions or need further information about Grades and SLOs, please contact me at jsholars@mtsac.edu or at Extension 4610.

This newsletter is one example of an effective local practice in helping the college community reach a common understanding on the differences between grades and SLOs within the context of the campus culture. This practice can be documented down the road for accreditation while also establishing the college's overall definition and application of the terms it uses, including grades and SLOs. Also, the more widespread the information, increasing numbers of

individuals on the campus are made aware of the issues involved.

Does your college have ways of sharing SLO information with your campus community? If so, please pass them along to kawaguchi_lesley@smc.edu. We would like to share these from time to time in the appropriate venue. ■

“All Senates is Local”

BY DAN CRUMP, RELATIONS WITH LOCAL SENATES COMMITTEE CHAIR

Okay, so I took liberty with Tip O’Neill’s famous quote of “All politics is local” and please, no groans from those grammarians about “is” instead of “are!” But Speaker O’Neill was correct in his observation that what happens at the local level is vital to the political operation of a country (and my extrapolation to college campuses and districts). We had strong evidence of this when more than 250 faculty leaders attended the Fall Plenary Session in November of this last year. We were able to participate in a variety of breakouts and other activities that provided us all with vital information for us to take back to our local senates for dissemination, discussion and action.

My committee is responsible for two breakouts that are presented on a rather regular basis—one as an introduction to new delegates at a plenary session and another on practices for effective senates (the PowerPoint presentations for both of these breakouts are on the Senate’s website at www.asccc.org).

The first breakout is listed for new delegates, but it is really for all “newbie” attendees to a plenary session. It is important for everyone to be informed of the roles and responsibilities expected of them at session. As we always say, the work and actions of the state Academic Senate are determined by the resolutions that are passed by local college and district delegates. It is especially important for delegates (there is one from each college and recognized

district senate), though, as these are the attendees who will vote on resolutions. We cover some of the basics about what happens at session, from breakouts to area meetings (you mean we have to be coherent at 8:30 am??) to resolutions and the voting process on the last day of the session and elections of Senate officers and representatives (and hear our explanation of “trickle down”).

The other breakout is equally important (note: all the session breakouts are extremely informative and interesting, but I am tooting my own horn right now!) in that we hopefully are able to relate good practices for facilitating effective local senates. We start off with a background of the basis of academic senates with a lot of numbers (AB 1725, Title 5 section 53200, 10+1) and acronyms (ASCCC, CCLC, CO, FACCC) to a discussion of collegial consultation between the local academic senate and the local governing board, either through *mutual agreement* or *rely primarily*.

I think the most prominent phrase that I used continually through the breakout was “academic and professional matters.” But it can never be stated too many times—“in ALL academic and professional matters, the academic senate must ALWAYS be consulted collegially (either through mutual agreement or rely primarily).” There are no IFs, ANDs or BUTs about that! ■

Transfer Degree Déjà Vu

BY BETH SMITH, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Transfer degrees are creating a buzz locally and statewide. These are degrees that have two goals—both degree completion and transfer. Legislators have shown interest in these degrees, and that interest caused some angst at the plenary session in the fall. But even if the legislative interest is removed, colleges are actively creating more degrees designed for students wishing to transfer as shown by the increased number of degrees approved at the Chancellor's Office. Some faculty have expressed interest in revisiting degrees designed for transfer because they feel these degrees provide great options for students. And, the resolutions addressing transfer degrees were referred to the Executive Committee for improvement and return in the spring. Here are some thoughts and facts to help local senates and faculty discuss the issue of degrees designed especially for transfer.

Students have more degree options than ever before in the California community colleges. As reported by the Chancellor's Office, the conversion of non-compliant to compliant degrees over the last few years has erupted into the creation of more than 1500 new associate degrees by community college faculty. Of these, more than 40% were created specifically with a focus on meeting transfer requirements. These degrees consist of a major or area of emphasis that is informed by common transfer major preparation requirements, typically require or recommend CSU GE or IGETC to fulfill the general education requirement, and electives to reach the minimum

number of units required. Data will be available in a couple of years on the number of students taking advantage of these new degrees, which should show an increase in degree attainment.

