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ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEWSLETTER

“Ignore Us At Your Peril!”: The San Francisco Accreditation Hearing

*by Hoke Simpson, President
Julie Adams, Executive Director*

“Ignore us at your peril!” Those were the closing words of Los Angeles Valley Senate President Leon Marzillier during testimony at the Accrediting Commission’s hearing on Draft A of the proposed new accreditation standards. The hearing, held on Sunday, January 6th in San Francisco, was the only one to be scheduled in the continental United States.

Besides Marzillier, faculty members testifying were Academic Senate President Hoke Simpson, Past President Linda Collins, Treasurer Ian Walton, and Representative-at-Large Scott Lukas, all from the Academic Senate Executive Committee, and Senate President Ophelia Clark, and Vice President Susan Lopez, both from City College of San Francisco. Also testifying were Jim Perley, representing the American Association of University Professors, and Regina Stanback-Stroud, Past President of the Academic Senate and currently Vice President for Instruction at Skyline College.

All of the participants were in communication with one another prior to the hearing, with the result that the overlap in testimony was minimal. It will surprise no one who attended the Fall Plenary Session, or who has read the resolutions generated there, that those assembled to provide testimony came to persuade the Commission to abandon their

misguided emphasis on quantifiable outcomes, and to focus instead on educational quality.

Scott Lukas led off the testimony by calling for an extension of the Commission’s timeline for adoption of a new set of standards. Lukas called for the delay in order “to allow for more dialogue [on the standards], for additional hearings to be scheduled, for more time to allow for further written comments to be submitted, and for the commission to adequately share its research with the public.” “As a social scientist and researcher,” Lukas said, “I can attest to the desirability of sharing one’s background materials with their presentation of completed work. Particularly in this case where the adopted standards will impact so many institutions, we feel that it is absolutely necessary that the commission share all background material and data with the public.”

Ian Walton testified to his experience as a member of a visiting accreditation team and as standard chair for Governance and Administration during his own college’s recent self-study and visitation. “During both of these processes,” Walton said, “I observed that for most colleges the current ten-

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Hoke Simpson

"Where are We, and What are We Doing Here?"

by Hoke Simpson, President

"Where am I?" and "What am I doing here?" is a brace of questions that Executive Committee members ask often, as they wake up in strange—or vaguely familiar—hotel rooms, having departed home turf for YAM (yet another meeting). I recall that my own disorientation was chronic when, as Vice President, I was often traveling four to five times a week. Things are better as President; now I just wake up on cold rainy mornings in Sacramento wishing that the sun would shine.

"Where are we, and what are we doing here?" have become questions of some urgency for our system to answer, for, if we don't, there are others who seem more than willing to answer them for us. And I'm not sure we'll like their answers.

So, where are we? We're here at the beginning of 2002, the largest postsecondary system in the known universe, in a state whose governor seems to be an educational elitist without a clue what the community colleges do, a legislature in which those who do have a clue are quickly being termed out, a Master Plan on the verge of publication, the higher education portion of which is being written, by his own admission, by a staffer named Charles Ratliff,¹ whose history shows him to be enamored of corporate accountability schemes and a "do more with less" mentality, and, oh yes, we're in an economy that's gone South, our base funding's been cut, and more cuts are promised. That's where we are.

What are we doing here? We're struggling, as always, to fulfill our multiple missions: we are trying to be the gateway to higher education for millions of people who, for the most part, need substantial preparation if they are to succeed at our four-year universities; and we are offering vocational education to new

and incumbent workers and, through the Economic Development Program, trying to help regional businesses become more competitive. And we're trying to do all this with the lowest per student funding of all the segments of public education—five times lower than UC, and two times lower than CSU.

To help matters along, we are faced with constant criticism from those who think we should be doing more: the Governor and the Legislature think our transfer rates are too low; UC and CSU, now that their facilities and—from their perspective—their funding are impacted (we should have their funding problems), want us to handle the freshmen and sophomores they have no room for; and business people can't seem to decide whether they want entry-level workers to provide a quick fix for their bottom line, or skilled generalists who will be with them for the long haul, so, for them, we are either too slow or too fast. It's little wonder, in the face of all these demands, that we find ourselves a little confused about what we're doing here.

As institutions of higher education, the answer should be simple: we provide quality education, the equivalent of anything students would get in any of the public postsecondary segments. This should be the case, whether the student's goal is transfer or vocational training. The distinction between our transfer and vocational education functions has been blurred, in fact, by the Career Ladders Initiative of our Board of Governors. The blurring occurs in the repeated call for the "integration" of vocational and "academic" education for the traditional vocational education student. What this call acknowledges is that the best vocational training will not only have the specific focus of a vocational area; it will also include a strong component of general education, with exposure to the arts and sciences, to history and language and mathematics, to all those areas that have classically been considered to

¹ Mr. Ratliff asserted, at a meeting of the Intersegmental Coordinating Council (ICC) on January 18, 2002, that, because the Master Plan workgroups had had little time to attend to higher education (they were almost exclusively concerned with K-12), he would be the author of the higher education portion of the new Plan.

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The Lessons of IMPAC

by Kate Clark, Vice President



Kate Clark

Surely by now you've heard about the IMPAC Project (Intersegmental Major Preparation Articulated Curriculum), a project of the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS). Literally hundreds of community college faculty have joined their discipline counterparts from UC and CSU to discuss curriculum, and yes, the A & T words: ARTICULATION AND TRANSFER.

The IMPAC project enables faculty who gather at five regional and one statewide meeting to identify issues associated with transfer, to note trends or external pressures upon the discipline, and to seek innovative and collaborative solutions. The IMPAC project seeks to ensure that students are fully prepared for their transfer into the major and that duplication of coursework is minimized, thereby fostering students' success in the four-year institutions.

