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ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEWSLETTER

SENATEROSTRUM

THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Institutional Review Boards—An Academic and Professional Matter

BY EDUARDO JESÚS ARISMENDI-PARDI, ED.D., SENATE PRESIDENT AND PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS, ORANGE COAST COLLEGE

MARK WADE LIEU, EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMITTEE

While community colleges are not normally thought of as research institutions, an increasing amount of research is being conducted, including analyses of student success data, examinations of teaching strategies and how well they improve student learning, and studies of the effectiveness of student intervention strategies. Because community colleges are not considered research institutions, faculty are generally less aware of the need to have in place processes that provide appropriate protection for research subjects and by extension protection for the faculty, the college, or others conducting the research.

Resolution 13.13 S09, “Institutional Review Board,” (full text available at www.asccc.org) was referred to the Executive Committee for the purpose of providing more information to local academic senates on the subject before returning the resolution to the body for reconsideration at the Fall 2009 Plenary Session. The resolution states:

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges strongly encourage local senates to consider the development of local college and district Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committees as a preventive measure to litigation and for the protection of the students and community that they serve; and

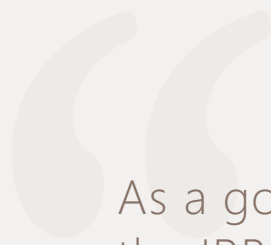
Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommend that development of IRB Committees be a faculty driven collegial consultation process through each local senate in an effort to establish a culture of compliance regarding protection of human subjects when conducting research and writing grants.

This article provides basic information about Institutional Review Boards (IRB) and their relation to academic and professional responsibilities.

What is an IRB?

In short, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) is part of a review process to ensure ethical standards in conducting research that is derived from classroom experiences involving human subjects and when such projects and presentations become public (i.e., presentations at professional conferences, sabbatical reports distributed throughout the college).

The purpose of the IRB is to review a proposed research project to determine whether participants in the study will be placed at physical or mental risk and, if risk is involved, to certify that the following conditions have been met: (a) risks to participants are minimized; (b) participants in the study (and their guardians) are fully aware of the risks



As a good practice, the IRB serves an important role in the protection of the rights and welfare of human research subjects.

and that individuals may withdraw from the study at any time without any form of penalty; (c) risks to the participants are so outweighed by the sum of the benefits to the participants and the importance of the knowledge to be gained as to warrant a decision to allow the participants to voluntarily accept these risks; (d) rights and welfare of any such participants will be adequately protected; (e) legally effective, informed consent will be obtained by adequate and appropriate methods in accordance with the provisions delineated in Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations; and (f) conduct of the activity will be reviewed at intervals determined by the IRB, but not less than annually (Lincoln, 2005).

Generally accepted good practices for the functioning of IRBs have been established and published. Should this resolution be adopted, more information about such practices will be provided in a future Rostrum article.

Why does a college need an IRB?

As a good practice, the IRB serves an important role in the protection of the rights and welfare of human research subjects. An IRB review is beneficial to both the investigator and the institution because such a review certifies that the investigator's research project is in compliance with ethical guidelines and with state and federal rules and regulations. Moreover, an IRB re-

view may also bring to the attention of an investigator ethical factors which may not have been considered. An IRB review also demonstrates and documents the institution's commitment to the protection and ethical treatment of human participants.

On a more practical level, an IRB helps a college to avoid both, litigation should research subjects be harmed and federal reprimand for conducting research without obtaining informed consent from human subjects. As more and more colleges search for additional sources of funding to offset declining state support, it is also important to note that eligibility for federal grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and Department of Education (DOE) require that the institution have an IRB in place.

The IRB as an Academic and Professional Matter

In general, human research is any activity with the primary intent of securing information from or about human participants for the purpose of advancing basic, clinical, psychosocial, or educational understanding of humans. At community colleges, human research focuses primarily on students and their success. Student Success is one of the academic and professional matters under the purview of academic senates as stipulated in Title 5 regulation. Therefore, it makes sense for the Academic Senate to initiate discussion of this issue for the entire system.

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Moving Forward with Basic Skills Strategies

BY JANET FULKS, CHAIR, BASIC SKILLS COMMITTEE

The Basic Skills Initiative has taught us a lot of important things about our profession and about the students we serve in our classrooms. We know the percentage of first time students with basic skills needs are over 75%. But how much basic skills work do they need? In other words, we know the breadth, but what is the depth of those needs? The work with CB 21 rubrics and recoding basic skills courses has provided a great deal of information about the depth of basic skills needs. A recent study by researcher Craig Hayward at Cabrillo College, using a representative sample of 23 California community colleges, reveals a sample of both the breadth and depth of basic skills needs. The table below indicates the levels at which our

students are assessing into English (writing), mathematics, reading, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Of the 76,138 students assessed in English, 42% were more than two levels below transfer in English. Of the 77,231 students assessed in mathematics, over 64% were two levels or more below transfer (this means they assessed into algebra or lower). How do we meet this depth of basic skills needs?

Is the best strategy to have students take eighth grade or high school level mathematics and English over again at a community college? Most students covered this material in their previous schooling. Why are they still assessing low?

	English (N = 23 colleges)		Math (N = 23 colleges)		Reading (N = 11 colleges)		ESL (N = 15 colleges)	
	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number
Overall (N=23 colleges)								
Transfer level	26%	20,083	16%	12,539	33%	12,782	1%	71
One level below transfer	32%	24,100	19%	14,986	36%	13,921	9%	493
Two levels below transfer	29%	22,142	25%	19,626	24%	9,136	20%	1,102
Three levels below transfer	13%	9,814	39%	30,080	7%	2,895	70%	3,964
Total	100%	76,138	100%	77,231	100%	38,733	100%	5,629



Do we respond with a one-answer-fits-all, such as “Take two aspirin and call me in the morning?” Unfortunately that has often been our response. Take this assessment test; now go back and take these courses all over again. This may take a semester or more likely a year if the majority are two levels below transfer. Is it possible to finesse our thinking, to engage the student needs using a more diagnostic analysis and invest resources effectively?

Students come to our colleges with many aspirations and realistically with many basic skills needs. But no student wants to major in basic skills or to devote a year of college reviewing and repeating what they could not catch in their previous education. The truth is most of our students need some help in some area of basic skills, but many do not need an entire course repeated. Is relegating students to repeat an entire course the equivalent of take two aspirins and see me when you are done? The truth is,

and this is a shocking and unacceptable truth, only approximately 50% of those that go back and take those basic skills courses will succeed in them. We definitely need to have those classes available and to meet basic skills needs in a planned and curricular way, but are there ways to explicitly address basic skills needs rather than courses as a whole? Courses are designed to build or scaffold knowledge so there are situations where the entire course is a necessity. But does every student with basic skills needs have to take an entire course?

What we have learned from the Basic Skills Initiative is that we cannot only view these needs in chunks of semester- or quarter-long courses. We need to have a better way to finesse our assessment of students’ needs and then to help them gain specific skills. The Academic Senate regional Basic Skills Initiative training has highlighted some of the very effective alternative ways to help students gain specific skills

while continuing on their college level trajectory. There are many creative interventions being used throughout California community colleges. Here we are highlighting a few very successful interventions, particularly because in the midst of budget cuts if we lose all summer school or all short term courses or greatly reduce our innovative success strategies in the name of saving money, we will be closing the door to the future success of our students, the majority of whom have basic skills needs. Here are three great ideas:

Discrete skills can be developed and students reassessed in summer accelerated programs. Pasadena City College, among others, has a summer program that catapults students through specific basic mathematics skills, called Summer JAM. The compressed and high energy program engages students and ignites the rest of their college career.