Title 5 permits colleges to establish local graduation requirements. An associate degree contains component parts of 1) general education (locally or university determined), 2) major or area of emphasis, and 3) electives. However, in order to graduate with a degree, some colleges also add local graduation requirements to the above mentioned component parts. A graduation requirement might be to take a physical education, computer literacy, multicultural, or other course, and sometimes, these requirements are embedded in other GE area courses or are separate courses that often perform double duty (meeting GE as well as graduation requirements). There is debate about whether or not local graduation requirements deter transfer students from earning a degree prior to transfer. Much more data is needed to draw conclusions about the negative effects of requiring students to fulfill one or more additional requirements.


Local senates recommend to their boards local graduation requirements that are believed to be academically sound and good for students. Title 5 gives the senates and boards the ability to define a degree that fits the local culture and community plus gives students the educational background that is jointly believed to contribute to the success and well being of students. If there is suspicion that local requirements are impeding transfer, Title 5 permits local decision making to correct any problems. ■

Counselors are needed more today than ever before. With more degrees to choose from and more competition for fewer transfer seats at the universities, students need guidance from counselors at an increasing rate. Unfortunately, just as student needs skyrocket, matriculation and counseling budgets are decreasing. Local senates must remind college colleagues of the value of the counselors and counseling staff and the effects that budgets cuts wreak on counselor burn out and student success.

Local senates may wish to invite counselors to speak to the senate about ways that other discipline faculty can assist the counseling and advising process. For example, what strategies for accessing counselors can be shared with students? What messages about transfer deadlines can be communicated in the classroom? How can classroom faculty market degree attainment to transfer students? Despite the help that classroom faculty provide, no one can replace the wonderful counselor-student interaction that makes the difference for students.

Faculty do not want to create artificial barriers for students earning degrees. Some will argue that local graduation requirements become barriers to transfer students earning associate degrees because students may have to take additional units or extend their stay at the community college in order to complete the requirements. It may cost students more money to complete these requirements, too. If students find real barriers to earning degrees, then faculty will want to re-evaluate graduation requirements. If however, students are opting out of earning a degree prior to transfer for other reasons, then faculty can work with student leaders to learn more about student perception of degree attainment.

It is true that some colleges have more graduation requirements than others. Faculty and senates must decide which requirements make sense and are relevant for students. Degree requirements determined by faculty-driven motives are due for re-thinking. Hopefully, faculty never use FTES, faculty workload, or enrollment as the motivators for creating degree requirements.



Hopefully, faculty never use FTES, faculty workload, or enrollment as the motivators for creating degree requirements.

Barriers to student attainment of degrees are a serious matter. The Chancellor's Office considers it important enough to require reviews of degree attainment and transfer through student equity plans. Colleges last submitted student equity plans about five years ago, and one component of the plans addressed any disproportionate success of student cohorts in degree attainment and transfer. The Academic Senate's resolutions and papers on student equity communicate the importance of identifying and eliminating barriers contributing to disproportionate success. Local senates should carefully monitor local graduation requirements and barriers to transfer for adverse impact.

In conclusion, faculty have a responsibility to use their authority wisely. Students have access to many degree options today that combine interdisciplinary coursework, have a transfer preparation focus, and meet the requirements of transferable general education. There are many good reasons to review local graduation requirements to ensure that students are well served and artificial barriers are removed. Local senates and boards have the authority to create local graduation requirements and may modify or eliminate the graduation requirements for students earning degrees that prepare them for transfer. Please share this information with local governing boards and legislators. ■

Fall 2009 Referred Resolutions— Revising the 50% Law and Response to AB 440: “Transfer Degree”

BY MICHELLE PILATI, VICE PRESIDENT

Resolutions are referred for many reasons—much of the time resolutions are referred because the delegates believe the Academic Senate needs to have a position, yet the resolution being considered requires more work or more time is needed before an informed vote can be made. Most of the time such delays are warranted and allow for resolutions to be both perfected and appropriately considered. There were some noteworthy referrals made during our Fall Plenary. In one instance, the referral option was clearly the best solution. In the other, referral may have been the option selected due to general confusion—as opposed to a desire for an improved resolution or more time to consider. There are times when action is needed—not delay. And this may have been one of them.