Faculty's work this year, however, has been augmented by the inclusion of articulation officers who have been assigned to one of the 16 on-going discussions.* At the regional meetings, these articulation officers note variances among perspectives in the regions, ask pertinent questions about problems associated with prerequisites, and provide information about the articulation process: how articulation is coordinated and agreements crafted; how local requirements can be established; how case management approaches can be instituted.

While remarkable progress is being made, and while faculty are forging professional contacts with their discipline colleagues throughout the state, they have also taken to heart a few lessons themselves. Among those lessons are these:

1. that discipline faculty work in partnership with articulation officers and that their mutual respect enables articulation officers to complete their responsibilities and ensures the academic integrity discipline faculty wish to see institutionalized through articulation;
2. that the work of counseling faculty is too often maligned, particularly by our transfer partners who have little understanding of the professional status of our counselors who have faculty rank;
3. that the instructional wing and student services wing truly do have as their shared goal the educational development of our students and that working in tandem is more efficient than working at odds;
4. that intersegmental problems require intersegmental responses, and the failure of any one entity to participate incurs the enmity of the others;
5. that efforts to articulate courses across the segments can be eased by the common identifying number assigned by the CAN System;
6. that agreements upon courses or major preparation, once articulated, must be readily available to students, faculty, and counseling staff in all segments, on a common data base—ASSIST;
7. finally, that the failure of any one of these supportive mechanisms will impair the ability of the others to function with credibility.

These lessons seem self-evident to those of us in the community college for whom transfer has been a pressing matter. But they have been less evident, perhaps, to my colleagues in my own department, and to our

*Disciplines currently under discussion are: chemistry, biology, physics, math, geology, ICS, nursing, agriculture, food science and nutrition, administration of justice, business administration, computer science, geography, engineering, political science, economics.

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IMPAC



Renee Reyes Tuller

Horse Sense for People— “Don’t Fence Me In...” 2002

by Renee Reyes Tuller, Consultation Task Force on Counseling Chair

I have been in love with horses ever since I began riding as a young girl in my small hometown of Reedley, California. I am also a great fan of Monty Roberts, the Horse Whisperer. Roberts’ extraordinary work pioneered an entirely new approach to horse training, and if other trainers could be said to be working within the “fenced pastures” of older methods, Roberts’ thinking definitely sought out the “open range.” Key to his transformative method is the skill of listening and communicating according to the individual needs of each horse. Roberts’ new book, *Horse Sense for People*, reveals this and other principles that he developed for communication with and understanding of horses, which could effectively be applied to students needing mentoring and guidance, and more broadly to creating effective educational environments.

The value of applying these principles in the educational arena seems obvious as we encounter more and more demands to justify what we do in terms of quantifiable outcomes. In the face of pressures to consider students as widgets, our thinking is going to have to seek the “open range” if we are to inform them, mentor them, and free them to find that special educational path they each deserve.

The demands for quantity over quality will likely increase unless counselors insist on bringing our knowledge to the conversation. The year 2002 should be the time for counseling faculty to raise awareness regarding the creative approaches needed for our students. Through discussions, both at local campuses and statewide, we can contribute to policy perspectives and underscore the creative and vital role we play in students’ success. Monty Roberts offers some ideas with regard to creative mentoring, and his perspectives seem quite apt where policy changes in our education system are being considered. Here are a few of his observations that we need to keep in mind.

“MANY PEOPLE WATCH, BUT FEW SEE.”

Given the nature of our one-on-one access to students we have the opportunity as counseling faculty to share our knowledge of the many obstacles and issues our students face. Within our counseling processes and procedures we have opportunities not afforded classroom faculty who deal with students *en masse*. Counselors come to possess a more holistic picture of the long-term needs of students, as well as each individual student, beyond the classroom. We “see” students and help them in spite of the obstacles with which we contend within our limited resources. As a rule, and not the exception, students attending community colleges must overcome unbelievable odds. Yet, with our help and despite those odds, many persevere semester after semester and achieve their educational goals. Through all of this we try our best to “see” ways in which to help them persevere. In fact, we counselors “see” what many other folks do not. We know how to relate to each student’s individual needs and how to avoid “fencing” students into one-size-fits-all solutions.

Quantifiable, “fenced in” outcomes do not accurately measure the quality of the work we do and never will. In this regard, I encourage all of you to be aware of the proposed new accreditation standards. The proposed new standards in Draft A primarily focus on outcomes and pay little attention to the counseling component, suggesting only that all student services be evaluated in terms of quantifiable student learning outcomes. The framers of these standards “watch” but do not “see.” The context of the draft seems blind to the needs of our students with regard to the very essence of the one-on-one “seeing” that counselors provide. For example, neither the word “counseling” nor “counselor” appears in this new draft, although the term “advisor”—with its connotation of less-than-professional training—does. This should trigger a red flag to the counseling faculty of the California

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The Disciplines List Hearings

by Scott A. Lukas, Standards and Practices Committee Chair



Scott A. Lukas

The Disciplines List Hearings are just around the corner! As many of you now know, the review of the proposed changes to the disciplines list is moving along. The disciplines list establishes the minimum qualifications for the faculty of California community colleges. The Academic Senate has the responsibility of making recommendations to the Board of Governors regarding proposed disciplines list changes. The following is provided to give everyone an update on the status of this year's review, what has happened and what will be coming up in the two hearings and Spring Session.

