

WELCOME TO OUR NEW SENATE

The other night I got up to deal with a beeping smoke alarm - batteries always threaten to go dead at 3 AM - and in the dark, I accidentally stepped on one of my grandson's toys. It's a demonic yellow plastic Bob the Builder box that says in a monotone voice, "Let's get to work" whenever it's touched. "Let's get to work" seemed apt when I thought about our new senate.

We have a rather long list of senate "to dos" for next year. But I look at the names of our new senators and realize all the talent and energy and the devotion to making this school a perfect place to teach and learn, and I know we will power through a senate to do list.

Robert Kennedy is co chair of the Budget Committee and will launch a pilot program review of our transfer program beginning this summer.

Michael Dougan, our Journalism professor, is a member of the Governance Review Council and is involved in the first program review pilot.

Carol Adair is a member of the English and English Skills faculty and serves on the Facilities Committee, the Instructional Equipment Committee, and is a founding member of the College Student Success Council.

Joe Mueller will be a part of the Phase II program review for the Natural History Program, which he developed. Joe is active in the international environmental community, leads field trips to wonderful places like Alaska and the Mojave Desert, and has been involved for over ten years with the Bolinas Marine Lab.

Derek Wilson is the long time chair of the Curriculum Committee and is preparing a program review of the Multi Media Studies Program.

Radica Portello, as a part time faculty member, is the newly elected chair of the Modern Languages Department and this year's winner of the Hayward Award for teaching excellence. This is the first Hayward Award for a College of Marin faculty member since 1995.

Meg Pasquel, an attorney turned English skills part time faculty member, is working on a project that links courses up through English 120 with transfer courses to create a "transfer prep academy."

Erika Harkins a non credit instructor in French Literature, serves on the Educational Planning Committee, College Council, numerous ad hoc committees, and is past president of the Emeritus College.

These newly elected senators will join members beginning the second year of their two year term, including Ron Gaiz, Blaze Woodlief, Ingrid Schreck, Arthur Lutz, Sheri Rollison and Patrick Kelly.

Together, we have the capacity and the desire to tackle the major issues at COM - the ones that have an enormous impact on faculty and students. We respect the work of the faculty, have an abiding love for this college and a strong commitment to the students we serve.

Welcome to our new senate. Now, let's get to work!

Yolanda Bellisimo
President, Academic Senate

THIS YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Computers for Student Labs and Faculty

The Instructional Equipment Committee prioritized requests for new and replacement technology and Patrick and I worked with the administration to insure funding. Faculty and lab computers are being replaced now. IT's goal is to have the new computers for faculty and student labs up and running by the beginning of fall semester.

Technology Replacement Plan

The Technology Committee worked with IT to develop a technology replacement plan for the upgrade and/or replacement of faculty office and student lab technology as a long term solution to changing technology needs. Our old system involved complaining a lot when your computer died. The new plan will go into effect via a Board policy and will include a procedure for funding.

English and Communications Department Merger

The Senate leadership intervened in the administration's attempt to unilaterally change the configuration of the English and Communications departments. We asked that a program review occur before considering reconfiguring departments. After Patrick and I spoke with the president and vice president, both departments were given the opportunity to conduct a program review and elect department chairs according to the customary configuration of the departments.

Program Review

The Institutional Planning Committee (IPC) wrote the Program Review section of the Educational Master Plan, which was approved by the Academic Senate, College Council and the Board of Trustees.

Program Review Pilot

The pilot of Program Review began this semester and will continue through fall and spring of next year. In fall of 2008 we will launch our program review process and the outcome of program review will guide program funding and budget planning.

Senate Budget Found

Senator Ron Gaiz, in perusing the COM budget posted on the intranet, discovered that the Academic Senate had a \$14,800 budget. This budget, which went unused in the prior year, funded this year's Senate related travel, supplies, a secretary, a Brown Act training and a faculty member to assist the Senate in rewriting the charge of the Curriculum Committee as it relates to Program Review.

User Groups

The user groups for new and remodeled buildings have made sure that projects such as the PE and art buildings are fully represented by faculty and that we have a strong voice in the process.

Faculty Participation in Screening and Hiring

Many members of the faculty have answered the dreaded emails from me asking if they would serve on a hiring committee for everything from architects to administrative assistants. The faculty has been strongly represented in the process and I am grateful to all who have devoted so much to this time consuming but crucial process.

Testing Center

A task force representing all constituent groups was formed to help solve the problems of testing center access. After a number of discussions with Patrick, members of the task force and the administration, testing office hours have been extended and the testing center is offering academic support and basic skills tutoring for distance ed students. Next year's goal will be to find a home for the distance ed and make-up testing office that can be found without GPS or blood hounds.

