



COLLEGE OF MARIN ACADEMIC SENATE

December 2011

News from the State Academic Senate Fall 2011 Plenary

In early November, as the Academic Senate President, I represented College of Marin at the state wide Academic Senate Fall Plenary Session. There was much discussion around changes in the repeatability of activity courses and even more discussion around the Student Success Task Force Recommendations. These draft recommendations cover a variety of our services and spring from a fairly narrow definition of student success, namely “completion”. Four members of the Task Force as well as Chancellor Scott answered questions in a General Forum. I would like to outline a few of the concerns raised by faculty from across the state.

Some recommendations are valuable in concept if a little questionable in implementation. The state has recently mandated in AB 743 the use of a common assessment for English, Math and ESL. While faculty are not necessarily opposed to this, there are questions about how multiple measures will play a part as well as whether individual college’s curriculum and cut scores will be respected. Equity issues were brought up concerning various recommendations tying the BOG Fee Waiver to certain student behaviors. In addition to possibly losing the fee waiver for deviating from one’s Ed Plan, there was a possible requirement for students to pay full cost for courses not in their education plans, creating a two-tier system of fees. I would mention that deviations are often necessary for students when a class has been cancelled or there are not enough sections available or the class is not available at the time a student can attend due to his/her work schedule. And fundamentally, this is completely contrary to the basic philosophy of a community college education, which allows for students to explore their options – not to mention contrary to a basic tenet of a free society that *we are allowed to change our mind.*

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There were a number of recommendations concerning Basic Skills, Noncredit and ESL. At first they lumped ESL and Basic Skills together although these are very different populations with different needs. They have decided to amend this recommendation. Additionally, the Task Force is interested in promoting alternatives to traditional basic skills instruction. This is fine as long as they do not tie this to one mandated strategy. Those of us who teach in these areas recognize the necessity of having multiple strategies to reach students who come to us with a wide variety of needs. Faculty would like to see support for best practices in basic skills courses, and indeed, at all levels of coursework, with the determination of what strategies are used left to faculty at the local level.

In the area of noncredit, they had originally planned to eliminate the nine traditional areas of noncredit instruction leaving only a recently added area – *Career Development and College Preparation*. This would have threatened many programs across the state, including basic skills, ESL, citizenship, older adult classes, short term vocational classes and others. Constance Carroll, as the Chancellor of San Diego Community College District, which includes an entire campus devoted to noncredit, is going to be rewriting this particular recommendation.

I would like to say that many of the recommendations make good sense, including making sure that all new students be given placement testing and orientations; that students DO get an Ed Plan to give them direction and focus; that students who test into basic skills when they arrive, take those basic skills classes immediately; that there be mandated student success classes for such students and that there be earlier interventions for students who are not making it.

All of these are very laudable goals, and I'd like to say, goals that Angelina Duarte put forward when she arrived at COM last January – before this task force ever met. These goals, in fact, make up a good part of her Student Success Initiative, which she is beginning to unfold at College of Marin. These goals will require professional development and curriculum development as well as more resources devoted to matriculation services and ongoing counseling.

The Student Success Task Force will be meeting again in December and then giving their recommendations to the Board of Governors in January and then to the Legislature in March. Much of the angst around the recommendations has had to do with a sense of erosion of the original community college mission and many of us are not willing to give it up so easily. The College of Marin Academic Senate has adopted a resolution regarding the mission of the community colleges that was first created by the College Advisory Council at City College of San Francisco. We have also written our own resolution and sent it on to the task force regarding more specific points that concern us. You can read our resolutions on the senate website: <http://marin.edu/senate/>

--Sara McKinnon, COM Academic Senate President

CALL IT MASTERY - NOT REPEATABILITY

Our education system was modeled after factories in the 19th century - not surprising since a national education system was expected to educate people for skilled industrial work. Schools were expected to behave like factories. You put the little tot on the conveyer belt at kindergarten, stuff some data into his brain and off he goes down the conveyer belt to first grade. Any problems gaining or using the data stuffed in those malleable little brains is the students' fault and certainly not the fault of the school or the model used for teaching.

The student who has difficulty learning is much like a factory defect sent back for repair. We call that flunking or in more polite company, it's called repeating a grade.

The people who make financial decisions for the state of California went to school, probably through graduate or law school so they assume themselves experts in education and the education system they know is this one - linear and progressing toward a quantifiable outcome where only the factory defects repeat.

