



COLLEGE OF MARIN

ACADEMIC SENATE

February 2009

BE PREPARED

The Academic Senate has been trying for the past three years to develop a culture of far-thinking, data-driven decision making. To that end, the Senate has been paying close attention to the news from the UCs, CSUs and our neighbor to the North, Santa Rosa JC, and we are certain that their loss of students will be our gain. Because of budget constraints, Santa Rosa JC is set to cut about 7% of its classes in the fall and the CSUs and UCs are planning to accept fewer students than in previous years. In addition, we are expecting that the economic downturn will prompt many local parents to re-think college plans for their children and consider the more cost-effective community college. We assume this is already happening as our enrollment increased by 5% this semester. Other community colleges are reporting increases this semester as high as 12% with 85% of their classes at capacity.

Our concern is two-fold:

- What classes will most likely be impacted by increased enrollment?
- Are we prepared with faculty and facilities to open more sections of critical courses if the need arises?

At our meeting on January 5th, the Senate reviewed a report from Senator Robert Kennedy about the areas that will most likely be impacted and we discussed the need to prepare additional sections for these critical courses.

According to Robert's report, it is reasonable to assume that a great many of these new students will be preparing to transfer either to four year colleges or to professional programs. To better analyze the needs of transfer students, Robert divided courses into priority areas depending upon how critical the courses were to transfer plans:

- **Priority 1** Beginning level college English and Math and the prerequisites to those courses. These are courses that students are required to take for general education with little or no variation. They are sequenced by prerequisites so that not being able to get into a course can have a severe impact on the student.

The Priority 1 courses clearly show signs of being heavily impacted already with 74% of all sections 80% or more at maximum capacity this semester. English 150 and Math 103 are about 95% full and English 155 is at 106% of capacity.

- **Priority 2** Selected Social Science, Speech, Communications and Modern Language courses required by either the CSU system or the UC system for general education. There are a small number of courses that meet this requirement, which limits student choices.

Currently impacted Priority 2 courses are in Speech, Spanish and Social Science.

- **Priority 3** Courses that are required for lower division work within transfer majors and are the most popular choices of major courses with COM students.

Impacted areas in Priority 3 include Biology, Chemistry, Anthropology, Art History and Philosophy. The Biology and Chemistry area are a particular problem because of a shortage of classrooms and instructors, which will require significant planning to solve.

We will be meeting with the Vice President of Student Learning, Nick Chang this week to discuss ways in which we can prepare for the influx of students in our priority courses and we will keep you informed of plans for fall semester.

Yolanda Bellisimo
President, Academic Senate

Senate Briefs:

Golden Bell Award

The Marin County Office of Education recognition of teachers will take place at the Annual Golden Bell Education Evening on Thursday, May 28, 2009 in Angelico Hall, Dominican University. Each year, the College of Marin Academic Senate is asked to nominate one full time and one part time faculty member for this honor. The Senate is asking all faculty members to consider submitting nominations. Nomination forms were placed in faculty mail boxes this week. Please complete the form and return it to the Academic Senate mail box in the Kentfield mail room. The Senate will announce the nominees at its February 26th meeting.

Senator Author Lutz does not agree with the majority of senators about this award. We hope you will read and consider his statement accompanying the ballot.

I thought TR meant Thursday so I didn't come to class on Tuesday...

Have you heard that one? Many of us were concerned about the number of students who missed the first day of a Tuesday/Thursday class thinking TR meant the class only met on Thursday. Faculty member Wendy Walsh, who serves on the Governance Review Council (GRC), followed through on this problem for us and discovered that Banner could only put in two letters for a class meeting day. Banner can't say Tu/Th and god knows you wouldn't want to re-design the technology to suit the needs of the people who use it. So, Wendy got the next-best solution. In future schedules there will be a footer along the bottom of every other page explaining that TR means Tuesday/Thursday. Thank you Wendy for helping solve this problem!

Welcome! to our New Senator

Members of the Academic Senate knew how difficult it would be to replace our dear Senator, Carol Adair. We miss her. In her honor, we wanted to fill her position with someone who shared Carol's principled good judgment and kindness. At its January 29th meeting, the Academic Senate chose by acclamation Joetta Scott to fill out the remainder of Carol's term. Joetta is the chair of the Student Access and Success Committee and a key figure in helping us complete last year's program reviews. Both this year and last, Joetta helped develop rubrics for the committee and provided feedback to reviewers. Joetta also serves on the Program Review Committee and, as a member of the counseling faculty, provides us with both the academic and student services perspective on student access and success issues. We are pleased that Joetta has joined the Academic Senate.

Program Reviews

Thank you to all the faculty members who helped in the completion of this year's Program Reviews. The reviews were read by members of the Program Review Committee and suggested changes were returned to each team of reviewers. The reviewers made changes and submitted final reviews the end of January. The governance committees are now in the process of rating program needs for equipment and supplies, unit allocation, and additional personnel. Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Institutional Planning Committee (IPC) in mid-February and IPC will be sending its recommendations to the Budget Committee in March. Results will be posted on the Program Review template.