EOPS/DSPS Priority Registration

Patrick and I brought up the issue of priority registration and the administration agreed to a one week priority registration for this spring semester and two weeks every subsequent semester for EOPS and DSPS students.

New Senate Web Site

In an effort to improve communication with the faculty, Senate secretary, Ingrid Schreck set up a web site where you may, for the first time, access the Academic Senate agenda, complete sets of minutes and announcements. To access the web site, go to:

(<http://marin.edu/senate/index.html>)

Math Lab

This past fall, the Math Department was informed that the Math Lab would have its hours of operation cut. The department developed a schedule that suited student needs and Patrick took the request to the administration. After mutually agreed upon refinements, the administration agreed to the new schedule, hired another classified math specialist and increased the hours for the math labs.

Petitions Committee

Brown Act requirements make it necessary for us to shift the student petitions process from the Academic Standards Committee (AS) to a Petitions Committee. Senate leadership insured that the Petitions Committee policy was written by a group of faculty and staff involved with AS and we were able to keep the petitions process with the AS members until the new policy takes effect.

Brown Act Training

The Senate sponsored a very informative training by an attorney expert on the Brown Act. This training was open to all members of the college community and it helped us improve our compliance with the act's requirements.

Governance Committees

We have written a Senate procedure for selecting faculty to serve on governance committees and we have maintained a broad representation of faculty on committees this year. We will continue to work toward including as many faculty as possible on the governance committees.

Meetings

Patrick and I can't get enough of meetings. We meet with College Council, Management Council, and we've met with the Classified Senate, both classified unions, the Student Senate and ASCOM. We meet regularly with the modernization team, the president and vice president, the faculty involved in program review, GRC, IPC, the Budget Committee, ad hoc committees, sub committees, the Data Advisory Group, and people we run into on campus who have a small problem that needs Senate intervention. Our goal this coming year will be to turn our governance committee assignments over to other faculty.

Grand Jury Report

The Superior Court requested that Patrick and I respond to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations. The Board read our report and will follow our recommendation for Board/faculty study groups on topics important to our academic mission.

Administrator Evaluations

The Senate circulated administrator evaluations for faculty to complete - for the college president, vice president and the deans. Results will be tallied and presented to the president and the Board of Trustees.

NEXT YEAR'S CHALLENGES

Program Review MOU

The Academic Senate has prepared the first draft of the Memorandum of Understanding on Program Review and it has gone to College Council for consideration in fall 2007.

Program Revitalization and Discontinuance Policy

The Academic Senate will begin work in the fall on a program revitalization and discontinuance policy, which is required by Title V and expected by WASC. The goal of the plan will be to include guarantees for remediation of failing programs and insure that a careful process is followed when considering the elimination of any instructional or non instructional program. As it stands now, the Board can eliminate programs at will and without faculty input. The new plan will insure faculty input and a rational, data driven decision making process.

+/- Grading

We have asked ASCOM for their input on an option for faculty to give plus or minus grades on student transcripts. The +/- grading system would be voluntary on the part of faculty and would provide an option used by many four year colleges in California. The Senate will address the issue in the fall and this option will be brought to the full faculty for your input.

Senate Directives

As a result of attending State Academic Senate conferences, we have discovered that other senates take an active role in providing faculty with helpful directives about academic practices, something our senate has not traditionally done. We hope to provide Senate directives on such topics as the election of chairs, clear standards for the class syllabus, classroom use of technology, and an intervention procedure for retaking exams.

Full Time Faculty Hiring Procedure

In the past 18 months we have had twelve faculty retire or complete their phased in retirement and we have no participatory system for the prioritizing and selection of disciplines entitled to replace full time hires. This has created a serious problem for disciplines like Chemistry, Modern Languages and Anthropology. The Senate will work on a faculty run system for full time hiring that will use program review to set priorities.

By Laws

The senate will be working on rewrites to the Senate by laws in order to streamline and update our governance procedures.

Gold Book Rewrites

The Senate will be actively involved in the major overhaul of the Board policies (know locally as the Gold Book). The college has hired a consultant from CCLC (Community College League of California) to help in this process and the Senate will be appointing a representative to serve on the task group that will rewrite policy.

Bolinas Lab

Eric Dunmire, Patrick Kelly and Joe Mueller are serving on the Bolinas Task Force and the goal is to have a plan of action for the lab within a year. It is crucial that we have a strong faculty

voice involved in this process.

Other Issues

We have at least another two pages of issues, including the work of the Budget Committee, the academic impact of compressed calendar, Board study groups, and changes to the discipline review process, but this newsletter is already cutting into your summer time. We will address these and other issues in a Senate newsletter at the beginning of fall semester.

Enjoy your summer break.

Yolanda & Patrick