

COLLEGE OF MARIN ACADEMIC SENATE

Minutes

April 3, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 12:45 PM AC 303

Senators Present: Rebecca Beal, Kyle Beattie, Maria Coulson, Gina Cullen, Alex Jones, Dave King, Cara Kreit, Kristin Perrone, Ian Sethre, Kevin Muller, Ron Oxford, Patricia Seery, Logan Wood

Senators Absent: None

Invited Guest: Jonathan Eldridge

- I. **Agenda:** approved (Muller/Sethre).
- II. **Minutes from 13 March 2025:** deferred for editing.
- III. **Minutes from 27 March 2025:** approved (Sethre/Muller)
- IV. **Public Requests:** VP Dana Emerson was present and greeted the Senate. **V. Officers' Reports:**

a. President:

- i. First packet of resolutions for the upcoming plenary has been received. Resolutions will be accepted until April 10.
- ii. Deferred the rest of the President's Report to make time for invited guest. **b. VP:**
 - i. COM Academic Senate nominations for the 2025–2027 term are open. Secretary and Treasurer elections will be held at the last meeting in May.
 - ii. Grant opportunity: *Program Pathways Mapper* extended to April 30.
 - iii. *Credit for Prior Learning* input meeting on May 9 (registration by May 2).
 - iv. State surveys from the Chancellor's office on remote/hybrid work and international student support.
- v. Upcoming events:
 - 1. Rising Scholars meeting (Bakersfield)
 - 2. APAHE conference (early April)
 - 3. Part-time Faculty Institute (early April)
 - 4. Curriculum Institute (July, Ontario)
 - 5. New workshop: *Global Accessibility Awareness* (mid-May)

VI. Committee Reports

- a. Curriculum Committee (Gina Cullen):** Discussion of the multimedia certificate proposal (possibly changing to "game design"). CC encouraged the department to consider revitalization. Mandatory course revision progress is mostly solid; a few areas need follow-up, including Counseling.
- b. Bookstore & Legislative Tech Compliance (Ron Oxford):** Banner limitations discussed (icon visibility issues with XB12/SB1398). No IT presence at meeting, but migration to Banner 9 might help.
- c. DEC (Maria Coulson):** Instructional designer Stacy Lince forming an AI community of practice (May). Honorlock now in the statewide STAC agreement; being reconsidered despite past controversy.
- d. SLO Coordinators (Logan Wood):** Pilot for Canvas Insights starts this summer. Routine department progress check-ins are also underway.

- VII. Invited Guest: President Eldridge.** In summary, Senators engaged in a candid and heartfelt discussion of concerns about their perceptions of the direction the college is heading in. When pressed to be more specific, Senators were at first hesitant, and expressed a general feeling of lack of safety, fear of retaliation, and quiet quitting, returning back to a previous culture at the college that had lacked community or shared commitments to student and campus wellbeing.
 - a.** One senator opened the forum by voicing discomfort and a growing sense that COM is moving in the wrong direction. Based on many conversations and observations, the Senator said that faculty feel some people in power operate with impunity, emboldened by administrative favoritism, and

that the College atmosphere has become punitive, microaggressive, and trust-eroding, and that there was a general fear of speaking up about this, related to the potential of retaliation.

