



# COLLEGE OF MARIN

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## ACADEMIC SENATE

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### THIS YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

May 2009

This school year went by lightning fast as we worked with our students, dodged backhoes in the parking lots, and came to the eerie realization that Banner is a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of Hal from *Space Odyssey*. As we close out spring semester, it's time to reflect on what the Senate has accomplished over the past two semesters, in spite of all the disruption.

#### **Parking, or the Lack Thereof**

We did manage to get one of the lots behind Dickson Hall returned to faculty and staff this year but as parking continues to shrink for the Art Department and Social and Behavioral Sciences, we will try to get the second "back lot" converted to faculty and staff before next fall.

#### **New College Skills Department**

Last year, the Senate leadership intervened in the administration's attempt to unilaterally change the configuration of the English and Communications departments. We asked that program reviews be completed and used to make the final decision. After a good deal of lobbying from IPC and the Senate, the English and Communications departments got what they wanted. A new department has been created called the College Skills Department. It includes Basic Skills English, Non-Credit ESL, and Credit ESL. It is housed in a new division called the College Skills and Learning Resources Division. Former Academic Senate member and long time Basic Skills faculty member Barbara Bonander is the department's first chair.

#### **Liberal Arts Degrees Resurrected**

Our liberal arts degrees were about to be eliminated by the state as a result of changes in California Education Code. Eliminating these degrees would be a serious blow to our degree programs as most of our students who graduate do so with these degrees. The Senate set out in early fall semester to rewrite these degrees to new state standards and to make sure they were approved before next fall. Senator Robert Kennedy took the lead on this and by April the Senate and the departments had approved and sent to the state a Liberal Arts degree with an emphasis in either Language Arts and Humanities, Communications Studies, Social and Behavioral Sciences, or Visual and Performing Arts. Senators Patrick Kelly and Eric Dunmire helped craft a Liberal Arts degree for the Physical Sciences and this too was approved by the Senate and sent to the state for approval. These degrees are actually a vast improvement over our previous Liberal Arts degrees and we expect to see more students completing the AA and AS here at COM.

#### **Bolinas Lab**

Senators Eric Dunmire, Patrick Kelly and Joe Mueller served on the Bolinas Task Force that recommended the lab be turned over to a non-profit for renovation and reopening. This was a far better solution than an earlier suggestion from the Grand Jury that the college divest itself of this incredible learning resource. A group from the Bolinas area has come forward and offered to raise money for the renovations. Joe Mueller has been appointed as the faculty representative working with this group to seek funding for refurbishing the lab.

### **Gold Book Rewrites**

The Senate has been actively involved in the major overhaul of the Board policies (known locally as the *Gold Book*). We are working our way through Chapter 4 and 5 – all the policies and procedures that deal with instructional programs, student academic issues, and faculty professional matters.

### **Student Learning Outcomes and Our WikiSpace**

The Academic Senate appointed Sara McKinnon and Becky Brown as our Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Facilitators. Sara teaches ESL and Becky teaches Biology. Sara has created a WikiSpace for inputting all SLOs and tracking discussion and changes to course and discipline SLOs. She also did an inventory of all the SLOs in our course outlines of record – about 1,600 courses - and has given the inventory to departments so that they can work on the outlines that need SLOs. Since WASC is coming back to visit us in a year and a half (Yikes!!) the Senate is focusing on getting our SLOs to the level WASC expects.

### **Program Review and Budget Allocations**

The Academic Senate, working through the governance committees, made sure that program reviews were used to determine budget allocations for equipment, supplies, new staffing and administrative budgets. We have seen to it that budget decisions are based on the college's long term goals and that planning precedes budget decisions. We continue to work on an evaluation process whereby all budget increases or funds for new programs will include an evaluation component so we know – whether it is administrative spending or instructional programs – if that funding helped the program achieve its stated goals.

### **From Probation to Full Accreditation**

About a year ago, faced with WASC probation and the potential of losing our accreditation, I promised that our faculty, with Senate leadership, could finish all our program reviews and that we would do a better job of it than any other community college in the state of California. And we did. It was the hard work of the faculty and the leadership of the Senate that made sure COM did not lose its accreditation. We are now back in good standing with WASC and fully accredited and the Senate has been answering requests from California community colleges who want to know how we did it. Many colleges are in trouble with WASC and none of them have seen a turnaround quite like ours.

### **Conference Presentations**

As a result of our near-miraculous six months recovery from probation to full accreditation, the Senate leadership has been invited to give presentations at a number of conferences. Here are a few of the conference presentations we have done in the past nine months:

“Addressing WASC Recommendations: The Senate’s Role” Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Plenary Session – January 2009

“From Sanctions to Success” Association of California Community College Administrators – February 2009

“Don’t Reinvent the Wheel: An Interactive Program Review You Can Borrow” League for Innovation Annual Conference – March 2009

“The Perfect Partnership: Merging Program Review with a Board-base Participatory Governance System” Academic Resource Conference, sponsored by WASC in collaboration with ACSCU and ACCJC – April 2009

## THANK YOU!

I left a late afternoon meeting in February and happened to walk past a classroom where the Education Planning Committee members were working on our Education Master Plan. No one gets paid to do this work and many of the people in that room are part-time faculty members. **Meg Pasquel**, a part time faculty member who serves on the Senate, was there. So was **Erika Harkins**. **Peggy Dodge** and **Blaze Woodlief** chaired that effort.