By the time of Fall Session, the Standards and Practices Committee had received over ten disciplines list proposals. At a very lively and well-attended breakout at session, faculty expressed their opinions on the first set of proposals. By the time of the deadline for all revisions, our committee received over thirty proposals. The final list of accepted disciplines list proposals includes thirty-three—the largest number of submissions since the instituting of the process. The proposals represent eighteen different disciplines where recommendations have been made regarding the minimum qualifications of disciplines. Many of these proposals reflect the changes occurring in disciplines across the state and the offering of new programs of study in higher education. Other revisions seek changes in the level and nature of qualifications for disciplines. These particular revisions would require a change of Title 5. Twelve proposals have been submitted to argue for the establishment of new disciplines to the list. For those of you who have not yet had the opportunity to review the proposals, feel free to check them out at the Academic Senate website.

The disciplines list proposals have been sent out to local academic senate presidents, college presidents, chief instructional officers, curriculum committee chairs, personnel officers and representatives of various disciplines organizations. Already our committee has received excellent feedback on the proposals and we would like to thank the many

individuals and groups who have taken the time to look over the proposals. In addition to the commentary we have already received, the Standards and Practices Committee relies on the disciplines list hearings to gather testimony on the proposed revisions. This year there were two hearings, one in the North and one in the South. The North hearing was held on Friday, January 25, 2002 in Oakland and the South hearing was held on Friday, February 15, 2002 in Los Angeles. The hearings were intended to provide an opportunity for those concerned with proposed disciplines list changes to comment on the proposals. Comments from the hearings will be summarized and available through the Senate Office. In addition to the commentary provided through direct testimony at the North and South hearings, testimony was also given through E-mail.

Following the hearings the Standards and Practices Committee will compile summaries of the testimony provided for distribution at the March area meetings. Discussion of the disciplines list proposals at the area meetings will provide the Academic Senate further indication of the level of support for the proposals. Based on reaction from the field, the Executive Committee will select those proposals that appear to have significant support for adoption. These proposals will be held for presentation at the Spring Session in April where delegates will vote on them as resolutions. Depending on the result of resolution voting, the Board of Governors will be presented with a first reading of proposed changes to the disciplines list in July 2002.

The disciplines list review is a long but interesting process, highlighting the important responsibilities given to the Academic Senate by AB 1725. As I hope I have made clear, the process also illustrates the real power of consultation and collaboration. The disciplines list review is happening, and I would like to thank the many people throughout the state who have submitted disciplines proposals and to those who have taken the time to provide commentary and suggestions.



Dibakar Barua

A Report From the Affirmative Action and Cultural Diversity Committee

by Dibakar Barua, AA/CD Committee Chair

Recently, the addition of new members has brought a new infusion of energy into the AA/CD committee. Just in time, too, because we are revising and updating the 1993 Student Equity handbook entitled “Student Equity: Guidelines for Developing a Plan” for the spring plenary session in April. AA/CD is in the process of discarding unnecessary or old information, adding new materials where needed, updating definitions, adding new and useful materials on campus climate, classroom assessment, learning styles, and academic mentoring, and updating funding sources. One thing we are need is data on exemplary programs to promote student equity. Last year’s turnaround survey on Student Equity yielded only thirty or so responses, many of them simply stating that there were no exemplary programs on their campuses. We are going to make one last ditch effort to collect more useful data and send out a follow up memorandum to all colleges. Our aim is to get more information on programs or projects on various campuses that promote student equity in any of the five areas specified by the student equity regulations—namely, access, course completion, ESL and basic skills completion, degree and certificate completion, and transfer rate. We want to collect information on well-planned exemplary programs with proven effectiveness in promoting student success, to give you a more than compendium of all programs initiated in the name of student equity.

To repeat something you all know by now, a recent court action (*Connerly v. State Personnel Board, et al.*) has invalidated many Title 5 regulations aimed at achieving diversity in hiring on the premise that such regulations—especially those asking for district goals or timetables for the hiring of minorities and women—violate constitutional guarantees of equal protection under law. The question now is how do we ensure diversity and equal opportunity in employment, required by both federal and state constitutions and various statutes—

for example, Government Code §11135, Assembly Bill 1725, and several sections of the Education Code—without the benefit of most of the instruments and mechanisms so far used by community colleges under Title 5 Regulations. The Chancellor’s Office has reiterated its longstanding commitment to equity and diversity, so revisions of Title 5 Regulations are being planned to remove sections rendered problematic by *Connerly* and strengthen equal opportunity and nondiscrimination regulations. The Chancellor has also convened a Task Force on Equity and Diversity to “recommend changes in policy, Board regulations, or state law needed to carry out the system commitment to diversity and student equity,” according to the Task Statement. Diversity, in this new context, is “a work force that provides equal employment opportunity to all regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, disability, religious or political affiliation, age, income level, socio-economic status, prior hardship, or sexual orientation.”

Diversity in the work force is also a student equity issue. That a diverse faculty and staff would promote equity and success for our very diverse student population is a *prima facie* argument. We want equity and success for all of our students, regardless of their color, creed, gender, or economic status. No reasonable person will deny that California’s community colleges, more so than its other segments of higher education, have precisely this mission. California’s community colleges are the last best hope, so to speak, for the vast majority of our high school graduates. And we need effective programs to implement various measures for student equity and success—not just good or indifferent Student Equity plans on paper. The Chancellor has stated that the system will enforce minimum conditions regarding student equity plans. That may not go far enough since simply writing a good plan does not ensure that meaningful progress is being made in achieving student equity.

Local Senates

If you don't know much about the Relations with Local Senates Committee, you soon will. Our members are busy this spring with three projects having direct bearing on your local academic senate.