Chaffey College has Directed Learning Activities (DLAs) that address distinct basic skills needs as they relate to a particular discipline, for example mathematics activities for automotive students. These DLAs are required of students, outside of class time, in order to catch up to relevant mathematics skills required in a particular course. The student success center provides specific mathematics DLAs developed by the instructors that help students address needs while continuing in their chosen field of study.

Bakersfield College, modeling a concept from Butte College, developed a series of Critical Academic Skills workshops (CAS). These workshops are provided regularly after the semester begins. A little over 50% of the participants are students that faculty specifically directed to the workshops. A sample of the topics include: Colons and Semi-colons, Mastering Spelling, Thesis and Topic Sentences, Repairing Run-ons, Fixing Fragments, Punctuation Perils, Comma Crimes, Appalling Apostrophes, Subject-Verb Agreement, Plagiarism, Test Taking Skills, Attacking Words in Word Problems, Making Multiplication Math Facts Memorable, Preparing Powerful Power Points.

The latest basic skills supplemental Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges (ARCC) report indicates that we do not have adequate basic skills sections—meeting only about 24% of the need statewide. During this budget crisis, basic skills credit and noncredit sections have been reduced at many colleges. Where do those students go? One way to continue serving our students is to reserve the basic skills course sections for those that really need the whole course, and to provide other short-term alternatives for students to pick up discrete skills, get refreshers, or apply the basic skills directly to their field of study. What is your college doing? For more information, look at the Basic Skills Handbook available at <http://www.cccbsi.org/basic-skills-handbook>. ■



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Updating The Faculty Role in Planning and Budgeting Paper?

BY LESLEY KAWAGUCHI, CHAIR, ACCREDITATION AND SLO COMMITTEE

California's current budget meltdown, the significant reductions in funding to the California community colleges, and the need for colleges to meet the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges' (ACCJC's) expectations on budgeting and planning have made Resolution 2.01 S08 timely. This resolution asks the Academic Senate for Cali-

fornia Community Colleges to review its paper *The Faculty Role in Planning and Budgeting* to determine whether any update or further action is warranted in light of the 2002 Accreditation Standards. The paper itself was the result of Resolution 5.07 F99, which asked the Senate's Executive Committee to research "best practices in planning and budgeting processes and to develop and present a paper ... highlighting these practices with recommendations for local academic senates." Written before the 2002 Accreditation Standards were released and applied, one could initially conclude that the paper needs immediate updating, particularly in light of the 2002 Standards which tie planning and budgeting to student learning. Yet, in reading this paper, one is pleasantly surprised by the currency of the principles used and recommendations made in the paper that apply directly to today's accreditation and budget environment.

Yet, in reading this paper, one is pleasantly surprised by the currency of the principles used and recommendations made in the paper that apply directly to today's accreditation and budget environment.

- ◆ In the paper, the fundamental recommendation is that local academic senates exercise their authority under Title 5 §53200(c)(10) to develop institutional planning and budgeting processes in collegial consultation with their governing boards. Moreover, faculty should ensure that planning and budgeting stay focused on providing quality instruction for students. With the 2002 Accreditation Standards and the introduc-

tion of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and assessment, faculty potentially have even greater voice in this area because faculty should now have the data, whether qualitative or quantitative, to demonstrate what they need in order to improve instruction and ultimately, student learning. This goes to the heart of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior College's rubric on planning (see <http://www.barstow.edu/accredit/rubrics.pdf>). Colleges are currently expected to be at the Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement level of the planning rubric. Two bullets on the rubric speak directly to the fundamental recommendation in the planning and budgeting paper:

- ◆ The institution uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and improve student learning.
- ◆ There is consistent and continuous commitment to improving student learning; and educational effectiveness is a demonstrable priority in all planning structures and processes.

In other words, the 2002 Standards strengthen the faculty's role in the budget and planning processes.

The paper then urges local senates to incorporate 25 principles into their planning and budgeting processes. Several of these principles bear repeating because they are coincidentally mentioned by the 2002 Accreditation Standards as effective practices and are strengthened by the faculty's role in SLOs and assessment. The very first principle, "Planning should drive budgeting, never the reverse" is core to Standard I.B and improving institutional effectiveness. With student learning as the core of the 2002 Accreditation Standards, having assessments and data would immeasurably help a college determine its priorities and set goals even in the face of severe budget cuts.

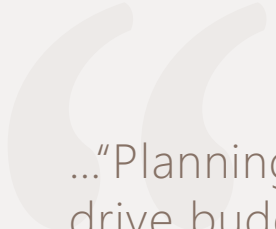
The second principle is just as timely in the current budget meltdown: "Planning should always be for the first-rate, even in the face of second- or third-rate budget allocations." As colleges slash their budgets, those most mindful that student learning is their

core mission will find ways to prune back, rather than wholesale eliminate programs and services.

The third principle, "Planning, coupled with a critical assessment of successes and failures, is a means of taking conscious control of the process of serving students, and enables the emergence and elaboration of best practices," is very much in line with the 2002 Accreditation Standards that colleges assess and evaluate what they are doing for their effectiveness.

And the fourth principle, "Planning, in an academic context, should be a bottom-up process, that trusts to the expertise of faculty to determine what is needed to serve students most effectively," speaks to SLOs and assessment. Faculty primacy in determining the SLOs and their means of assessment provides the data that get linked to program reviews that in turn have budget implications, which "closes the loop."

While these are only four of the 25 principles outlined, the core of the paper is as relevant in 2009 as it was when first called for ten years ago. Based on core principles established by the Academic Senate positions, one can see how the 2002 Accreditation Standards interplay with the paper. Does the paper need updating? At the moment, it probably does not. However, should issues of SLOs, assessment, and budget and planning processes evolve as rapidly as they have in the last couple of years, it probably should be in the not so distant future. ■



...“Planning should drive budgeting, never the reverse” is core to Standard I.B and improving institutional effectiveness.

Herding Cats: Local Senates & the Brown Act

BY RICHARD MAHON, CHAIR, CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

WHEELER NORTH, CHAIR, STANDARDS & PRACTICES

One of the perennial thorny issues that confronts local senates is the question of whether or not they are subject to the Ralph M. Brown Open Meetings Act. The short and simple answer is *yes*, though reasonable minds may disagree on the status of some local senate standing and ad hoc committees.

As most local senate presidents know, public agencies, like locally-elected community college boards of trustees, must meet Brown Act requirements in the conduct of their business. The items to be discussed and acted upon at board meetings must normally be announced to the public 72 hours prior to the meeting at which the board will deliberate. Items may not be acted upon of which the public received no notice.

The question of whether local senates are subject to the Brown Act is explicitly addressed in California Attorney General opinion 83-304, dated July 28, 1983. In that document, the Attorney General concluded that academic senates *are* subject to Brown Act requirements because Title 5 requires that local community college governing boards *must* recognize their local academic senate and thus local senates are subordinate creations of local boards of trustees. Indeed, as most local senate presidents know, local governing boards must stipulate in local policy whether they will “rely primarily” or “reach mutual agreement” with their academic senates in the “10 + 1”

areas stipulated in Title 5 §53200. Similarly, Title 5 §55002(a) establishes a parallel relationship between the local community college governing board and the college’s curriculum committee. A local senate or college which has other standing committees whose recommendations proceed directly to the board (regarding sabbatical leaves, for example) should ensure that those committees also conduct their business in the light of Brown Act requirements.