- b. In a follow-up question, Dr. Eldridge asked for specifics, and was told by several Senators that this was not possible in a public forum due the atmosphere spoken of. Dr. Eldridge expressed understanding and apologized.
- c. Another senator explained that the specifics are variable, but that there is an overall sense of malaise, frustration and disconnect. He described a perceived double standard: faculty are expected to operate at an exceptionally high level of professionalism—serving as mentors and fostering comprehensive student growth—but this same expectation is not imposed on administrators. While teachers must be capable of reading the room at all times, communicate clearly with students and manage all details of courses, programs, and transfer experiences, leadership fails to provide equivalent clarity and structured support. As a consequence, faculty encounter unplanned mandates and ill-defined processes, leading to frustration that eventually turns personal.
- d. At this point in the meeting, Senators noticed that a faculty member from the public was commenting via Zoom chat. Although the comments were unsolicited, they became part of the conversation and were later referred to by participants in the meeting, including the invited guest. Senators took note and screenshot the comments in order to study them further. The following comments are an exact timestamped copy of the chat:
 - 00:31:22** Does anyone in this body actually think Jonathan Eldridge would retaliate against them if they had a one on one meeting where they spoke truth to him.
 - 00:32:07** The fact that you can accuse him and his administration over and over again of these type of things without never one time giving him an example is embarrassing.
 - 00:48:12** This is the most disgusting, pathetic meeting I have ever heard. You should be ashamed.
- e. Continuing with the open forum, another senator offered specific concerns from her perspective and department. She said that faculty in her discipline are being asked to do more and more and more. She worried that teaching and students had fallen to the bottom of her priority list and said that it was breaking her heart. She mentioned good administrators leaving because of problems at COM and faculty struggling with the workload. Senators around the room were in agreement.
- f. Another senator raised concerns related to the future of Program Review. She mentioned the accreditation meeting last spring when COM received a commendation for work on program review, celebrating in pride. She said this now felt like it was in danger and that she doesn't know what happened, why our equity facilitators might not be doing what they had been doing, finding out about changes without input from the people who had been working on projects, and a desire that people who want to make changes consult with those who are dedicating their time and energy to the current efforts. Program Review is number 9 in 10+1, and falls within Senate purview.
- g. A fifth senator said that rather than look at a specific event, we might consider the intersectionality of what's happening. She said that when colleagues with longstanding working relationships suddenly say they will not be doing something anymore, even though they have always loved it, it affects her, both in her work functions and personally.
- h. A sixth senator stated that people are no longer doing extra work that they have done for a long time and put many extra hours into, for the love of the college and the work, which yes they were compensated for but never fully because it really is a labor of love, they are leaving and resigning from these positions because they have been accused of corruption, of stealing. And why would you do something that requires so much time and dedication, if you're going to be vilified for it rather than respected and appreciated? Other senators chimed in and said that people were being bullied.
- i. A seventh senator stated that, specifically, she didn't know why her dean had left, because she had been wonderful, and she doesn't think she left for a better job. She stated that people she knows

love this work and they are quitting, and she doesn't know why. She also mentioned that Senate purview of 10+1 is ignored frequently.

- j. To the point of deans leaving, another senator chimed in that contrary to the implications of new language in the UPM contract about gossip, some of the concerns cannot be named specifically because faculty do not gossip as much as one might assume, and they really don't know what happened in many cases.
- k. An eighth senator shared that, before he worked at College of Marin, he knew that COM had a reputation of poor follow-through on grants, and he himself had voted against us receiving them. When he arrived here, he thought it would be easy to fix, but it hasn't been. Calls that would help students a great deal by providing them with free and low-cost materials have not been supported by the union, and it is not clear why.
- l. A ninth senator added that brilliant people here want to do great work, but they don't get enough support, making it hard to serve students.
- m. A tenth senator asked those present for a show of hands if they knew of someone who had quit their non-instructional positions or committee work, or were considering it. Most senators raised their hands. The senator shared that people want to do the work, but cannot do it under these conditions.
- n. A senator who had spoken earlier named Puente as a very successful and important program that has been discontinued at the college, to students' great loss.
- o. A senator who had already spoken said that there has been a delay in calls for learning community coordinators.
- p. Another senator who had spoken earlier then invoked concerns about the future of FDIP, COM's flagship equity program, which has been so successful.
- q. An eleventh senator discussed how he prides himself on taking a neutral stance, and he sees that the college is suffering from a tremendous communication breakdown.
- r. The senators reiterated that the intention of these comments was not to accuse anyone, but to point out problems that are obvious.
- s. President Eldridge said he appreciated the candor and reiterated that anyone was welcome to a 1-1, because the more information he can get, the better.
- t. Senate President Coulson closed the meeting by summarizing the message that this is a deeply committed group of people who choose to serve the students and the college, that these concerns are not one-offs, and that they are not minor. She warned that we may not see the effects of some of the cracks yet, but that one of her greatest fears is that what could very well fall apart is accreditation, which would be disastrous for everyone.
- u. Dr. Eldridge promised that would never happen.

VIII. All other agenda items: deferred.

IX. Meeting Adjourned: 2:02 PM.

For more information about College of Marin Academic Senate Minutes, please contact Caitlin Rolston, Academic Senate Secretary, at CRolston@marin.edu or 628-234-7695