First, a committee member or an Executive Committee member will be contacting you soon to establish a date to meet on your campus with your senate, your officers, and other interested faculty. We hope to visit each community college campus to learn of your successful ventures and your concerns or local issues. We hope to exchange information—to provide you with alerts and reminders in keeping with adopted resolutions, and to secure from you model documents and data of use to the Academic Senate and its various committees. If you are particularly eager to have someone visit your campus soon and wish more information, please Email the Local Senates Committee Chair and Academic Senate Vice President, Kate Clark at kclark@ivc.cc.ca.us.

by Kate Clark, Vice President

Second, the committee is finalizing a revision of a handbook previewed at the Fall 2001 plenary session breakout. That document, much updated and reorganized, will be considered for adoption at this spring plenary session. Watch for the session materials to arrive in March for your preview copy.

Finally, the committee is working with the Academic Senate's office to create a Leadership page, much like other web pages available from the Academic Senate's website at <http://www.academicssenate.cc.ca.us>. This page will ultimately contain links—internal and external—to materials and resources of particular use to local senate officers. If there are particular features you would to have readily accessible, we welcome your suggestions. Our committee looks forward to meeting each of you in the coming months!



Kate Clark

The Lessons of IMPAC

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fellow faculty in all three segments who teach geology, or business, or computer science, or chemistry, and whose day-to-day preoccupations have seldom been focused on the frustrations associated with the transfer process. For them to suddenly see the benefits of ASSIST, and the need for UC participation in an improved and revised CAN process seem significant lessons indeed—genuine “ah, ha!” moments. Equally significant is the faculty's new appreciation for the work of articulation officers and the complexity of counseling students uncertain about their major or the institution to which they wish to transfer.

These have been the correlative lessons of IMPAC. To learn more about the IMPAC project or to join our efforts, please visit our Web site at <http://www.cal-impac.org>. There you will find notes from regional meetings, names and email addresses of faculty and articulation officers who attended, and links to other resources. You may also register there for cost-free attendance at the IMPAC Statewide meeting, April 12-13 at the LAX Sheraton Gateway.

Local Senates



Mark Snowwhite

Efforts to Improve Basic Skills Instruction in Community Colleges Show Promise

Mark Snowwhite, Chair of Basic Skills Committee

With well over fifty percent of community college entering students assessed as being underprepared to do college-level work in English, mathematics, and/or reading, according to our 1998 Basic Skills Survey, California community colleges face a monumental task of providing effective basic skills instruction. This challenge seems daunting when we consider the degree to which many of these students lack rudimentary skills in reading, writing, and computation—usually after completing high school. With drop-out rates among these students extremely high, how much success can we expect in the future?

Surprisingly, we can expect a great deal of success, but only when our institutions commit to improving basic skills instruction and student success at these levels as a top priority. We already know what practices yield improved results. Both Hunter Boylan, of the National Center for Developmental Education (sponsor of the Kellogg Institute), and Norton Grubb, Chair of UC Berkeley's Community College Cooperative (sponsor of the Basic Skills convocations), have published work and presented workshops describing best practices that have been documented successes and that we can replicate on our local campuses—of course, with the necessary institutional commitment.

And some of our colleges are making impressive progress in basic skills instruction. To get a picture of what practices have been in place in recent years in our community colleges, the Basic Skills Committee has completed a second comprehensive survey, with a 60 % return to date. This survey reveals what our institutions are doing to help students make critical gains in precollegiate basic skills. With a Board of

Governors grant to follow up on this survey, the Senate's Basic Skills Committee—along with a number of college administrators, representatives from the other public higher education segments, a K-12 representative, and research advisors—will use this data and the available information on best practices in basic skills to identify programs in the California community colleges that best achieve student success. This expanded committee will determine ways to use data—some subjective—to demonstrate success in basic skills instruction. We hope to develop data collecting models that might be useful for all colleges to demonstrate the successes of their efforts.

We already have a good idea of best practices. They include having highly integrated instruction and student support services, the use of a variety of instructional approaches, faculty development activities that encourage sharing successful strategies, providing support for part-time faculty and promoting their full integration into instructional approaches, the use of a variety of learning communities, designing curriculum that allows for clear steps of advancement in skills levels, and many more.

We need to increase our efforts in identifying those practices in our colleges and using them as models we can replicate at or adapt to other colleges. We also need to develop better means by which we document our successes. To this end we must maintain control of the design for collecting and using data that help us promote what works. With the Board of Governors grant and the help of bright, dedicated administrators and others from the other systems and segments, the Basic Skills Committee looks forward to a very productive period.

Technology Resources Showcased at Fall Session

At the Fall 2001 Session of the Academic Senate, attendees were given overviews of two important technology resources. Actually, the first of the two, the MERLOT Project, is miscast when categorized as a technology resource because it is first and foremost a teaching resource, which just happens to be available through the Internet. The Multimedia Educational Resources for Learning and Online Teaching, aka MERLOT, was begun at Sonoma State University, hence its viticulturally influenced acronym, and its title explains its function although MERLOT is useful for all educators, not just those teaching online. While there are many teaching resource sites on the Internet, the uniqueness of MERLOT comes from its evaluative function.

Here's how MERLOT works. Anybody can suggest an online resource for inclusion under MERLOT. These resources can be commercial sites or websites created by an individual instructor. The resources are listed under subject areas to facilitate access by teachers. Then comes the important part. Subject area teams made up of educators in the specific discipline work to evaluate the submitted resources using a defined set of criteria established by the project. The peer reviews are rigorous and include specific information as to how the site can be best used, the accuracy of site information, and the overall quality of the site. These evaluations are then added to the resource listing. In addition, users of the resource can add their own comments about each resource. Some teachers have encouraged students to evaluate sites after using them with their classes. When you view resources in MERLOT, whether you use the subject area listings or perform a search, you can specify whether you want evaluated resources to appear first.