The award for the most-warranted referral goes to our numerous resolutions on the 50% law (6.02, 6.03, 6.04, 6.05, and 6.05.01). It is easy to lose sight of what happened during the choreographed chaos of Saturday—always lively and with unpredictable moments of levity. Looking back now it is interesting to note that there were nine referrals— and that all pertain to just two topics. The numerous resolutions on the 50% law (in simplest terms, requiring that 50% of general fund dollars be spent on

classroom instruction) were introduced to ensure a healthy discussion of the topic. No longer was the 50% law merely something that troubled those who are excluded from the 50% calculations. The resolution suggesting that we abolish the 50% law as “Life without the 50% Law would allow for honest discussions about planning and budget to better foster student success” (referred resolution 6.02) ensured that ALL faculty would exhibit the appropriate concern about the 50% law—and sparked vigorous discussions about finding a means of improving it. While developing a modified version of the 50% law that maintains current funding levels for instruction, removes disincentives for funding student services activities, ensures some minimal level of funding for faculty who support student learning in a non-classroom environment, and removes the current artificial divide between faculty engaging in different functions is not simple, it is worth our efforts. And even before Saturday morning a majority of delegates were probably aware that the numerous resolutions (four resolutions and one amendment) were likely to be referred as a group and without discussion—and there was a clear consensus that this was the right thing to do. Our positions on the 50% law are numerous and clear—we have our well-established positions—and there is time to explore alternatives. The resolutions on this topic were “Referred to the

Executive Committee to research the data, craft a new resolution that considers the ideas included in all of the referred resolutions and our previous position in resolution 8.04 S01 and bring back to the Spring 2010 Plenary Session.”

The discussion that preceded the referral of resolution 4.03, “Response to AB 440: ‘Transfer Degree’”, suggested that the referral may have been a consequence of a lack of understanding or, perhaps, a desire for more local discussion. This resolution proposed that the Academic Senate support a change in Title 5 that would permit colleges to award an associate degree in a major or area of emphasis designated “for transfer” (e.g., “Psychology for Transfer”) to students who complete a degree based on a locally defined major or area of emphasis that meets the requirements of transfer institutions and a transfer general education pattern. And, if a college opts to offer such a degree (i.e., a degree entitled “X for Transfer”), then additional local graduation requirements must be waived. This was a strategic proposition that would not mandate any local changes (unless, by chance, a college had degrees entitled “X for transfer”), but would explicitly permit colleges to do something that they already may do. In other words, the proposed permissive language would permit what is already permitted. So why was it written? The resolution was a strategic move intended to aid in preventing legislation of our degree requirements—as almost happened last summer. What was evident in the discussion was that there was concern about and opposition to putting the content of our degrees in the hands of legislators instead of faculty—as would be expected. The discussion also suggested that the purpose of the resolution and its impact were not well-understood. The goal was to move forward with implementing Title 5 language, working with our Chancellor’s Office, that would introduce permissive language regarding degrees—the language that was in AB 440 in July and was supported by our Chancellor’s Office. Moving forward with such Title 5 changes would increase the likelihood that we would have our Chancellor’s support should there be further attempts to place our degree requirements into law.