About these matters there is little controversy or disagreement. As much as possible, public boards *and their subcommittees* should conduct their affairs in public and with adequate notice to the public so that it can participate as it sees fit. The following language comes from the prelude to the Bagley-Keene Act, which is to state agencies what the Brown Act is to local agencies.

The people of this state do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created.

Thus a simple test would ask, “If a matter of public concern were to be decided by a public agency, would I not want every opportunity possible to voice my concerns?”

Brown Act Exceptions

One exclusion from the Brown Act that most do seem to agree upon is the case where the Board has delegated to a person or group the tasks of *implementing* local policy. Thus the Board approves the budget and colleges follow that spending plan as departments meet to create class schedules and purchase equipment and supplies. This can get fuzzy when delegated areas of implementation overlap with policy-setting processes. For example, imagine the following local sabbatical process: the Board has approved three sabbaticals as negotiated; senate processes implement this decision by identifying the best candidates. But the process then calls for the Board to approve these selections. Where does the process transition from policy to implementation?

In practice, interpreting these rules as we determine what to do with each deliberating group can become very gray. There are some districts that follow the high road and Brown Act nearly everything, and there are some who are less inclined.

A second test is a practical one. Some subordinate groups are tasked with a very specific non-policy setting task. A curriculum tech review committee might be charged with ensuring that all Title 5 requirements are met. Thus, if their work process produces a product or information with no advice or recommendation then the Brown Act may not apply. So if this committee forwarded two batches of curriculum—one that contains no errors while the other does, with each error flagged—it would be up to the parent committee to approve, fix, or deny, and the subordinate group made no recommendations with regard to policy or priority. Similarly, if a local senate tasked a committee to go out and find all the regulations pertaining to the Brown Act and report back, this committee may not need to follow the act. But if their task was to *advise* the senate on how to implement the Brown Act, then their deliberations could be construed as falling under the act.


With regard to Brown Act compliance, local senates should consider the golden rule. Local senates should provide the same openness and transparency in their decision-making that they wish their local trustees to provide to the college community and the public.

Additional Nuances

“Serial meetings” are prohibited by the Brown Act. A serial meeting takes place when members of a Board contact each other, one after another (i.e. serially) to arrive at a decision out of the public eye. For this reason, email, blogs, wikis, faxes, and snail-mail are inappropriate tools to use in decision making. Certainly asking for a clarification or confirming a meeting date is allowable, but any required notices must be posted in a location that is accessible to the public. Any materials related to the meeting must be reasonably available for review as well.

New un-agendized items may be introduced at a meeting, but these must be placed on a subsequent meeting agenda to allow for the proper noticing of the item. Parliamentary procedures don’t normally require “first” and “second” reading of action items, but doing this does ensure Brown Act compliance.

In summary, philosophically the Brown Act embodies the ideal of openness and transparency that most academics prefer. It can be challenging to implement in every instance, and it can be challenging to determine when it must be followed, but it is almost always a desirable practice. ■



Local senates should provide the same openness and transparency in their decision-making that they wish their local trustees to provide to the college community and the public.

Accountability Measures in Noncredit; What Next?

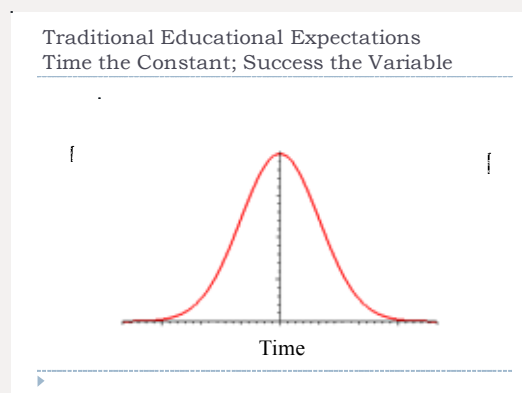
BY JANET FULKS, CHAIR, BASIC SKILLS COMMITTEE AND NONCREDIT AD HOC COMMITTEE CHAIR
DANIEL S. PITTAWAY, NORTH ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
VIVIAN IKEDA, CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

As much as we would like accountability to go away, it is not going to. We are seeing with the current political climate that accountability is increasing in education, not decreasing. The noncredit enhanced funding came with mandatory accountability reports attached. So what do we do for noncredit accountability? The first reports were frustrating given that the student success data for noncredit courses appear as zero because success is currently defined as completion with a grade of C or better. In noncredit, there are no official grades or progress reports in the college MIS database. Many noncredit program data exist only in shadow systems of the credit college because the different pedagogy and record keeping cause anomalies in the credit reporting.

So what do we do about noncredit accountability? Noncredit faculty have decided to become participants guiding their own accountability measures, using their expertise to explain and define what success is for noncredit. In many areas of noncredit education open entry—open exit courses and non-grading practices make it difficult to describe student success in terms legislators understand, vitally needed in order to substantiate and continue the funding. However, faculty are working to document noncredit work and student achievement. The robust noncredit discussions are revealing important aspects of our community college values and unique strategies

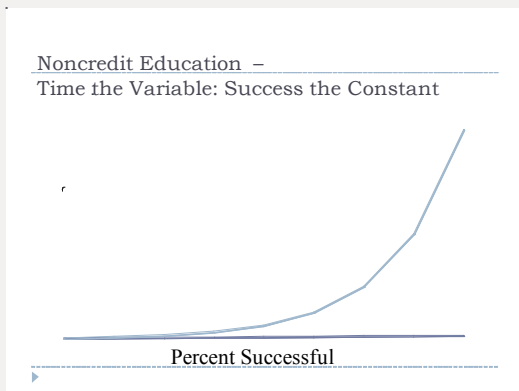
targeting student populations that are served best by the noncredit pedagogy.

The differences between credit and noncredit are numerous, but certainly time is an important difference. Traditional credit education is always confined to a specific time frame; a semester, a quarter, an academic year. The success graph for traditional education is somewhat bell shaped, where time is held constant and success varies; some students succeed within that time, some do not. In *It's All About Time!*¹ Lee Shulman questions why, in traditional education, time is the constant and success the variable.



In noncredit education the constant is success and the variable is time. Students are given adequate time because the goal, the constant they strive for, is success.

¹ Shulman, L. (2008). *It's All About Time!* <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/perspectives/sub.asp?key=245&subkey=2483>



Research indicates this is particularly important in language acquisition. The vast majority of noncredit students are in ESL. What differentiates noncredit students from credit students is not so much the kind of language skills they acquire, but for what purpose they use these skills and the time they have or don't have to attain language skills. *California Pathways*¹ points out that it can take as long as ten years to learn a second language well enough to succeed academically. For this reason alone, it seems justified to liberalize the number of years the state expects a student to be in noncredit, recognizing that a compressed window of 2-3 years is not a wide enough lens to capture the true pace of noncredit participation nor to allow language acquisition at college level.

So how do we communicate success in noncredit? A metric of success for noncredit could be defined as simply progressing from one level to the next within the noncredit system. It could be accounted for by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) benchmark reporting (i.e., significant gains) or by course promotion statistics (i.e., number of students moving from Beginning High to Intermediate Low). These “smaller scale” metrics more accurately reflect the reality of what success means to many students who are in noncredit ESL programs. In addition, the Academic Senate has brought together noncredit faculty to develop rubrics that will allow

us to track student progression (see the final paragraph below). But noncredit education is so much more than progressing through levels.