The California Community Colleges are just one of 23 participants in the MERLOT Project, which involves institutions of higher education from throughout the country. Ian Walton, ASCCC Treasurer, is on the mathematics team, and his co-presenter at the Fall Session, Michelle Pilati, participates on the physics team. These teams evaluate between

Mark Lieu, Chair Technology Committee

12 and 30 sites per year. I recommend that you visit the site at www.merlot.org for yourself. You may find materials for an upcoming lesson, or you may have a resource you want to suggest for inclusion. If you have questions about MERLOT, you can contact Ian at ian_walton@wvmccd.cc.ca.us and Michelle at mpilati@rh.cc.ca.us.

The California Community College Satellite Network, aka CCCSAT, is appropriately labeled a technology resource. Funded by a TMAPP grant, the goal of CCCSAT is to provide the California Community College System with the infrastructure necessary to take advantage of satellite technology for the delivery of digital information throughout the state. While the current focus is on delivery of television, Project Director Sherilyn Hargraves emphasizes that any type of digital information can be delivered using CCCSAT.

Seventy-one districts in the California Community College System have the equipment in place to downlink from CCCSAT, and more are being added all the time. Districts can download programming that can be telecast in labs or classrooms or over district-run cable channels. CCCSAT was recently awarded a public interest channel on the DISH network, which increases its capability to reach California residents, and provides districts without access to cable channels an alternate way to reach students in their districts. This channel is called the Community College Network (CCN), and its current schedule is primarily programs available over public broadcasting channels. The channel will also be used to publicize the California Community Colleges System and what the System accomplishes for the State of California.

Project Director Hargraves emphasizes, however, that CCCSAT encourages colleges and districts to provide content to CCCSAT for statewide distribution. CCCSAT is not just a way to receive programming, it is also a way to market programs you develop locally throughout the state. For more information about CCCSAT, you can reach Sherilyn Hargraves at shargraves@palomar.edu.



Mark Lieu

Technology

"Ignore Us At Your Peril!"

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standard process is still a very new experience. It includes two standards (3 and 4) that closely resemble your proposed revisions and their heavy emphasis on so-called quantifiable outcomes. But most colleges have had extreme difficulty meeting those standards or have failed them. And you have no evidence that the very few colleges who have succeeded in meeting those standards are in fact providing a superior education to students as a result.... And yet," Walton continued, "you want to involve us all in a giant leap of faith by making your entire process similar to these two unproven standards. To my logical mathematician's mind that seems close to lunacy. If I were a CEO I think I would be terrified. Why not practice what you preach—and collect some data first, before you leap."

Next to testify was Jim Perley. Perley, a past president of the AAUP and past chair of its Committee on Accreditation, had also challenged the standards as a panel member at the Fall Academic Senate Plenary Session. Perley and AAUP are sufficiently concerned over the Commission's direction that he made the trip from Decatur, Illinois, where he is currently Dean of Arts and Sciences at Millikin University, specifically to testify. Perley said that his concerns centered on academic freedom and shared governance, "areas which have historically been thought to be indicators of quality in higher education.... The emphasis on 'outcomes,'" he said, "rather than process in the new proposed standards is a threat to the exercise of academic freedom which allows excellence to emerge." In his concluding remarks, Perley said that "If new standards for accreditation lead to a perception of the elimination from consideration of structures that have assured...quality, then I, for one, will lobby for a new and different mechanism and structure for achieving accreditation that will insure the maintenance of...high standards of quality."

Linda Collins presented the Commission with a synopsis of her earlier written commentary on the proposed standards. Collins cited the Commission's claim that it has reduced the number of standards to avoid redundancy. "However, upon closer examination, it is noteworthy that the proposed draft is actually

quite redundant," she said. "Essentially there is but one overarching standard, repeated over and over again. What is required above all is a 'systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation and re-evaluation to verify effectiveness.' This 'standard' is then expected to be applied across the institution, be it in instruction or student services, administrative processes or governance." Draft A, she said, "completes a retreat from historically understood approaches to standards in two ways. First, the Commission moves away from prior expectations that baseline standards of resources and quality will apply to various areas of the college. However, requiring that colleges meet increasing expectations for productive outcomes without regard for the resources colleges use or need to attain these outcomes creates systemic pressure to cut corners. Second," Collins continued, "the draft avoids any real commitment to or discussion of the levels of achievement expected of students or the educational rigor and integrity of the offerings. It is quite possible to imagine institutions with 'systematic cycles' of evaluation and planning used to enhance 'outcomes' whose offerings are not educationally sound and whose transcripts will not be honored by transfer institutions. In fact, to compel attention to outcomes while removing the underpinning of expected standards in both of these senses is a prescription for disaster in higher education. Focus on quantifiable outcomes without the checks and balances afforded by attention to baseline standards of quality and rigor creates premium conditions for accreditation of and institutional pressures toward diploma mills."

Ophelia Clark, from City College of San Francisco, was also critical of the Commission's lack of attention to essential "inputs," and of its apparent unwillingness to spend time listening to faculty. Her colleague, Susan Lopez, said that "There should be more emphasis on what is known as 'value added.' The student enrolls already possessing (or lacking) certain skills and motivation. How is the student transformed by the process? And what is the process, what is the institution contributing to the equation? Just looking at *outcomes* is not sufficient," Lopez said, "you have to look at the student's starting place, the process and the ending place." Lopez went on to observe that "The standards

"Just looking at outcomes is not sufficient...you have to look at the student's starting place, the process and the ending place."

should speak clearly and eloquently to the reader, but as written, they fail to convey any sense that education is a noble enterprise on the part of the learner and of the educator—on the contrary, the pursuit of knowledge is made to sound completely mundane.”