AB 440 is not dead (although the bill number and author may change) and legislative interest in its intent reportedly persists. If we are lucky, it will either not be re-introduced or will be resurrected without changes—unfortunately calling for the placement of a degree in Education Code, but remaining permissive in nature and recognizing our basic degree structure. If we are not lucky, it could revert back to its earlier form and mandate some new form of degree. In addition to the threat to local control, one critical concern with legislated degrees is this: how do we meet accreditation standards with respect to learning outcomes if we are not designing our own degrees? When AB 440 was first introduced it intended to permit degrees to be offered when a student had completed 60 semester units and met “the minimum requirements for transfer to the California State University or the University of California”. In other words, permitting colleges to offer degrees based on the completion of requirements that were not locally defined. The language of the resolution was quite different—and was consistent with what AB 440 proposed after countless hours working with the sponsor and author. Resolution 4.03 and its clarifying amendment 4.03.01 (below) were *permissive*—explicitly introducing an option to colleges that they already have (emphasis added):

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges work with the Chancellor’s Office to change Title 5 regulations such that colleges would be permitted to award an associate degree in a major or area of emphasis designated “for transfer” (e.g., “Psychology for Transfer”) to students who complete at least 60 transferable semester units including a minimum of 18 semester units in a major or area of emphasis that meet the requirements of transfer institutions and a transfer general education pattern, and require the colleges that choose to offer such a degree do not impose any additional local graduation requirements.

Why would we seek language in Title 5 that states something that we can already do? This idea was proposed as a means to prevent the same language—or more intrusive language—from being placed into

Education Code (law) by legislation. While we objected to degrees going into law, AB 440, as voted on in July 2009, respected local authority over degrees and their requirements as it was permissive and acknowledged our basic degree structure. Our Chancellor's Office supported the bill and, with the proposed Title 5 language moving forward, would have been more likely to join us in opposing other legislated interference. Earlier versions of AB 440 did not recognize local authority over degrees—or our basic degree structure—and moved quickly through the legislative process with minimal opposition—even though the language said little. Here is what AB 440 proposed as of February 24, 2009:

66745. *A community college district may grant an associate in arts degree in transfer studies to a student meeting both of the following requirements:*
(a) *Completes a minimum of 60 semester units.*
(b) *Meets the minimum requirements for transfer to the California State University or the University of California.*

66746. (a) *A degree granted pursuant to this article shall recognize the completion of lower division general education requirements.*
(b) *A degree granted pursuant to this article does not guarantee admission to any institution.*

The bill and its history can be obtained at http://www.aroundthecapitol.com/Bills/AB_440/. The language of the bill when it was voted on in July (and narrowly failed due to reasons too complex for this brief overview) differed greatly from this earlier version—and while far less problematic, it did place language regarding the components of our degrees into Education Code. Given the often stated need for California to have more citizens with degrees, this is a most troubling proposal. How can we ensure the integrity and quality of our degrees if we are not determining what they consist of? If explicitly placing a degree option in Title 5 prevents legislated degree options or mandates, aren't we better served? The Title 5 language alluded to in resolutions 4.03 and 4.03.01 was intended to prevent legislated changes in our degrees, to ensure that what you do at your college can remain as it is, and to explicitly permit degrees containing the words “for transfer” in the title if you are willing to require

that such degrees require a transfer general education pattern and local graduation requirements are not imposed.

Hopefully this second group of referred resolutions will prompt local discussions about degrees and their requirements. Has your college developed a variety of degrees that will really “work” for students? While colleges have introduced many new degrees (see “Transfer Degree Déjà Vu” in this *Ros-trum*), have colleges considered whether or not they are creating undue barriers to degree completion for students who are preparing for transfer? While we wait and see how others might legislate changes in our degrees, why not take the time to consider what we are currently doing? Should there be a relationship between local degree requirements and the coursework needed for transfer? Of course—that should be obvious. Degrees should be designed with the needs of students in mind, as well as informed by the expertise of local discipline faculty.