Education Planning, Strategic Initiatives and Our Next Self-Study

Like automobile rust, WASC never sleeps. WASC continues to monitor us, asking for periodic reports and checking to see if we are meeting their standards for planning. Program Review was a key piece of it, but we were given until March of this year to complete our Educational Master Plan and our Strategic Plan and document this in our midterm report to WASC.

One of the most important elements required of WASC is an Education Master Plan. We had a previous one that was written by a consultant, mostly to enable the bond work to go forward, but it was inadequate and did not reflect the faculty's thinking about best planning for the college.

The Academic Senate wanted the Educational Planning Committee (EPC), co-chaired by faculty members Blaze Woodlief and Peggy Dodge, to design an Education Master Plan that truly connects planning with implementation and assessment. We also wanted EPC to play a leadership role in the design and writing of the Strategic Plan.

COM, at the request of the Educational Planning Committee chairs, hired two excellent consultants, Eva Conrad and Ed Bagley, to facilitate creating both the Educational Master Plan and the Strategic Plan. The two consultants worked with the governance committees and faculty chairs of EPC and IPC, as well as with members of the college community. With the help of the two consultants, EPC held a half day meeting, attended by over 40 staff, faculty and students to develop a model of integrated planning that makes sense to us. We did not want a plan imposed on us from outside "experts." For once, we actually found consultants who are doing what we want consultants to do – offering their expertise to facilitate what the (unpaid) governance committees need to do, doing the legwork, editing documents, facilitating meetings, and providing expert feedback. It's important to note that no one on any of the committees is being paid for their work – not faculty or classified staff, and the EPC has been meeting every week this semester. Having the support of two experts has made it possible for us to complete both the Strategic Plan and the Education Master Plan, which was vetted by all constituent groups on campus over the past four months and approved by the Board of Trustees this week.

We are now on to the next leg of our journey, the preparation of the Strategic Planning Implementation Schedule, which is a fancy way of saying "program reviews for administrators and administrative units." This project is underway and expected to be fully enacted by May.

Then of course, there are the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). WASC is putting heavy pressure on all the community colleges to be at the "proficient" level for SLOs by 2012. That means they expect every discipline to have course and discipline level SLOs, to be able to document program-wide discussion about these SLOs, and to demonstrate how findings have been used to enhance programs and courses. All of this will have to be documented in our 2010 Self-Study. (The Self-Study is the highly structured report to WASC that each college prepares in advance of a WASC visit. Our next visit is scheduled for 2010.) The upcoming self-study for WASC, which started in earnest this semester, is co-chaired by Blaze Woodlief and David Snyder.

To help us with our SLOs, Sara McKinnon and Becky Brown have been appointed by the Academic Senate as our SLO Facilitators and they will be working with all departments to initiate the creation and tracking of SLOs. Sara has set up a WikiSpace for each discipline's SLOs. The WikiSpace will track all our writing and editing and make it vastly easier to share our work and document our SLOs for WASC.

What we do and why we do it: Your Academic Senate's mandate

Sometimes we get requests for action that fall outside of the Academic Senate's purview, so it might be useful to review our charge. The job of the Academic Senate is defined by the California Education Code. We are granted primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards: the fabled "Ten Plus One" aspects of our authority.

We take a variety of approaches to achieve this. We appoint, sit on and sometimes chair the governance committees, councils and task forces. We advocate on your behalf before the administration and the board of trustees. We write policies and procedures that must be adopted by the board of trustees. We jealously guard faculty power in shaping the critically important matters that fall under the Ten Plus One umbrella. Always, our primary focus is on the academic aspect of the College of Marin.

These are the Ten Plus One policy development and implementation matters that come under our charge:

- 1) Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within discipline.
- 2) Degree and certificate requirements.
- 3) Grading policies.
- 4) Educational program development.
- 5) Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success.
- 6) District and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles.
- 7) Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports.
- 8) Policies for faculty professional development activities.
- 9) Processes for program review.
- 10) Processes for institutional planning and budget development.
- 11) Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the academic senate.

District trustees are obliged to "rely primarily" on our advice and judgment on these matters in most cases. That means our recommendations must be accepted unless for some rare and compelling reason, which has to be spelled out clearly.

To get a better idea of what we do, drop by and observe one of our meetings. We assemble each Thursday from 12:45 p.m. until 2 p.m. in the Student Services building, Conference Rooms A & B upstairs.

For a full copy of Robert Kennedy's report on the courses most likely to be impacted by the migration of students from the CSUs and UCS to the community colleges, please visit the Academic Senate web site at: <http://www.marin.edu/senate/index.html>.

The WASC Dog-House List Grows

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges met in January 2009 and added to its ever-growing list of colleges on warning, probation, and show cause. Also note that one college has been terminated and another closed.

Placed on Warning or Continued on Warning

Cuesta College	Imperial Valley College
El Camino College	Sierra College
Long Beach City College	Lassen Community College
Rio Hondo College	Palo Verde College
Santa Ana College	Ohlone College
Santiago Canyon College	Shasta College

Placed on Probation or Continued on Probation

American Samoa Community College
Crafton Hills College
San Joaquin Delta College

Placed on Show Cause or Continued on Show Cause

Diablo Valley College
Northern Marianas College
Solano Community College

Terminated Accreditation

TransPacific Hawaii College

Accepted Closure Report

Brooks College