Hoke Simpson told the Commissioners that they should not be surprised that “I am here to make a case for writing the academic senates back into the accreditation standards.” The argument, he said, that the standards are necessarily vague about governance because all of the institutions accredited by the commission do not have the same statutory and regulatory requirements as the California Community Colleges, is a weak one. Citing examples of local academic senates’ protection of academic quality on their campuses, Simpson said that all colleges would clearly benefit from the requirement that they have a faculty organization entrusted with decisions about curriculum and program quality. Simpson was also critical of the Commission’s emphasis on outcomes. Arguing that the principal outcomes of a higher education are the largely intangible changes wrought over the course of an entire lifetime, he said that the best way to tell if a college contributes to producing these positive lifelong results was to look at how it made its decisions—that is, at its governance. “For it is here,” he said, “in the ways that people deal with one another, that an institution will model—or fail to model—those traits of personal character that it hopes to effect in its students, and those social and political processes that it hopes to see sustained in the larger society.”

Leon Marzillier told the Commission that his academic senate at Los Angeles Valley College was sufficiently concerned by the new standards to pay his way to San Francisco to testify. One focus of their concern, he said, was the language of proposed Standard III concerning faculty evaluation: *Evaluation of faculty also includes effectiveness in producing stated student learning outcomes*. “Depending upon who establishes these so-called ‘learning outcomes,’” Marzillier observed, “this could have the exact opposite effect stated at the beginning of Draft A as being the purpose of the commission: ‘To assure quality’ and ‘To promote the ongoing pursuit of excellence.’ Instead, the above-proposed language is liable

to create institutional pressures toward reduction of rigor, grade inflation, and lowered academic standards.” Should the Commission fail to abandon its current course, said Marzillier, “I for one will be joining those at the senate’s Fall Session expressing the opinion that as a system, we should simply find another, more responsive body, under which to be accredited. With all due respect,” he concluded, “ignore us at your peril!”

Regina Stanback-Stroud told the Commission, “I have to inform you that the standards are bankrupt. There is absolutely no expectation that institutions make any type of resource, service, or scholarship commitment that is generally recognized to insure some measure of academic and educational quality.” The abandonment of such expectations, she said, and the shift to an exclusive reliance on outcomes as a measure of quality “is occurring at precisely the time when people who classify themselves as white are no longer in the majority....Now,” she said, “the means of certifying quality shifts from the commitment of the institutions to the exclusive performance of the now very diverse student population.” Stanback-Stroud continued, “The over reliance on the value based rhetoric of accountability and taxpayers’ interest is flawed in that it presumes that the taxpayers who demand accountability are somehow different than the students who attend the community colleges. The community college student as a whole works more than 40 hours per week and pays payroll and income taxes. They live in the community and pay sales taxes. Yes, these taxpayers do demand accountability. They demand to know that when they need to see a counselor they can, that there will be a core of full time faculty to serve them, that the facilities will be decent and suitable for their educational experiences, that the college will have instructional resources to support their learning experience and that the college is stable enough that it will be there by the time they complete their educational goals.”

The Commission thanked the participants for their testimony. There were no questions.

In summing up the day’s testimony, the AAUP’s Jim Perley said that it was “Brutal, but effective!”

“The over reliance on the value based rhetoric of accountability and taxpayers’ interest is flawed in that it presumes that the taxpayers who demand accountability are somehow different than the students who attend the community colleges.”



Linda Collins

The Proposed Accreditation Standards: A Summary Critique

Linda Collins, Accrediting Commission Liaison

At its recent session, the Academic Senate passed a record number of resolutions concerning the proposed accreditation standards. Other faculty organizations have also gone on record opposing the proposed draft standards, including the Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers as well as representatives from the American Association of University Professors. The Commission currently intends to adopt a revised draft at their June 2002 meeting.

The Academic Senate has called upon the Commission to extend their timeline and engage in a more inclusive deliberative process. Certainly, the Commission should hold more than one public hearing each in California and Hawaii.

The Academic Senate has also requested that the Commission make available to the public the materials and research upon which they based their extensive proposals.

According to the Commission's "Project Renewal" plan, the revision aims to import quality assurance approaches from business and to address inclusion of the wide variation in institutions now on the higher education "market." But to widen the umbrella in this way essentially reduces the standards to the lowest common denominator.

The content of the standards has been narrowed from the assurance of adequate educational, fiscal, human, physical resources and conditions to the continuous monitoring of outcomes.

The number of standards has been reduced from ten to four; but close reading reveals that these four are restatements of one theme. Essentially, there is but one overarching standard, repeated over and over again. What is required above all is a "systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation and re-evaluation to verify effectiveness." This "standard" is then expected to be applied across the

institution, be it in instruction or student services, administrative processes or governance. This approach would inappropriately impose a singular educational philosophy and practice upon all institutions. This represents a radical departure and places the Commission in too partisan a stance in relation to current policy debates about educational reform.

The proposal completes a retreat from historically understood approaches to standards in two ways. First, the Commission moves away from prior expectations that baseline standards of resources and quality will apply to various areas of the college (full-time faculty, basic counseling and library services, adequate or at least tolerable libraries, or sound deliberative processes for ensuring curricular integrity) At precisely the time our students are the most diverse in the history of the region, the Commission would countenance a retreat from an assurance that the minimum resources and standards in instruction and student services are available for them to fulfill their educational dreams.

Second, the draft avoids any real commitment to or discussion of the levels of achievement expected of students or the educational rigor and integrity of the offerings. It is quite possible to imagine institutions with "systematic cycles" of evaluation and planning used to enhance "outcomes" whose offerings are not educationally sound and whose transcripts will not be honored by transfer institutions. Focus on quantifiable outcomes without the checks and balances afforded by attention to baseline standards of quality and rigor creates premium conditions for accreditation of and institutional pressures toward diploma mills. Privileging educational productivity over educational quality risks the academic reputations of the colleges and undermines the credibility of our degrees and certificates in the eyes of transfer institutions and employers alike. This is no service to our students.