While new legislation may emerge that is intended to increase degree completion, we should be considering this ourselves. How do we increase degree completion? We, as faculty, should consider what we can do to help our students reach all of their goals and ensure that we are not creating obstacles to degree completion. This should entail in-depth conversations about the components of the degree—with a focus on any local requirements and their justification. If requirements exist for the sole purpose of filling classes, are we serving our students and spending the State's dollars wisely? As this is a time when we are being forced to cut classes and re-think our offerings, why not take a look at your degrees? Are student easily able to understand what is needed to transfer AND earn a degree? Does a student need a higher degree to even identify what it takes to get a degree? These are local questions with local answers—questions that need to be asked and answered in as many as 110 different ways. ■

It's Not FSAs

BY WHEELER NORTH, STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMITTEE CHAIR

The number one unasked question I answer as the Chair of the Senate's Standards and Practices Committee is "are you sure you mean FSA and not Minimum Qualifications?" Of course, answering an unasked question with another question is a faculty kind of thing to do, so I don't feel too abashed for repeating that interruption at the start of many MQ discussions.

Since both FSAs (Faculty Service Areas) and MQ (Minimum Qualification) processes similarly define disciplines in which faculty might teach, they are often confused, but it is important to note that they address distinctly different issues and thus may have different processes. It is also important to note that FSAs and MQs are required by two entirely different mandates and both are often handled somewhat uniquely within each district.

In a nutshell, an FSA is a negotiated arrangement between districts and unions that pre-establishes primarily seniority rights for faculty via contractual agreements and possibly board policies. On the other hand, through Education Code and Title 5 regulations, minimum qualifications are brief but rigorous criteria established by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges for each of many specific disciplines. Each discipline criteria acts as a common denominator or connector between faculty and the courses that are approved for them to teach.

In practice, an FSA contractually establishes potential subject areas where a faculty member might be qualified to teach. As quoted from a typical contract, "*A faculty service area (FSA) is a discipline area in which faculty have seniority rights in the event of a reduction in force.*" But the establishment of an FSA, possibly by an FSA committee, may happen with less scrutiny in part because we hope they will never be exercised. It is also problematic because if our processes for ensuring minimum qualifications were replicated for every FSA granted, we would be overwhelmed. Many faculty have two or more FSAs, so the additional work to scrutinize these at the rigor we use for minimum qualifications could be significant. However some contracts/FSA processes may go to that length, thereby ensuring that an FSA granted means the faculty meets the minimum qualifications for that discipline.

So, in my district, my FSA in electronics means that in the event of downsizing or reorganizing I may have some preferential rights to continued employment. This is based upon meeting some conditions, one of which would be to meet the minimum qualifications for the discipline of electronics, as determined by that local MQ process at the time of downsizing. Coupled to this process, local contracts may have additional rights-granting elements such as retraining or separation/rehire guaranties, or it may be specified that teaching recency shall not affect the original FSA.



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Minimum qualifications implementation is a state-driven process established in Education Code and Title 5 regulations, and maintained by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. In short, we maintain a list of agreed upon disciplines, grouped in several categories, each with a listing of qualification criteria that are required to teach any course assigned to that discipline. The second part of this process is that every course that earns state apportionment must be assigned to one of these disciplines.

Inherent to using this list of “common denominator” disciplines, districts should be able to demonstrate that in each case of a faculty member being assigned to teach a course, there exists a means by which faculty qualifications and course discipline assignments can be verified by the deans or chairs

doing the hiring/assigning. Usually this is a no-brainer because of obvious course and discipline titles. But there are often local exceptions of course naming or abbreviations that have no obvious counterpart on the disciplines list. So if that new dean doesn’t magically know the “human factors” course has been assigned to “aviation” and “psychology,” he or she might wrongly assign it to be taught by faculty meeting qualifications for “administration of justice.”

Suffice to say the above descriptions are very brief, and do nothing to illustrate the variety of nuances and exceptions that exist in both FSA and MQ requirements. It is also very important to understand that local requirements and practices prevail in this area probably more so than in any other area of the CCC fiefdom. For multi-college districts, these distinctions can be very convoluted. The legal requirement is that every course be taught by qualified faculty; how we get there is completely up to us. Regulations require that faculty have primary roles in determining this occurs, but a breakdown in compliance bears serious consequences for all district constituents. Thus each district, acting as a community, must carve its own road to a compliant process in a very permissive and complex environment.

