

# ACADEMIC SENATE NEWSLETTER

November, 2006

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We all understand the importance of the Academic Senate in protecting faculty interests. If you've witnessed our meetings you know they are frustratingly slow and little seems to get accomplished. But Patrick and I are working in every way we can to help the faculty get important work done. To date, we have not communicated to the full faculty the results of our efforts.

Here are some of the things we have accomplished in our first two months of leading the senate:

## **Computers for Student Labs and Faculty**

Within the year we will be phasing in new campus-wide software systems, such as Banner, that will require significant computer upgrades. For us to run these programs we will need to replace the 1990s relics found in many faculty offices, the library and student labs. Patrick and I met with Bernie Blackman, Fran White, Anita Martinez, and V-Ann Chernock to request that we upgrade faculty office computers and the computers in the library and student labs. We proposed that bond money could be used to purchase other forms of hardware and should include faculty, library and student lab computers as well. It was agreed that the college would upgrade our technology to accommodate the new computer systems we will be using. The Technology Committee and the Budget Committee will work with Bernie Blackman to create a rollover plan for the upgrade and/or replacement of faculty, library, and student lab computers. Computers that are new today will likely have reached their horizon by 2008 so the goal will be to bring all our computers up to the proper requirements as close to the date of our conversion to Banner as possible. Thereafter, we will follow a replacement schedule designed by the Technology Committee.

## **Program Review**

The Institutional Planning Committee (IPC) has been working on the program review section of the Educational Master Plan with the involvement of faculty members Michael Brailoff and Maula Allen. We have asked to have guarantees written into program review that address instructional and non instructional programs that are having difficulty meeting their stated goals. We will write into our program review a multi-year process for remediation of programs to insure that there is no blindsiding of programs deemed to be failing. The goal will be to help remediate these programs with special assistance and insure that a careful process is followed when considering the elimination of any instructional or non instructional programs. The inclusion of guarantees for remediation of failing programs will make our program review unique and quite a bit stronger than other colleges in protecting programs. We are also including in this iteration of program review both instructional and non-instructional programs.

### **Budget Committee**

The Budget Committee spent the better part of last year stalled by not holding meetings or, when meeting, discussing allocations for supplies. This is not our vision of a budget committee, which should have a much broader and more serious charge. This year the Budget Committee is addressing how to take the vision and goals described in the planning document, and allocate funds to support programs as these programs work to meet their stated goals. The charge of the Budget Committee will be to align planning with allocations, which is the job it should be doing. The committee has begun by reviewing its charge and educating the committee members about budget practices, funding resources and allocations. It is currently going through the budget line by line. This month, at my request, the Budget Committee will meet with Institutional Planning to begin discussion on how to develop a process whereby budget is driven by planning and program review. To put this process in place will take more than one budget cycle, but we will begin with the 2007/2008 budget. By spring the committee will begin reviewing program budgets and making recommendations about program support.

### **Senate Budget Found**

Ron Gaiz, in perusing the COM budget posted on the intranet, discovered that the Academic Senate had a \$14,800.00 budget. Some senators suggested that this may be money the district had hidden in our account and this money was not actually ours to spend. Ron and I brought this up with Al Harrison who informed us that this was indeed our budget and that we could spend it in the designated categories or request that it be moved as suited our needs. This money has gone unused for the past two years and unfortunately did not accumulate in our account. This year we will be using funds for a secretary to bring our archive of records up to Brown Act specifications. This has lapsed in recent years. We also paid our State Senate dues, which had also lapsed. We fixed the printer in the senate office, and we sent three senators to the State Academic Senate Plenary Session.

### **User Groups**

The user groups for new and remodeled buildings started as grass roots efforts to influence the building plans and architect designs that would accommodate the people actually using these sites. While the idea of a faculty oversight committee modeled after the one formed at Ventura College never got off the ground last year, the user groups for projects such as those in the PE complex as well as the Science/Math/Nursing complex are fully represented and have a very strong voice in the process. Of course there are still space allocation and project budgeting concerns. We are actively pursuing these issues within the user groups, the District Modernization Committee as well as discussions with the President and Vice-President.