Student outcomes measurements are not complete and exclusive measures of quality. The evaluation of institutions should in fact avoid singular measures. As Wellman has noted, “One strength of accreditation historically is that it has avoided one dimensional measures of quality, instead...[institutions must] demonstrate performance in a variety of areas, including curriculum, faculty, finances, governance and student services. Academic freedom, institutional commitment to the public interest, and other important aspects evaluated through the governance standard should not be sidestepped.” (J. Wellman, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Sept. 22, 2000)

The proposed Draft significantly weakens the previous standards with respect to sufficiency of fiscal resources, fiscal stability and fiscal accountability. This is a mistake. The public has a right to expect that accredited institutions are fiscally responsible, stable and with sufficient resources to make it likely the institution will be there long enough to allow students to complete their studies.

The proposed Draft would require that all student development, support services and learning support services be systematically assessed against student learning outcomes. This presumes that one can establish a causal connection between say, a counseling hour, or a visit to the library, and a specified set of learning outcomes. Such an instrumentalist approach to justifying student services appears to presume that students do not have rights to access essential student services, including financial aid advisement, health services, and student access to cultural and social events. While we strongly support program review and assessment of student services, and would agree that all such services should be both relevant to student needs and effective, we do not agree that all colleges should be required to try to prove the efficacy of each service in terms of learning outcomes, as though learning outcomes were the only measurement of a college’s function within society.

Much that we do in higher education has long term or longitudinal effects, and could not always be shown to be of immediate efficacy. The approach here is overly simplistic, and could have damaging consequences.

Myriad other new requirements would be imposed including: regular validation of course and program examinations; the identification of competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for all credit, degrees and certificates, as well as general and vocational education programs. Yet there is no rationale cited to suggest that documentation of this magnitude is necessary and appropriate in all colleges, nor to justify requirements this extensive.

The Draft also calls for evaluation of faculty to include “effectiveness in producing stated student learning outcomes.” This particular suggestion is the most likely to exert immediate downward pressure on academic integrity, rigor and standards—especially given the absence in the Draft is any stated commitment to tenure, due process and other central academic norms.

The proposed draft groups all “personnel” together and de-emphasizes distinctions among employees. This reflects a general inattention in the document to faculty, their qualifications, and their role as teachers, mentors and discipline experts. There is a notable absence of any mention of the relational aspects of teaching and learning. Attention to the discipline expertise of faculty is a critical component of ensuring confidence of transfer institutions, and we de-emphasize it at our students’ peril.

Of the thirty-four (34) institutions that have undergone the accrediting process in the last several years, only four (4) have satisfactorily met the Commission’s expectations with regard to current standards 3 and 4. Yet these, particularly the current standard 3 on institutional effectiveness, really are the “guts” of the new draft proposal.

This should raise flags for all involved. It suggests that the framers of the new standards may be so taken with the outcomes agenda that they are not sufficiently concerned with the very real considerations of cost or practicality. For any college to successfully implement the Commission’s new mandates will require significant, sustained and targeted investment in professional researchers, data analysis and computing capability, professional development, and faculty and staff time. This is particularly

“The proposed Draft significantly weakens the previous standards with respect to sufficiency of fiscal resources, fiscal stability and fiscal accountability.”

“The ACCJC draft retreats from a commitment to collegial governance.”

problematic (especially for the public institutions that ACCJC* serves) at a time when public funding for community colleges has been cut across the region, and we stand on the threshold of major economic downturn.

The diversion of resources on the scale that would be required will by necessity siphon from those places most likely to provide enhanced student achievement: the classrooms, counseling offices, and libraries where faculty and students interact. Prior to embarking on such an expensive and extended experiment, the colleges, the communities we serve, as well as state level policy makers deserve to see a more detailed analysis of the projected costs, impact and implications of this shift in standards for the colleges. Such an approach constitutes a massive unfunded mandate, and will ultimately undermine our shared goal of serving students in the community colleges.

Ironically, while other minimum educational standards are no longer salient, there is one exception. The draft inserts a new, prescriptive emphasis on ensuring baseline resources for technology in teaching. No corresponding plan is required regarding some of the other generally agreed-upon, fundamental resources that support the provision of excellent education such as qualified faculty and staff or sufficient learning resources.

The singling out of technology mediated instruction, particularly absent any evidence that such instruction is good for our students, or enhances their “learning outcomes,” suggests that the Commission is working to promote distance education and reorient the standards in favor of institutions (such as Western Governors University, Bob Jones University or the University of Phoenix) that are organized primarily around delivery by distance modality.

Judith Eaton, President of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), recently noted that

“Six core academic values sustain regional accreditation. They are the valuing of: institutional autonomy; collegiality and shared governance; the intellectual and academic authority of faculty; the

degree (whether associate, baccalaureate, professional, masters, or doctorate); general education; and site-based education and a community of learning.” www.chea.org/Research/core-values.cfm

The ACCJC draft retreats from a commitment to collegial governance. This retreat is clearest in the proposed standard on “Leadership and Vested Authority.” Gone are the current requirements that faculty have a substantive role in institutional governance, established academic senates and appropriate institutional support. Faculty, staff and students now only need to have a “mechanism or organization” to give “input” on budget, policies and planning.

This overall retreat is particularly problematic in light of the larger agenda in the draft. If colleges are to be organized around the production of student outcomes, then the deliberative processes designed to ensure the integrity of the curriculum and educational programs are even more, not less, critical. They serve as one of the interconnected and necessary checks and balances in colleges and universities. Without sound governance, functional academic senates, and curriculum review processes that ensure the role of discipline expertise, the credibility of our transcripts can and will be challenged by our four year partners.