I am constantly amazed at the amount of work it takes to govern this college, to protect and grow our programs, and to provide our students with an exceptional educational experience. We owe an enormous thank you to the hard-working faculty members who volunteer their time to serve on committees and to work on the Academic Senate.

Thank you to Senator **Derek Wilson** who continues to work on our program review template, trying to make it as painless as possible for all of us who use it. Derek also serves on the Curriculum Committee, co-chairs the Budget Committee, and is vice president of the Senate. Thank you to Senators **Patrick Kelly** and **Eric Dunmire** for creating the new science degree and to Senator **Joe Mueller** for work on the Bolinas Lab, the field programs, and for making us think about the Senate's use of resources.

Thank you to Senator **Michael Dougan**, the Senate's secretary, for his fantastic minutes, his work on our web site and on College Council and most of all for his wonderful sense of humor. Thank you to Senator **Radica Portello**, part-time faculty member and chair of the Modern Languages Department, for advocating our study abroad program and for working with student groups trying to find less-expensive alternatives to text books. Thank you to Senator **Ron Gaiz**, who is my anchor at the far end of the table, senate treasurer, Brown Act expert, and member of countless screening committees. To **Arthur Lutz**, thank you for serving on the Instructional Equipment Committee and for careful and insightful reading of all our documents. Thank you to Senator **Joetta Scott** who serves as chair of the Access and Success Committee and worked with counselors and the Senate in preparing our new Liberal Arts degrees. There are not enough thank yous for Senator **Sara McKinnon** whose work on our SLOs is stellar and who spent most of winter break preparing spread sheets from the program review templates so that governance committees could review and rank requests.

And finally to **Robert Kennedy** who has turned a brilliant vision of how this college should and could serve students into a reality by using research data to show just how good we are at what we do. If you want to demonstrate why you are proud of your program and what you provide students, ask Robert for the data. Robert also rescued our Liberal Arts degrees from a certain demise and made sure (using sound data) that we had the administration add extra, vital classes for next fall in anticipation of enrollment increases. A special thank you goes to the Counseling Department and especially **Bessie Ng-Jung** who worked with Robert in the preparation of the new Liberal Arts degrees.

We have a Senate of overachievers. They make my job a joy and our college a treasure.

Yolanda Bellisimo  
President, Academic Senate

## **GOVERNANCE AND SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The Academic Senate wishes to thank all of the members of the college community who have volunteered their time to serve on governance committees and Academic Senate committees this past school year. Faculty, staff, students and administrators serve on these committees without pay, including about 40 full and part-time faculty members. We proudly list our faculty members serving on governance and Senate committees here:

### **BUDGET COMMITTEE**

Bonnie Borenstein  
Michele Martinisi  
Derek Wilson

### **EDUCATION PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Peggy Dodge  
Kristi Kuhn  
Meg Pasquel

Erika Harkin  
Blaze Woodlief  
Frank Crosby

### **TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

Frank Crosby  
Jeff Cady

Harriet Eskildsen  
Kathleen Smyth

### **FACILITIES PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Fernando Aguedelo-Silva  
Eric Dunmire

### **GOVERNANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Wendy Walsh

### **STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS**

Joetta Scott  
Chris Schultz

### **INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Yolanda Bellisimo  
Win Cottle

Sara McKinnon  
Sara Lefkowitz

### **INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT**

Greg Grist  
Tron Bykle  
Kathleen Smyth

Arthur Lutz  
Mary Pieper-Warren

### **DISTANCE EDUCATION (DETAL)**

Ingrid Kelly  
Win Cottle

Frank Crosby  
Derek Wilson

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## **SENATE COMMITTEES AND FACILITATORS**

### **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

Rinetta Early, Chair  
Toni Yoshioka

Charles Williams  
Laurie Ordin

### **EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT**

Bonnie Borenstein  
Kathy Freschi

Barbara Bonander  
Robert Kennedy

### **EQUIVALENCY COMMITTEE**

Meg Pasquel  
Yolanda Bellisimo

Sara McKinnon

### **PETITIONS COMMITTEE**

Rinetta Early  
Toni Yoshioka

Charles Williams  
Laurie Ordin

### **RESEARCH FACILITATOR**

Robert Kennedy

### **SLO FACILITATORS/PROGRAM REVIEW CO-CHAIRS**

Sara McKinnon  
Becky Brown

### **CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

Chris Schultz, Chair  
Derek Wilson  
Maura Allen  
Ron Palmer  
Bill Albright  
Diusca Smith

Sara McKinnon  
AJoe Ritchie  
Karen Robinson  
George Hritz  
Kristie Kuhn  
Becky Brown

### **SELF-STUDY FACULTY CO-CHAIR**

Blaze Woodlief