Noncredit education is mandated by the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which charges California and other states with establishing adult education programs that prepare adults with basic skills for employment. It is important to note that a student who achieves a personal goal is not any less successful or valuable to the economy than a student who earns a degree. An individual who has met his or her personal goal can become just as motivated to contribute to society or the economy as someone who earns a degree. There is no inherent truth to the notion that one student's final destination is any more or less successful than another. While it cannot be debated that one's earning *potential* is positively correlated to degree status, it must be remembered that potential is just that—potential. A student whose ambitions are to become more active in her community and a citizen are just as valuable as anyone who goes out and gets an AA degree. These factors need to be considered in noncredit accountability.

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), created in 1991, addressed competencies necessary for skilled workers. Being better workers is certainly a major goal that noncredit students have. Our noncredit courses have addressed SCANS competencies for many years, as well as Equipped for the Future (EFF), “a customer-driven, standards-based reform process” for adult education which prepares students not only to enter the workplace, but to become better participants in American society and support the notion of life-long learning. Are there ways to communicate noncredit student success related to SCANS and EFF? But noncredit is so much more than workplace preparedness.

There is also the nature of noncredit education itself compared to credit programs to consider. Many noncredit programs, such as ESL, are as much focused on teaching life skills as they are basic reading, writing, and consumer mathematics. This heavy emphasis on life skills instruction, cultural norms, and civic engagement is yet another aspect that uniquely defines

¹ California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages [CATESOL]. (2000). *California Pathways: The Second Language Student in High Schools, Colleges and Universities*. A project of the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

A metric of success for noncredit could be defined as simply progressing from one level to the next within the noncredit system.

noncredit education. And again, it is here, within the civic life skills realm, that many students achieve their personal or vocational goals by achieving citizenship, obtaining employment, or simply becoming more involved in their community via volunteering or active participation in local civic matters. And these successes need to be reflected in the accountability data because the results are already there; the information just needs to be lined up and sent to the right channels.

Students who feel successful, whether their goal is personal, academic, or vocational, are more confident, and thus more likely to contribute positively to the workforce and economy in a number of ways: as consumer, producer, and civic participant. Again, it matters less which path a student chooses than the simple fact that the student progresses on a path at all.

The noncredit faculty just completed CB 21 rubrics in noncredit ABE/ASE reading, writing, mathematics and ESL in an effort to communicate student progress. They will be revisiting these rubrics in Spring 2010 to see whether they can be perfected. But describing student success in noncredit includes



determining how to indicate student success when students have different goals, most of which are not transfer or collection of units. Is success completion of a personal goal or a critical mass of hours attended or progress reports or something entirely new? Understanding and defining this comes down to the entirely unique nature of noncredit adult education and its *holistic* approach. That is, students are afforded the opportunity to explore and achieve not only academic goals, but also vocational and community-based goals. These pathways allow students to progress and succeed in traditional and not-so-traditional ways. The challenge is communicating this to legislators and those outside of noncredit education. ■

The Categorical Saga

BY MICHELLE PILATI, VICE PRESIDENT

The past few months have been a challenge for us all on so many levels. As we face unprecedented budget cuts, funding deferrals, and surges in enrollment, we also are getting a glimpse into the politics of it all. It is clear that some of our programs, and some of our student populations, have been deemed not worthy of the state's resources. And those who care about student success and understand that success requires appropriate and adequate support are likely convinced that student success has been found not worthy. All this at a time when the calls for more degrees and such are louder than ever—perhaps the solution is to automatically grant degrees when students complete 60 units of anything—removing the need for counselors, evaluators, and the like. I can see it now—“California Community Colleges—Your Diploma Mill.” Ah, but I digress—my mission here is to tell the tale of the categoricals—a tragic story, for sure. I'll start with an aside and then get more focused.

At the start of the summer I participated in a presentation on the state of our colleges—where I bemoaned the California State University (CSUs) and University of California (UCs) desire for “flexibility”. I disparaged

the word to such an extent that the other presenters had to apologize each time they used it. For our colleges, limiting money to selected categorical items ensures funding for student support. Why is that so essential? Because counseling, assessment, educational planning, and other matriculation-related functions don't generate FTEs. Thus, those who have dollars as their primary focus would prefer to use those funds for activities that generate dollars.

While the concept of “flexibility” and an interest in “relief from regulations” is not a new push from our administrators, the systemwide message has not been one of concern for our students.

As our budgets are slashed, we are told to focus on basic skills, transfer, and career technical education—with no reminder that support services are needed for us to engage in these missions and maximize student success. The

message has none too subtly encouraged the decimation of some noncredit programs, even those that have the most readily apparent positive impact for the state as a whole. But that is hardly the most alarming element of this saga. The federal government and its



**COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DIPLOMA MILL**

American Recovery and Re-investment Act (ARRA) funds were touted as being the answer to the devastating cuts that the state was making to categorical programs. And allowing “flexibility” with respect to certain categorical funding streams was intended to allow local districts to determine where to dedicate their funding.

Much of this was unveiled and explained in detail at the Chancellor’s Office Annual Statewide Budget Workshops. Twelve “categorical” areas were identified as having the “flexibility” option. In reality, only 10 categorical areas really mattered—as two of the line items listed are only technically categoricals (the Academic Senate and Economic Development). Here’s the interesting thing: if you opt to take advantage of your “flex” option, then you are relieved of all reporting mandates that the Chancellor’s Office can remove for those areas. But, if you don’t, all the old rules apply. As I pondered this, someone asked the essential question “So, we have to move \$1 in order to have that relief?” The answer was a yes. Note, of course, that money can only be moved out of the designated categorical areas and then into other categoricals.

The rules, or lack thereof, are in effect until 2013. A college could opt to simply move all funds out of one categorical area—but then they would still get dollars for that line item. Apprenticeship is one such area—you could take all those dollars and spend them on matriculation functions—and continue to get funds for that categorical over the next few years.

I really haven’t gotten to the element I find the most bothersome. At the time of this workshop, the stated estimate of the ARRA funds we would be receiving was \$130 million. If \$130 million in ARRA dollars came to our colleges, various categorical functions were being told that they would be looking at a cut of 32%. And now, here we are, with the final figures in hand—a mere \$35 million.

All categoricals have taken a devastating hit—and it is not over. While the amount of ARRA funds

“All categoricals have taken a devastating hit—and it is not over.”

being distributed is based on the size of the reductions in the categorical funding streams, there is no mandate, no requirement, not even a suggestion that these funds must go to the categorical areas that they have been based on. If we did our home finances this way we’d all be eating dog food while driving expensive cars. Here’s the qualifier on the document distributed in early October that provides “simulated” allocations—**“ARRA State Stabilization funds are displayed broken out by categorical program to show how funding eligibility was determined. Under federal law, ARRA State Stabilization Funds are general purpose.”** While it is one thing for Washington to not care about our devastated essential programs, perhaps someone in Sacramento could at least hint that it is no accident that your ARRA dollars are being based on your categorical cuts?

What now? Now it is time for you to be a local advocate. If you don’t know what all of this really means—if “matriculation” is merely a cool sounding word that you find amusing—talk to the people on your campus who engage in these important functions so that you can be a strong advocate for ensuring that your ARRA dollars are allocated as they should be. While we will always have classes and students, which students will we still have when this is all over? And what support services will remain to help them achieve their goals? While we struggle through these hard times, it is imperative to look to the future and ensure that all elements of a properly funded educational institution are intact when some sort of normalcy is restored. ■

Why Should We Care About Categoricals?