### **The Math Lab Hours and Specialist**

In June the Mathematics Department was informed that the Math Lab would have its hours of operation drastically cut at the Kentfield center and that there would be equal (reduced) hours for both the Kentfield and IVC math labs, even though the IVC lab was closed this term. In August the math lab supervisor asked Patrick to look into the matter. He encouraged the math lab supervisor and department chair to develop a schedule that

worked for the instructors, the classified personnel working in the lab and what was best for the students. Once this schedule was developed Patrick took their request to the administration. After mutually agreed upon refinements, the administration agreed to the new schedule, hired another classified math specialist and increased the number of hours for the math labs.

### **Faculty Participation in Architect Interviews**

A number of faculty mentioned their concern that faculty were not involved in the writing of questions for the prospective architects. Patrick talked with Swinerton Management and they consented to have the faculty members, who were serving on hiring committees, review and revise questions. Swinerton agreed to honor all faculty requests for revisions or additions to interview questions. The faculty was strongly represented in the architect interviews and selection process.

### **WASC**

I worked with Bernie Blackman in the preparation of the Program Review and SLO portions of the WASC report, insuring faculty input in the early drafts and shaping the reporting of Student Learning Outcomes. The WASC report was reviewed by College Council, where all college constituencies are equally represented and reviewed as a consent item by the Board of Trustees before it was submitted to WASC.

### **Testing Center**

Early this term a number of issues were brought up concerning the workload of Testing Office staff. A task force representing all the College constituencies was formed and many of the items in question resolved. (A memo was sent around in a President's Monday Briefing addressing hours of operation, and policies of the testing center.) One of the few issues left unresolved was the lack of space and resources for distance education examinations. Initially, the administration said there was not enough money to fund the resources needed to proctor distance ed. exams. After a number of discussions between myself, Patrick, President White and VP Martinez, the administration consented to not only provide extended testing office hours, but also to offer academic support and basic skills tutoring for distance education students.

### **EOPS/DSPS Priority Registration**

Last year the Academic Senate passed a resolution requesting CoM allow priority registration for all EOPS and DSPS students. There was no follow through and nothing was done. When Patrick inquired about this, he was told priority registration for the fall would be for one day. We brought up the issue with VP Martinez and the administration agreed to have priority registration for one week for the spring semester and for two weeks every subsequent semester.

### **New Senate Web Site and Faculty Email**

In an effort to improve communication with the faculty Ingrid Schreck established a web site (<http://marin.edu/senate/index.html>) where you may, for the first time, access the Academic Senate agenda, complete sets of minutes, and announcements; we have also created an Academic Senate distribution list "AS News". The purpose of this list is to

disseminate important information from your Academic Senate to inform about upcoming events, as well to call for applicants to open governance committee positions. Most importantly this list will highlight important events which will allow you the opportunity to not only be kept up to date, but also to jump in and get involved whenever you want, as well as keeping us up to date, via your comments, on what is going on in your area. We are looking forward to hearing from and working with you! Also, we previously said we would have drop in hours on Friday mornings. This has proven difficult given the number of meetings that often happen on Friday. Therefore, if any of you wish to chat with us about anything, please just email and we will find a time to meet with you.

### **Management Council Attendance**

In cleaning out the Academic Senate office files, I found a reference to the senate president and vice president attending Management Council meetings in the early 1990s. I brought this to the attention of Dr. White. I thought it was important for us to be informed of all decisions and to be aware of business discussed in Management Council. Patrick and I are now included in Management Council meetings as participants.

Along with these various activities, in order to improve relations and facilitate open dialogue, we've met with the Classified Senate, both classified unions, the Student Senate as well as ASCOM. Patrick meets regularly with representatives from modernization. We've opened up the senate office, took out the moldy curtains, and started an inventory of old records. Fusselman Hall custodian Falex Jalzagorri, kindly gave the room a thorough cleaning and we're open for business. Call, email or come by and visit us. And remember, we're here to help.

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