People who study learning and education have long since given up on the factory model for education. Learning is iterative; we go back over what we have learned. We practice it, add to it, change our thinking about it, and refine our use of it. This is especially the case for skill courses in the arts, physical education, career and technical programs. Each time we practice the fundamentals for one of these fields we gain new learning and new meaning. These programs cannot thrive much less survive without this iterative process.

Yet, the state legislature and the governor's education staff think this iterative learning process is the same as repeating grades. Their bias about education leads them to consider repeated courses as costly with little benefit. Therefore, they reason, the State can eliminate these courses as the easiest targets with the least negative impact on the primary goals of the community colleges – eliminate repeatability.

We can't likely re-educate the State legislators about learning - probably not even in the best of economic times but certainly not when they are desperate for things to cut from the budget.

There are some things we can do:

- Don't use the word repeat – invent some other word, like mastery, that stresses levels or learning stages;
- Create titles, or courses if possible, for each stage;
- Create and adhere to different SLOs for each stage;
- Emphasize what's different or new about each stage and not what's "repeated".

The Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges (ASCCC) has put together recommendations with which to advocate with the Chancellor's Office and the legislature on changes to Title 5 language on repeatability. We will have more as this process is completed.

No, R2T4 is not a Star Wars Robot...

Financial Aid packages granted to Community College students may include any or all of the following for a full time student: a BOG fee waiver (\$1000/year), a PELL grant (\$5,550/year) and/or a Direct Loan (up to \$10,000/year). These awards are based on the premise that students attend classes and make a concerted effort to pass the class, whether or not they are ultimately successful. Our present economy is causing a tremendous upsurge in financial aid applications – which have more than doubled since 2006/07. This year our financial aid office is processing about 5000 applications – out of a student body of only 7500-8000 students!

If a student qualifies for financial aid, the college issues a check prior to the beginning of classes. The first check amounts to half of the student's award for that semester. The second half of the award is allocated about mid-way through the semester. However, if a student withdraws before completing 60% of the semester OR does NOT pass a SINGLE UNIT (not even one of the units attempted), the federal government demands that federal student financial aid be given back to the government **BY THE COLLEGE. This is called R2T4 which means "Return to Title 4". The amount to be returned is pro-rated based on the last date the student attended class.** Financial aid issued to students who **NEVER** attend classes are called "over awards" and the students, rather than the college, must pay this money back.

In 2001/02 we had 60 students in the R2T4 category leaving us with a \$3,309.76 obligation. In 2010/11 we had 349 students leaving us with a \$44,961.86 obligation. You may have received requests from the Financial Aid Office to clarify the status of a student who did not pass your class. The consequences are different if the reason for failure has to do with not officially withdrawing from your class. The last date of

attendance is crucial in the calculations of how much must be returned, so if you do not take attendance, you might want to reconsider, so that you'll have accurate records.

The rapid increase in the number of students receiving financial aid has put incredible pressure on our financial Aid office making it difficult for them to closely monitor students who may be at risk of dropping out and leaving behind a federal financial aid obligation.

What Teaching Faculty can do to help:

- 1) **Report no-shows** (students who have never shown up to class) to Admissions and Records on the First Day and First Census rosters. The deadline for submitting midterm grades is also the deadline for faculty to withdraw students by assigning a W symbol to students who are not attending and have not officially dropped your class. You are required to assign a final grade to all students remaining on your roster after midterm.
- 2) Track student attendance and drop students who have stopped attending class. **Students not attending classes who are dropped before mid-October will not receive their second financial aid check, saving the college from paying this money back.**
- 3) If you give an F or an FW to a student who is receiving financial aid, you will receive a form from the Financial Aid Office at the end of the semester asking you to report when the student last attended class. **Therefore, please keep accurate attendance records.**
- 4) **Encourage students to attend classes and to stay in school:** consider requiring early semester assignments, so you can assess their progress EARLY, give them additional support or refer them to tutoring; take roll and contact students who are not attending regularly; talk to students about their college goals. Personal

contact with professors is important to students and often influences them to take their education seriously. Taking an active interest in your students' success may be the difference between a student dropping or remaining in school.

5) Aside from the college's financial obligations, remember that students may be racking up significant debts as well if they are receiving loans. We would hope that such debt stems from successes rather than failures.

Does the college attempt to collect this debt from students?