BY COUNSELING & LIBRARY FACULTY ISSUES COMMITTEE
AND THE TRANSFER & ARTICULATION COMMITTEE

Elimination of new student orientations, students registering for classes without assessing in mathematics and English, no student education plans. These are just a few of the examples of what might be in store for our campuses this year due to the unprecedented cuts to categorical programs. In July, the Governor signed into law a state budget that not only included deep funding cuts to categoricals, but also mandated significant policy changes allowing districts flexibility to move funds between categorical programs.

Programs and Their Respective Cuts

Some of the deepest cuts were suffered by Matriculation, Transfer Education and Articulation, Economic Development, Child Care Tax Bailout, Apprenticeship, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Equal Employment Opportunity, Part-Time Faculty Compensation, Health Insurance, and Office Hours—all at 32%. Other categorical programs receiving 15-16% less funding this year than last include Basic Skills, DSPS, EOPS, CARE, Fund for Student Success, Nursing, and CalWORKS. Telecommunications/Technology Services was hit with a 19% reduction. Foster Care Education and Student Financial Aid Administration were the only two programs spared.

Everyone held out hope that the estimated \$138M ARRA dollars for California Community Colleges would help stop the bleeding, including the legislature. In fact, all of the percentages above are based on the ability to backfill these programs with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) monies. Sadly, not only did our system receive a paltry 27% of that \$138M (\$37M), the Department of Finance determined that while the legislature sought to backfill each categorical cut with federal resources, backfilling was not permitted under ARRA guidelines that required funds to be “unrestricted”. That interpretation will no doubt result in mid-year cuts.

Flexibility Sounds Good, But Is It?

Under the 09-10 Budget Act, certain categorical programs (Matriculation, Transfer Education and Articulation, Economic Development, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Child-care Tax Bail Out, Equal Employment Opportunity, Apprenticeship, and Part-Time Office Hours, Health Insurance, and Compensation) have flexibility provisions which allow districts to redirect funds away from those programs to support any other categorical program funded in the state budget. Additionally, before exercising this flexibility, districts are required to discuss the redirection of funds at a regularly scheduled public meeting and take testimony from the public. This policy change decimates the very core of categorical programs:

“Additionally, before exercising this flexibility, districts are required to discuss the redirection of funds at a regularly scheduled public meeting and take testimony from the public.

protected funding. Furthermore, to make matters worse, any district exercising this funding flexibility is relieved of all state statutory, regulatory, and provisional requirements associated with the programs contained in the flexibility category. Lacking such mandates, students will go without assessment, orientation, counseling, and follow-up.

How Will These Cuts And The Flexibility Provision Play Out On Our Campuses?

In 2007, Governor Schwarzenegger stated, “California’s colleges and universities have great engineering programs and the capacity to produce more engineers. Our challenge is getting more students into these programs and ready for the job opportunities that await them after graduation”. The Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) Program addresses this challenge and has contributed to increasing the number of students graduating in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Fields. Yet, the MESA Community College Program (MCCP) at Mission College, which is funded through the Funds for Student Success (FSS) allotment, has suffered a \$30,932 reduction in grant funds per program. The total allocation for the 09-10 academic year is

now \$50,568 compared to the standard \$81,500. As a result of the decrease in grant funds, MCCP’s will have to make difficult decisions regarding services and student support. In response to the decreased budget, the Mission College MESA Program has reduced its number of tutors from six to four and has already planned to offer fewer leadership and professional development activities. Although these two reduced services are vital to the success of MESA Students, Mission College MESA is working on developing creative, less costly alternatives as a temporary solution to the budget crisis. Thus far, creative solutions have included collaboration of tutoring services among student support programs and partnering of MESA events among MCCP’s. These solutions may provide temporary relief, but if implemented over an extended period of time, they can prove detrimental to the success of MESA Students. Because MESA students are financially, academically and economically disadvantaged, absence of individualized services could sever the personal connection required for successful MESA student matriculation.

Without ARRA assistance, DSPTS programs statewide would endure a 27% cut. However, the 1973 Federal Rehabilitation Act (section 504 and 508) and the 1991 Americans with Disabilities Act mandate that students with disabilities have a right to equal access. Unlike matriculation, whether the cut is 16% or 27% the obligation does not go away. No matter what the state funding cuts to DSPTS are, colleges are still required to provide interpreters for students who are deaf and hard of hearing; Braille and tactile materials for students who are blind; alternate media for students with various disabilities; testing accommodations, including extended time on tests, for students with various disabilities; note takers; specialized computer equipment and software; scribes; steno captioning; and many other methods that provide access and allow a student to navigate and successfully complete a college education. The college DSPTS program numbers may not be “capped” and services must remain available. Nor can DSPTS services be discontinued and then

brought back when state funding is restored. College leadership needs to be mindful that providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities is not a luxury, but a responsibility.

Telecommunications and Technology Infrastructure Program (TTIP) funds are dedicated to California Community Colleges (CCC) to support an assortment of technologies including the support of library databases. And while the Telecommunications and Technology Services categorical is not subject to flexibility, TTIP was cut by 19% this year and the largest cut was the \$4 million that pays for library databases. In effect this would bring an end to the ability of libraries to provide access to journals and magazines. Faculty and students would no longer be able to rely on an assortment of periodical databases such as Ebsco or ProQuest. And given that many campuses significantly reduced their paper periodical holdings some years ago, the loss of these databases will essentially mean the disappearance of most, if not all library periodical resources.

Our transfer centers are already cutting staff and operating hours, reducing classroom visits and workshops, cancelling transfer fairs and campus tours, and eliminating important transfer materials due to reductions in printing/supplies budgets. UC and CSU are targeting community college outreach in their own efforts to trim operating expenses. Coupled with the lost resources on our campuses, this will cripple transfer centers, leaving students to guide themselves through the complicated maze of transfer.

What's Being Done?

And the worst part could be yet to come. The Chancellor's Office expects 2010-2011 to be even more painful for categoricals when ARRA funds are no longer available. On a positive note, the Chancellor's Office continues to advocate on our behalf and has submitted its annual System Budget Proposal for 2010-11 requesting restoration of the

full \$313M cut in 09-10. We have other supporters voicing opposition to the cuts as well. Former Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) President Bill Hewitt testified before the Board of Governors to denounce the Legislature's drastic cuts to categorical programs. "When you examine the impact these categorical cuts have had on individual campuses and multiply that by the 110 community colleges across the State" explained Hewitt, "you begin to see the dismantling of valuable programs that serve the most needy students in our communities. The core of these programs may never recover because of the disproportionate cuts." We all must wage a campaign on our own campuses to fight for general fund backfill for any categorical program subject to cuts. Our students' success depends on it. ■



Our transfer centers are already cutting staff and operating hours, reducing classroom visits and workshops, cancelling transfer fairs and campus tours, and eliminating important transfer materials due to reductions in printing/supplies budgets.

There and Back Again: Moving Toward Content-Review Based Prerequisites

BY RICHARD MAHON, CHAIR, CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

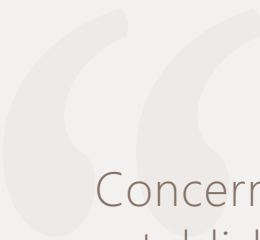
In Spring 2009, the Academic Senate adopted resolutions 9.02 and 9.03, calling for “changes... to Title 5 language on prerequisites that [would]... allow local faculty to base their determination for prerequisites of English, reading, or mathematics for collegiate level courses on content review” (9.02) and for “potential pilot projects, easily replicable at all colleges, for applying basic skills prerequisites to general education courses” (9.03). The question now is how to fulfill the requirements of these resolutions as effectively as possible.