In closing I would offer that if you haven’t recently reviewed your processes for ensuring faculty meet minimum qualifications, it’s never a bad time to give them a once over. Most often the questions we get asked are what happens when there is a disagreement, either between constituents or between process and oversight. Usually the problem is that “what happens” hasn’t been answered in formal written process. So it is important to be clear about things like just what does a signature mean, or who/what is the final decider when parts don’t agree. Usually the last thing we want to do is force our local Board of Trustees into making those decisions for us. ■

A Look on the “Bright Side” of Flex Activities

BY JON DRINNON (CHAIR), JEFF LAMB, AND KATHY SORENSEN, FACULTY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

“Always look on the bright side of life” Monty Python - The Life of Brian

It is not uncommon to hear the halls of colleges around the state reverberate with a collective moan when the details of professional development “opportunities” are sent out even though faculty play a major role on flex calendar committees. Colleges often include activities that stretch the very limits of legislators’ wildest Title 5 imaginings, such as a tour of the local Budweiser factory and “Badminton for Team Building.” Faculty woefully ask, “Why do we have to DO this every year?” In part as a response to questions like this one and as a result of our most recent plenary workshop, the Faculty Development Committee thought you’d like to know the history and scope of what Article 2 of Subchapter 8 of Chapter 6 in Division 6 of Title 5 calls “Flexible Calendar Operations.”

If your institution has decided to take advantage of the benefits listed in Article 2, know that there are some requirements. In order to comply with Title 5 §55724, your governing board has had to obtain advance approval from the Chancellor’s Office to do so and has provided a complete description of the calendar configuration and the number of days faculty will participate in “staff, student and instructional improvement activities.” (The reference to the 175-Day Rule from §58210 is thrown in here for good measure.)

Title 5 §55730 asserts that it is the “Ongoing Responsibilities of Districts” who conduct an approved flexible calendar to do several things including:

(a) conduct and annually update a survey of the most critical staff, student, and instructional improvement needs in the district; (b) develop and carry out a plan of activities to address the critical needs; (c) maintain records on the description, type and number of activities scheduled and the number of district employees and students participating in these activities; (d) evaluate annually the effectiveness of conducted activities and update the plan to reflect needed changes; (e) appoint and hold regular meetings of an advisory committee composed of faculty, students, administrators and other interested persons to make recommendations on staff, student, and instructional improvement activities; and (f) provide, upon request of the Chancellor, copies of documents and information specified in Subsections (a) through (d), inclusive.

There is quite a bit of leeway when it comes to the specifics of flexible calendar activities. Section 55724 specifically mentions,

Activities for college personnel may also include, but need not be limited to, the following: course instruction and evaluation; staff development, in-service training and instructional improvement; program and course curriculum or learning resource development and evaluation; student personnel services; learning resource services; related activities, such as student advising, guidance, orientation, matriculation services, and student, faculty, and staff diver-

sity; departmental or division meetings, conferences and workshops, and institutional research; other duties as assigned by the district; and the necessary supporting activities for the above.

So now that you've got a good sense of the roots of our flexible calendars activities, and what the Board of Governors through the consultation process envisioned we would do during this time, you'll be glad to know that in theory they didn't leave us holding the bag when it comes to financing all of this. Article 5: Community College Faculty and Staff Development Fund (§§87150—87154) demonstrates the intent to provide funding for faculty and staff development. As a matter of fact, it states that funds appropriated by the Legislature would be at one-half of one percent for the fiscal year revenues (as defined by §84700) for the 1987-88 fiscal year and in subsequent fiscal years no district would receive an allocation greater than 2% of its fiscal year revenues. However, while the state did provide funding for a period of time, unfortunately it is not providing appropriately for faculty and staff development today. And for the colleges that locally decide to set aside funds for professional development, we all know these are the funds that typically get cut first as has been the case for many colleges across the state. Finding ways to support faculty and to supplement these cuts with innovative activities and resources has become a primary focus for the Academic Senate Faculty Development Committee in addition to getting funding back for our local committees.