The College does attempt to collect on this debt. However, financial aid, which can run to \$15,000 or more a year per student, may well have replaced the safety net that kept these folks afloat before massive cuts were made federally and locally to social welfare programs. So, it's difficult to collect on these funds since many of the students are unemployed or underemployed; they carry significant debt, and may live outside the district.

A Voluntary Sub is Not What You May Think

Have you ever noticed the question on the Absence Report that asks if your substitute was voluntary? Many of us assumed that a **Voluntary Substitute** meant the person volunteered to sub, not that any of us thought through what **involuntary substitute** meant. As it turns out, Voluntary Substitutes have nothing to do with the free will of a class substitute. It actually means that the person trades substituting classes with you and does not submit a time card. So, if someone is teaching your class in exchange for your teaching one for them, mark that as Voluntary Substitute. If there is no trade, don't mark Voluntary Substitute or it may hold up your sub's timecard.

Academic Senate General Education Committee News

ACCJC, the accrediting agency, requires that general education programs be reviewed every five years. Since we really don't know when the last time this has been done at College of Marin, the Academic Senate formed a General Education Committee to do the following:

- Research and compare our GE program with GE Programs at other community colleges or four-year colleges.
- Review and revise/update the overall framework of the General Education Program in light of the college's GE SLOs.
- Review current General Education Offerings for accuracy.
- Recommend a procedure going forward for the selection and approval of courses to count for College of Marin General Education requirements.
- Recommend the criteria for the selection of GE courses.
- Propose to the Academic Senate revisions to AP 4025 Criteria for Associate Degree and General Education with the above recommendations in mind.

The newly formed GE Committee has met twice so far this semester. Committee members are both researching general education programs at other community colleges and four-year universities and looking at data about our own program. We will be surveying faculty in coming weeks about the college's general education program and will create a "press release" to be given out at convocation in spring with dates for open meetings during the spring semester inviting people to participate in the discussion.

Child Abuse Reporting

Since this is an issue very much in the news, we wanted you to know that we have several policies and procedures in place here at COM that are intended to protect students as well as all minors who may be on our campus. These policies and procedures can be found on the college web site.

Currently, they are hidden under the Board of Trustees pictures but we plan to move them to a more obvious location for easy reference.

One important procedure that you should be familiar with is **AP 3515** which outlines how employees are expected to report crimes and it is aptly titled: **Reporting of Crimes**. It reads in part:

Any employee who is the victim of any violent threatening or harassing conduct, any witness to such conduct, or anyone receiving a report of such conduct, whether the perpetrator is a District employee or a non-employee, shall immediately report the incident to the District Police Department, Human Resources, and his/her supervisor.

The second important procedure is **AP 3518, Child Abuse Reporting**. Child abuse reporting involves over 40 Penal Code Sections, Welfare and Institutions Code Sections and Family Code Sections. California is serious about this. Here are some important excerpts from AP 3518:

The Superintendent/President recognizes the responsibility of employees to report to the appropriate agency when there is a reasonable suspicion that an abuse or neglect of a child may have occurred.

Mandated reporters include faculty members, educational administrators, and classified staff members.

Mandated reporters must report immediately any reasonable suspicion of child abuse to local law enforcement and/or the Marin County Child Protective Services Department and follow up with a written report within 36 hours.

No mandated reporter who reports a known or suspected instance of child abuse shall be civilly or criminally liable for any report required or authorized by the Penal Code.

When you came to work for the College of Marin, you were given information about your responsibilities as a mandated reporter (under the Penal Code) and information about your confidentiality rights. You were also required to sign and return the statement to the District. As a result, you are a mandated reporter and your confidentiality rights are protected.

A Heartfelt Thank You!

The Academic Senate would like to thank the over 60 faculty who have participated or will participate on the full-time position screening committees and other hiring committees this fall and in coming months. We would not be able to do this without you! We would also like to thank classified volunteers as well as the tireless efforts of Pearl, Julie and Kirsten in the Human Resources Office.

Academic Senate Distance Education Committee News

The Distance Education Committee has been working on instituting Course Welcome Pages which outline the parameters of the different online/distance education courses for students, so that they are informed before they sign up about things such as pre-requisites, attendance requirements, instructional goals and outcomes, textbooks, and access requirements for online courses. Please see: <http://www.marin.edu/DE/online-courses.html>

In addition the committee has been discussing ways to improve DE student success rates and what support faculty might need to facilitate this including: instructional designers and equipment (telephones with speakers, for example, for faculty who want to hold a webinars and video cams for instructors who want to add the human presence to their online courses), website redesigns, student services link ups and an online orientation for DE students so that they can become more effective users of the LMS (Moodle).