Concern over establishing meaningful but not overly restrictive prerequisites has long been a concern of the Academic Senate. Searching past resolutions for “prerequisites” fills ten webpages from the Academic Senate’s resolution search engine and is the focus in an adopted Senate paper (*Good Practices for the Implementation of Prerequisites* 1997). More recently, Nancy Shulock’s “Rules of the Game” (2007) brought wider attention to the question of prerequisites as she criticized community colleges for their acceptance of enrollment policies which allow students to enroll in classes in which they are not adequately prepared to succeed.

Fewer and fewer community college faculty have been in the system long enough to recall the era when then-system chancellor David Mertes negotiated our current arrangement of “data [gathered] according to sound research practices” (Title 5 §55003(e)) as part of a 1991 out-of-court settlement in response to the Mexican American Legal Defense & Education Fund (MALDEF) suit against

Fullerton College. It is to undo the requirement for “course-by-course” (53003(g)) data collection and validation that the Senate is now embarked on piloting content review based prerequisite validation in order to move away from the regulations developed under then Chancellor Mertes.

An ironic consequence of the 1991 Chancellor’s Office agreement with MALDEF is that §53003 requires that colleges be particularly concerned about “disproportionate impact on particular groups of students described in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age or disability,” but it is arguable that success rates for these and other students in *many* courses have been adversely affected by the onerous process through which communication and computation



Concern over establishing meaningful but not overly restrictive prerequisites has long been a concern of the Academic Senate.

prerequisites must be established under current regulations.

The pilot project called for in 9.03 is targeted on *general education* courses. A number of questions immediately suggest themselves. What general education area should the pilot focus on? What course should be the initial prerequisite? Where should the pilot project take place? Should they be regionally based? How many pilot projects can be established and evaluated across the state in a period of fiscal crisis?

Some answers are also clear: pilot projects should apply to a broad enough sample of classes that students can't avoid prerequisites by taking non-pilot courses. The prerequisite course should be rigorous enough to provide the skills necessary to produce increased success but not so high as to decimate the population of students eligible to enroll in the target course. If a significant number of courses are involved in the pilot, the pilot should not take place at a college where students could easily enroll in comparable courses at neighboring colleges unless surrounding colleges are also involved in the pilot project.

Academic Senate president Jane Patton will be forming a task force, chaired by the Academic Senate and with expanded membership from administrative ranks and others to be determined. The goal of this group will be to anticipate and plan for the stumbling blocks that are likely to emerge as implementation of the Senate's resolution seeks to identify ways of phasing in prerequisites based on content review via methods that are as undistruptive to students and colleges as possible. There will be a breakout at Fall Plenary Session to provide faculty the opportunity to learn more about how our efforts to revise Title 5 §53003 and prepare for pilot projects are proceeding. ■

Upcoming Events

2010 Teaching Institute

February 19 - 20, 2010

Doubletree Orange County/Anaheim, Anaheim, CA

2010 Vocational Education Institute

March 11 - 13, 2010

Silverado Resort, Napa, CA

2010 Accreditation Institute

March 19 - 20, 2010

Hyatt Regency Newport Beach, Newport Beach, CA

2010 Spring Session

April 15 - 17, 2010

SFO Hyatt Regency, Millbrae, CA

2010 Leadership Institute

June 17 - 19, 2010

San Diego Hilton Resort and Spa, San Diego, CA

2010 SLO Institute

July 7, 2010

Santa Clara Marriott, Santa Clara, CA

2010 Curriculum Institute

July 8 - 10, 2010

Santa Clara Marriott, Santa Clara, CA

Julie's Inbox

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

Dear Julie,

Discussions have come up on our campus about evaluations. The union wants to start reviewing some of the aspects of evaluations, and many of our part-time faculty members who lost jobs due to budget cuts are angry since they feel our evaluation process did not adequately include and protect them. What role does the senate have in evaluations, and where should we begin the conversation?

Looking for the starting line

Dear LSL

The senate does have a role in determining the evaluation process, so we are glad you asked about it. Education Code §87663 describes most of the required aspects of the evaluation process. The only noted differences between evaluating full- and part-time faculty are the timelines and frequencies of evaluation. The Academic Senate recommends that there be only one evaluation process for all faculty; however it is recognized that differences in job duties between full- and part-time faculty may cause the evaluation criteria to vary slightly.

Education Code §87663(f) states that “in those districts where faculty evaluation procedures are collectively bargained, the faculty’s exclusive representative shall consult with the academic senate prior to engaging in collective bargaining regarding those procedures.” Your senate can wait for an invitation to join the conversation or send a gentle reminder to the union leadership of the senate’s role as defined above. Different timelines and protocols by the union may cause the senate some challeng-

es, so a call to the union leadership earlier rather than later is recommended. This is the best place to begin.

Section 87633 of Education Code also dictates the required participants in the evaluation process. Section (c) states that “evaluations shall include, but not be limited to, a peer review process,” and states in sections (g) and (i) that it is the intent of the Legislature that both students and administrators be included in the evaluation process to the extent possible. The senate will have to decide if and how to include students and administrators in the process, but more importantly, the faculty will have to take ownership of the peer review process named in the law.

Some questions that your senate can consider are: What does good and great teaching (counseling, assisting students in the library, etc.) look like? Is there a difference? How do we know it when we see it? What other factors are important when evaluating peers? Is self-evaluation desirable? How can colleagues develop coaching language to assist in the improvement of teaching? What are some techniques for evaluating online classes? What about other less-traditional types of instruction? What training is required for faculty to feel confident in evaluating peers?

We encourage you to have broad, campus-wide discussions among all faculty—full-time and part-time—to generate answers to the above questions. Only then will the senate be positioned to provide recommendations to the union. Good luck! ■

Do Career Technical Faculty Stand Alone?

BY DIANNA CHIABOTTI, CHAIR, OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE

Career technical education (CTE) faculty are often isolated on their campuses. They typically spend more hours in direct student contact due to inequities in what constitutes a full-time teaching load, and the programs are often coordinated and taught by one (or less) full-time faculty member.

Relative to other faculty, CTE faculty have less time to collaborate with same-discipline faculty, faculty from other disciplines, community partners, and other staff on their campuses. Yet, as a condition of Perkins grants and numerous other mandates they must create pathways and articulation agreements with high schools; ensure that their program has an advisory committee; participate on the advisory committee; create partnerships with businesses; market their programs; and defend their programs from continuous budget cuts and attacks. Often times they are called upon to plan for, acquire, and maintain all of their lab equipment and facilities. These requirements place undue pressure on CTE faculty and require countless hours that have the potential to far exceed the required time commitment of other disciplines while negotiating the constant pressure to keep enrollments unrealistically high. As a result, CTE faculty are often over worked and have difficulty developing and maintaining relationships with other groups and the community. If the nature of their programs requires them to rely heavily upon the use of laboratory coursework to develop student's skills and capabilities, their teaching schedule leaves little time for much of the above, or for any type of local leadership engagement.

Ironically, state and national data consistently indicate that community college vocational student success rates are always the highest when compared to students who are in programs that meet our other mission areas.

So, what can CTE faculty do? Do they continue to stand alone?

Since CTE faculty are seriously committed to faculty primacy on the 10+1, they rarely ask for help from others on their campus. They are in constant fear of letting administration facilitate or help with tasks that are deemed as faculty purview in part because they must continuously defend their programs from budget and resource reductions, or outright program closure by those very same administrators. We suggest it is time for a change. This change can happen without giving up our responsibilities and rights. This change can happen without administration usurping our role and infringing on the 10+1.