"I'm not dead yet!"- Monty Python and the Holy Grail

The Faculty Development Committee repeated this mantra again and again at the 2009 Fall Plenary Session in Ontario to let folks know that although it had not been heard from in a while, it was NOT dead yet.

At its first breakout session in several years, the participants began to address some of the most pressing issues facing faculty across California. During the session, several pieces of feedback were gathered from those in attendance: 1) Positive Aspects of Faculty Development on their respective campuses; 2) Negative Aspects of Faculty Development on their respective

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campuses; and 3) What the participants wanted from the Faculty Development Committee.

Positive aspects included:

- ▶ Collaborating with classified and administrators to work across constituencies
- ▶ Several new models for professional development on campuses
- ▶ Faculty driven
- ▶ Focus on select topics: student learning outcomes, basic skills, accreditation
- ▶ Provide trainings in web pages, technology
- ▶ Strong conference review and individual flex proposals

Negative aspects included:

- ▶ Not enough feedback from faculty about what subjects are wanted for future staff development activities
- ▶ Budget issues and travel restrictions, suspension of sabbaticals
- ▶ Not much institutional support
- ▶ Faculty participation low

It was clear from the discussion that as long as faculty development was collaborative and faculty-driven, it led to a more positive experience. However, when faculty were removed (or removed themselves) from the process, faculty development felt like it was being done *to* them rather than *by and for* them. The negative aspects were exacerbated by the budget situation, but the budget did not seem to be the cause of all the negative aspects.

Considering the feedback and current budget crisis, how can the Senate's Faculty Development Committee provide support to the faculty and to the local senates themselves? We received many suggestions, and after the Fall Plenary Session, the Committee prioritized a few of them.

- ▶ Reconnect with 4C/SD and the Faculty Association for California Community Colleges (FACCC) Professional Development Committee.
- ▶ Report out best practices from community colleges across the state—specific detailed papers explaining what campuses have done successfully and show how they got it done.
- ▶ Compile creative faculty development activity ideas that colleges could implement with little money and share these ideas on the Academic Senate website homepage and in the *Rostrum*.
- ▶ Publicize contact point, perhaps on the Senate's website homepage.
- ▶ Have a yearly meeting of professional development coordinators.

Thanks to all of the participants of the breakout at the Fall Session. You certainly helped shape the direction we will take as a Committee. The plenary body voted for a faculty development resolution, 12.01 F09 Faculty Development Funding, which will also guide our work as the year progresses.

In the meantime, "We are not dead yet!" See you in San Francisco.

Note: Title 5 references can be accessed at <http://law.justia.com/california/codes/edc.html>. ■

Julie's Inbox

Dear Julie, I understand that campuses will need to recode their basic skills courses by March 2010. How do we get started on the CB 21 coding, when is the deadline, and who submits the changes?

Faculty must lead the re-coding effort in order to guarantee the correct coding based upon the CB 21 rubrics and curriculum documents. Work on the CB 21 re-coding should be done collaboratively by discipline experts, researchers, CIOs and curriculum committee members. This should be completed on paper using a spreadsheet of all sequential basic skills English, ESL, math, and reading courses. Double check the other CB codes related to transfer (CB 05) and credit degree applicability (CB 04) and basic skills (CB 08) as well as level prior to transfer (CB 21) as well as the TOP codes which have been changed for the basic skills courses. Consider the basic skills courses with regards to student pathways.

The deadline is March 1, 2010, for submission to the Chancellor's Office. After the fall data is submitted the MIS person in charge of course coding at your college should submit the re-coding as determined by the collegial process—they should not determine any coding. Courses that are not re-coded by March 1 will be flagged as errors. The 2010 summer ARCC supplemental report will then reflect the new coding and a more accurate picture of our basic skills work.

Good Luck!

Executive Committee ■