Faculty Handbook

<http://marin.edu/faculty/handbook>

Curriculum Committee Webpage

<http://www.marin.edu/curriculum/>

Student Learning Outcomes WIKI:

<http://com-academic-senate-slos.wikispaces.com/>

PRIE Institutional Planning Webpage:

<http://marin.edu/com/ODP/InstitutionalPlanningPage.htm>

(Scroll to the bottom of the page for links to many Institutional Research Reports)

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) for GE and Institutional Level

<http://marin.edu/com/ODP/SLOTrackingTool.htm> (Website, 7-18-2011) **(NEW!)**

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) for Student Services

<http://marin.edu/com/ODP/SSSLO.htm> (Website, 7-18-2011) **(New!)**

SLO Resources/Program Review Resources (New! updated 7-29-2011)

<http://marin.edu/com/ODP/sloprogramreviewresources.htm>

COM Faculty Governance Committee Members 2011 - 2012

as of November 2011

College Council

(Three Senate Officers)

- Sara McKinnon
- Becky Brown
- Yolanda Bellisimo

Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC):

Sara McKinnon/V.P. Ken Meier – Co-Chairs

- Michele Martinisi
- Yolanda Bellisimo
- Norm Pacula
- Molly Johnson
- Kathleen Smyth
- Michael Dougan

EDUCATION PLANNING COMMITTEE (7)

- Peggy Dodge (Chair)
- Blaze Woodlief
- Sara McKinnon
- Chris West
- Jessica Park
- Joetta Scott
- Frank Crosby

FACILITIES PLANNING COMMITTEE (2)

- Fernando Aguedelo-Silva
- Erik Dunmire

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (2)

Two faculty members sit on this committee

- Yolanda Bellisimo
- Anne Gearhart

INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE (5)

- Arthur Lutz
- Paul DaSilva
- Ron Krempetz
- Scott Serafin

GOVERNANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE (2)

- Wendy Walsh
- Victoria Coad

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE (7)

- Jeff Cady
- Frank Crosby
- Maula Allen
- Jeannie Langinger

SLO Facilitators:

- **Yolanda Bellisimo:** Arts and Humanities
- **Anne Gearhart:** CTE, Math and Sciences, PE and Allied Health
- **Becky Reetz:** Student Services

Program Review Facilitator:

- Sara McKinnon

Curriculum Committee

Chris Schultz, Chair:

Kristi Kuhn, Sara McKinnon, Becky Brown, A.Joe Ritchie, Caterina Labriola, Letta Hlavacheck, Rinetta Early, Mary Pieper Warren, Rebecca Beal, Mia Chia, David King, and Bonnie Borenstein

Academic Standards:

- **Rinetta Early, Chair**
- Toni Yoshioka
- Laurie Ordin

Equivalency Committee

- Yolanda Bellisimo
- Meg Pasquel

SLOAC Committee

Yolanda Bellisimo, Chair

Anne Gearhart, Fernando Agudelo-Silva, Trina Miller, Robert Ovetz, Jessica Park, Beth Patel, Cara Statucki, Blaze Woodlief

Distance Education Committee

Alisa Klinger, Chair

Maula Allen, Sandy Boyd, Carl Cox, Ingrid Kelly, Ira Lansing, Sara Lefkowitz, John Marmysz, Kathleen Smyth, Brian Wilson

General Education Committee

Sara McKinnon, Chair

A.Joe Ritchie, Chris Schultz, Susan Rahman, Karen Robinson, Meg Pasquel, Kathleen Smyth, Yolanda Bellisimo

2011-2012 Academic Senate

Officers:

- Sara McKinnon President
- Michael Dougan Vice President
- Becky Brown Secretary
- Yolanda Bellisimo Treasurer

Additional Full Time Members:

- Bonnie Borenstein
- Rinetta Early
- Hank Fearnley
- Arthur Lutz
- Dikran Martin
- John Sutherland
- Blaze Woodlief

Part-Time Credit

- Paul Cheney
- Mia Chia
- Meg Pasquel

Part Time Noncredit

- Rebecca Beal

<http://marin.edu/senate/>