CTE Deans are generally former CTE faculty with the real-life experience of trying to balance the responsibilities without enough time. As deans they are in a prime position to make your life easier. We suggest that we change our paradigm for CTE deans. Rather than demonizing them, we should see them as agents who are there to help us serve students. To make our life easier by informing us about changes in the laws and regulations that are CTE specific but not discipline specific; by making the distribution of local VTEA funds transparent and with full budget disclosure; by including all CTE coordinators and faculty in the planning of the VTEA grants and budget; and by facilitating relationships with high schools, Regional Occupational Programs (ROPs), and businesses.

It could easily be argued that an effective administrator evaluation rubric would seek to promote this kind of behavior just as similar evaluation processes do for faculty. While not necessarily mandatory in regulation, the success rates demonstrated by CTE programs seems to demonstrate that all students can benefit when fac-

ulty and administrators provide this kind of collaborative support for their respective programs regardless of which mission cohort they serve.

As well, local faculty should be arguing to support all our colleagues who are subjected to gross and discriminatory practices. The lecture/lab-activity inequity is merely one, but there are many more: full-time/part-time, credit/non-credit pay and benefits, general program support, extreme variances in operating costs, a funding model that promotes the elimination of these programs in spite of their being the most successful. This list goes on and on.

It is rather odd that we are willing to fight the good fight for our students but we often fail to extend that effort to our most challenged colleagues. Yet when we want our children educated, when we want a nurse who will inject us with the correct substance, when we want to operate a safe vehicle or fly on an airplane that isn't going to crash, when we call for help from the fire or police departments in our direst moments, we fail to notice that these life-changing people graduated from those very programs we regularly fail to adequately support.

Change your paradigm. Talk with your dean. Request that funding sources and distribution of CTE funds use a transparent and participatory process. Then, take a deep breath, and strategize with your dean and other CTE faculty on ways to facilitate the mandated connections between your program and others. Educate your dean on the intricacies of your program. Give them talking points. Provide them with specifics. Arm them with the information that they will need to negotiate on your behalf and begin the initial steps toward career pathways and ladders. Have them do the planning and scheduling of meetings. Enlist your administrative colleagues to assist you.

With changes in funding streams, threats to faculty primacy, and continued attacks on the value of CTE at community colleges, we must work with our deans!! We must stop running on hamster wheels. We must stop living in fear of our administrators. We must begin collaboration with our deans that is meaningful and productive. They may have crossed over, but we can show them the light! We can take the first step toward a meaningful relationship. ■

Chancellor's Office CB21 Training Webinar Sessions:

Session	Date	Time	CCC Confer Passcode
1	November 17, 2009	10:00 am to 11:15 am	847679
2	November 18, 2009	2:00 pm to 3:15 pm	705926
3	December 3, 2009	10:00 am to 11:15 am	306913

Step 1:

Go to www.CCCConfer.org Website.

1. Click "Participant Login" under "Meet and Confer".
2. Find Meeting title.
3. Click "Go" next to the desired meeting time.

Step 2:

1. Dial into the audio conference phone number (888) 886-3951.
2. The passcode is the same for the website and phone line.
3. Please log into CCCConfer 15 minutes early if you have never used CCCConfer on your computer.
4. Pop-ups will need to be enabled.

In preparation for the upcoming webinar, please create a spreadsheet of your current Credit and Noncredit reading, mathematics, English and ESL courses that includes the college's current CB04, CB05, CB08, CB21 and CB22 data assigned to those courses.

It is important that the recoding process involve discipline faculty experts in each discipline, the CIO and the person who inputs the coding into your MIS system. It is also highly suggested that the researcher be part of this process in order to create a better understanding of the useful applications of these metrics at the local level and in using this coding element in the basic skills supplemental report

The Accelerated Learning College, California Leadership Alliance for Student Success, and Embracing Faculty Leadership

BY JANE PATTON, ACADEMIC SENATE PRESIDENT
RICHARD MAHON, CHAIR, CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

By now most community college faculty leaders have gotten used to the chorus of voices that want to fix community colleges, generally based on the assumption that colleges should do more with the same resources, or more recently, that colleges should do more with *fewer* resources. Whether it's the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy, the Hewlett Foundation, the Campaign for College Opportunity, or (most recently), the California Leadership Alliance for Student Success, these organizations and initiatives have all demonstrated a troubling ability to propose changes to California law and regulation without so much as a nod toward the state Academic Senate, the organization that represents the 60,000 faculty who actually teach, counsel and support California's diverse community college student population.

It is certainly not the case that the Academic Senate believes all existing laws, regulations and practices are flawless; Academic Senate resolutions regularly recommend modification that faculty believe will allow them to educate students more effectively (e.g. see this *Rostrum's* article on the Senate's work on pre-requisites). It *is* the case, however, that the Senate believes that recognition of both faculty expertise and trust in the ability of community college constituency groups to work together provide the most promising pathway to enhanced student success.

Two recent initiatives to modify California law and regulation come from the Accelerated Learning College (ALC) proposal and the California Leadership Alliance for Student Success (CLASS). The ALC proposal is sponsored by four community college districts and seeks legislative "relief" from over a score of Education Code statutes and over half a dozen Title 5 regulations. The goal of the ALC initiative is to allow colleges to collect apportionment for students who *complete* an academic term (whether successful or not) in order to see if colleges who are rewarded for *completion* can gradually improve student success. The opportunities to be extended to ALC colleges (proposed as a maximum of four districts) include: the ability to charge and retain student fees; exemption from the 50% law; the authority to determine minimum qualifications for instruction locally; to allow administrators to serve as academic employees in tutoring centers; the right to self certify courses for transferability to the UC and CSU; the authority for districts to approve courses and programs without Chancellor's office or CEPC approval.

While the authors of the ALC proposal acknowledge the importance of involving *local* faculty, and the ALC proposal makes it clear that the agreement of the local academic senate and bargaining agent would be required before legislated relief could be locally implemented, this initiative proposes strate-

gies that to many faculty are frightening. And while this pilot project would occur in four districts, the long-term goal is permanent, statewide, mandated change.

The full name of the CLASS Initiative, California Leadership Alliance for Student Success, seems ironic in that the initiative is directed by the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin. Unlike the ALC, however, the CLASS initiative does little to acknowledge the role of faculty leaders (and for that matter, state level administrative leaders) in California community colleges. The CLASS project is aimed at community college presidents, chancellors and board of trustee members; indeed, the local governing board is expected to adopt a resolution “in full support of the California Leadership Alliance for Student Success” (the language is quoted from a “Sample Board of Trustees Resolution” provided to participants). The project aims to strengthen college leadership to effect student success, but that leadership does not include faculty in the project’s design.

While the CLASS Project is focused on the pledging of *local* research resources and the commitment of local leadership to monthly meetings focused on discussion and analysis of local student success data, the project organizers have also provided a 15 point policy grid with specific *state* policy recommendation that appear unconnected with the *local* research component of the project. Among the policy recommendations are #4, “Increase Student Fees”; #6, “Amend [but not abandon] the 50% law”; #8, “Standardize Assessment Instruments,” and #11, “Develop Transfer Associate Degrees.” The CLASS initiative has already begun to roll out on some campuses with the local emphasis placed on the data collection and analysis portion of the project; faculty have been positive on the campuses where the unveiling has taken place, though little has been said locally about the initiative’s broader policy agenda.

It should be emphasized that it is not the policy agenda *per se* that the Senate finds objectionable, but the structuring of the initiative to involve CEO and trustees and *not* to involve faculty. Although we must remember that other states do not have Education Code and Title 5 that lay out the local and state roles for faculty in academic and professional matters, this must not be seen as an excuse for initiatives that bypass faculty. It’s clear that CLASS sponsors are aware of the existence of the Academic Senate, since policy initiative #10 refers to an Academic Senate project in English composition. Indeed, there are a number of proposals in both the ALC and CLASS documents that the Senate would enthusiastically support (they are consistent with adopted resolutions), and others in which the initiatives’ authors might invite the Senate to reconsider its past positions. The Senate *does* have a long history of working collaboratively, even with groups with whom we have areas of disagreement.

While a pessimist might raise concerns about possible hidden agendas in these initiatives, an optimist could say that the colleges would do well to try some new approaches. However, to the extent that any organization really hopes to improve educational outcomes for California community college students, there really is no way they can avoid working with faculty. We are clear about that; others may not be. The announced intent of the ALC colleges to work with their senates and bargaining agents and the commitment of the CLASS Project to using data to identify possible interventions to promote student success may indeed be promising; however, a critical ingredient—faculty leadership in the design as well as the implementation—has yet to be realized. ■

Transfer Degrees—Elephants in the Room, Lines in the Sand, Hills to Die on, and Dead Horses

BY MICHELLE L. PILATI, VICE PRESIDENT

The subject of “transfer degrees” has never died but has become a topic of greater interest as of late. To the outsider, the issues are simple and the faculty perspective may be one that is easily dismissed, viewed as “elitist”, and/or in need of a legislative fix. Your local and personal elephants, lines, hills, and horses are likely to be touched upon here—and as there are diverse views amongst us, you are left to identify them. There is, of course, a common starting point—but then the divisions begin. I would like to hope that there are fewer divisions than there have been historically—but perhaps that’s my own bit of head-in-the-sand indulgence.

We all want students to succeed. We all care about students. We all believe that our colleges offer students an array of certificate and degree options that are of value. We don’t think that there should be unnecessary obstacles to certificate and degree completion. But, as always, the devil is in the details—your “obstacle” may be someone else’s hill and the real obstacles may be elephants that no one wants to confront. Where is the common ground? How can we unite when perspectives are so varied?

Our conversations about the degrees in question really began in Fall 2006—shortly after we took the position that our mathematics and English graduation requirements should be raised and during a time period when we were considering the “meaning” of our degrees, which culminated in last spring’s resolution that defined the AA and AS. At the Fall 2006

plenary we passed the following resolutions—which are included here in their entirety as the “whereas” clauses provide a context that should be kept in mind.

9.02 Eliminate the word “Transfer” in Degree Titles

Whereas, The use of the word “transfer” in degree titles may lead students to believe the completion of the degree ensures transfer to a four-year institution; and

Whereas, Students may believe that all courses they successfully complete for a “transfer” degree are transferable;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges work with local senates, local curriculum committees, and chief instructional officers (CIOs) to eliminate the use of the term “transfer” in program titles for the associate degree.

13.02 Opposition to Associate Degrees based Solely on IGETC and CSU GE Breadth

Whereas, Title 5 requires “At least 18 semester or 27 quarter units of study taken in a single discipline or related disciplines” (§55806) to provide an area of emphasis for the associate degree, and an associate degree without this area of emphasis devalues the concept of the associate degree;

Whereas, Many in the field have expressed that the associate degree needs to be used to capture numbers, further devaluing the degree;

Whereas, The use of IGETC and/or CSU GE Breadth as the sole basis for the associate degree reduces local control and subjects the associate degree to determination by groups external to the community colleges; and

Whereas, The use of IGETC and/or CSU GE Breadth in fulfillment of local general education requirements together with necessary units in an area of focus is clearly consistent with Title 5 and is not the issue under consideration here;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges oppose the use of IGETC and/or CSU GE Breadth as the sole basis for the area of emphasis for the associate degree; and

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges support interpretation of Title 5 that prohibits the use of IGETC and/or CSU GE Breadth as the sole basis for the area of emphasis for the associate degree.

A lot has happened since these resolutions were passed. At the same time that colleges were called upon to ensure that their degrees were compliant, what the “major” component could consist of was expanded and an “area of emphasis” was introduced as an alternative to the more restrictive “major.” In response, we have created new certificates and degrees, and we have increased the ways that we recognize student accomplishments. The term “Certificate of Achievement” can now only be used for those certificates that receive approval from the Chancellor’s Office—a means of increasing their value and differentiating them from the variety of local certificates that colleges can award. Certificates of Achievement are the only credit certificates that can be transcribed and can now be awarded for certificates of 12-18 units and for completion of a transfer general education pattern. Thus, the student who fails to complete degree requirements—



Thus, the student who fails to complete degree requirements—for whatever reason—may have various other awards to show for his/her time at our colleges.

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And now an elephant I will call out—many, if not most, colleges developed degrees that have an area of emphasis that is roughly the equivalent to one or two general education areas—not too terribly far off from the “GE compilation” degrees of the past. These elephants, however, are far more philosophically aligned with what Title 5 called for than merely completing both a local and a transfer general education pattern. And even have the potential of guiding students in their course selections in a manner that just might benefit them. If a student completed an area of emphasis in “Social Sciences”, for example, he may very well complete the major preparation for two different majors in this broad area—such as psychology and sociology.

We’ve all navigated the maze that got us to a degree. And I suspect we all were asked to do things that did not make sense. I’m not suggesting that anything about our degrees does not make sense—just making a more general point—but that we did

what we had to do to get our degrees. There were requirements to be met—and no one sought to decrease what we had to do to make degree attainment simpler. Is a student entitled to a passing grade because they attended all classes and took all exams? Is a student entitled to a degree because they complete 60 units? The means to increasing degree completion should not be lowering standards, but aiding students in achieving their goals.

But that's one view of things. Do we make getting a degree harder than it should be? I'm going to argue no—but will, without hesitation, acknowledge that we could make it easier. Degrees should have requirements—including locally defined requirements. But they should also be honest—a degree should not bill itself as “intended for transfer” and then consist of well over the 18 units required for a major/area of emphasis (unless it is a high-unit major). The components of a major/area of emphasis or a degree should not be dictated by the desire to fill classes—but by an educational philosophy.

What local requirements do you ask your students to complete? Do they do double-duty as general education requirements? Are students informed of the courses that will meet multiple needs—do they know that selecting the “right” courses will decrease their ultimate course-taking? Are students steered towards the courses that will ultimately facilitate completion of all their goals?

I have spoken to counseling faculty who have found ways to help students out—to guide them in making the most “efficient” course selections—such as using advising sheets which clearly indicate which courses meet both general education requirements for transfer AND local graduation requirements. It sounds so simple, but are we doing all that we can to steer students to those choices? Are we doing all that we can to help students make the best choices? And is our curriculum structured effectively?

We need to look at how we can best “fix” ourselves before someone looks to mold us from the outside. Local faculty need to look at their degree requirements and options to ensure that they are meeting student needs and not creating undue barriers. We need to find ways to do better for our students, while maintaining quality and integrity. If we do not respond effectively to external calls for “reform”, we may find “reform” imposed upon us with a whole host of unintended consequences. We need to ensure that we are doing our best to facilitate student success—while ensuring the integrity of our offerings. ■



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