“Leadership” is not an adequate proxy for governance. The draft also places heightened emphasis on the “vested authority” of the CEOs and governing boards. The general approach to “leadership” appears to be an attempt to reinstate a dated and hierarchical model.

In general, the Academic Senate prefers the more balanced approach to institutional accreditation in the existing standards, and urges a return to multiple measures of educational excellence. While we recognize the current pressures arising from external sources, notably the federal Department of Education, we do not believe that the Commission should adopt unproven, perhaps even faddish measurements and thereby abandon its long-standing commitment to an institution’s educational quality evidenced in many ways.

* Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

The Commission has simply gone too far. In attempting to accommodate differences among the institutions accredited by ACCJC, the Commission should not lower generally accepted standards, or simply sink to the lowest common denominator. If accreditation is to be of continued value and viability, it must be credible, and that credibility rests in large measure on a shared belief that accreditation does in fact uphold accepted standards of educational excellence.

The Academic Senate believes this proposal should occasion widespread discussion of the role of the Commission and the accrediting process. The Commission serves the educational community, and a substantive redefinition of the basis of accreditation should not be the Commission's alone to determine.

President's message

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prepare one to live a rich life and to function effectively in the world.² The Career Ladders Initiative, in other words, recognizes that, as Neil Postman tells us in *The End of Education*, the preparation for making a living has always been well served by a good general education.³

A quality public education is one which does not serve a public, but which *creates* a public, to cite Postman again.⁴ Its goal is the self-actualization of its students, the creation of literate, compassionate people, capable of contributing to a democratic society. As Howard Bowen tells us, the goal of higher education is the development of the whole

We urge all faculty to carefully read the new draft and contrast it with the current standards. We urge you to work with your local academic senate and other faculty organizations to organize and express concern about these proposals. We urge you as well to work with classified staff, students, administrators and trustees to raise these concerns with the Commission.

Note: These remarks are drawn a lengthier document submitted to the Commission, available at www.academicsenate.cc.ca.us ACCJC materials can be found at www.acejc.org

Since this article was written, the Accrediting Commission has published Draft B of the Standards. Draft B is available for download at <http://www.acejc.org/>. The Academic Senate is currently analyzing the new draft, and is sending its liaison Linda Collins to testify at the hearing on March 13th in Hawaii.

person, involving the transformation of resources, not into things, but into “desired intangible qualities of human beings.”⁵

As obvious as this concept of quality may seem, it appears to be lost on many of the Master Plan staffers and accreditation commissioners of the world, who—perhaps forgetting their own educations—seek to define quality in terms of “measurable outcomes” and the acquisition of “skill sets.”

Over the years, my own commitment to our system of community colleges has deepened as I have witnessed, again and again, the dedication of colleagues—vocational and academic—to the “whole person,” to enhancing and enriching the potential of students’ lives. We can’t let ourselves be distracted from or confused about what we are doing here. It’s simply too important, and we must keep our conception of quality as the actualization of potential clearly in focus, both for ourselves and our friends and our critics. And with that clarity of focus, we must demand the resources to make the promise of quality a reality.

“As obvious as this concept of quality may seem, it appears to be lost on many of the Master Plan staffers and accreditation commissioners of the world...”

²We might note that a plumber who works on pipes and drains is called a “plumber” and is said to have a “vocation”; a plumber who works on the human anatomy is called a “doctor” and is said to have a “profession.” As Regina Stanback-Stroud has pointed out (Vocational Education Seminar, San Diego, February 8, 2002), our four-year universities are deeply involved in vocational education through their professional schools. And we would add that the need for a good general education is no less pressing for these professionals than for our vocational students.

³Postman, Neil, *The End of Education: Redefining the Value of School*. Vintage Books, New York, 1995, p. 32.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 18, 57, 197.

⁵Bowen, Howard R., *Investment in Learning: The Individual and Social Value of American Higher Education*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1987, pp. 33-36, p. 12.

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Horse Sense for People

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community colleges. It shows a lack of understanding and acknowledgement of our unique roles and our services to students. Get involved. Learn more from your academic senate on this issue. Let's remove the blinders. (Links to the Academic Senate's commentary on Draft A are found on the Senate Website: <http://www.academicssenate.cc.ca.us>.)

"MAKE IT EASY FOR HIM TO DO RIGHT AND DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO DO WRONG."

When it comes to the complex game of increasing transfer and graduation rates, who knows better than counseling faculty, what works and what does not for our students? A collaborative CSU-CCC steering committee is now in the process of developing a draft for a statewide CCC/CSU (4CSU) program, which will address the goal of assisting and supporting community college students to transfer to and graduate from CSU. I strongly encourage you to read the draft, which was placed on the Counseling List Serve January 2002. If you are not on the Counseling List Serve, please Email Lindy Williams in the Chancellor's Office at lwilliam@cccoco.edu and request to be included. If you need more specific information on this draft, you can also Email me at renee.tuller@gcccd.net. I will send you the draft in progress. Your input is highly appreciated and valued. This is where your professional expertise is essential for our steering committee to represent your ideas and concerns. Together, we can make it easier for our students to succeed, more difficult for them to fail.

"EXPERIENCES EITHER DRAW US IN OR PUSH US AWAY. THEY EITHER CREATE RESISTANCE, WHICH RESULTS IN FIGHTING OR FLEEING, OR THEY CREATE COMMITMENT AND COLLABORATION."

Partnership for Excellence was not the first time in our history that we have been asked to increase transfer and success rates. However, now the spotlight is shining brightly on these politically expedient focal points. We keep hearing from our leaders that they really want to increase transfer rates. We keep hearing the "talk," but, in the absence of a commitment of resources, we have grown to distrust it. Counselors in the trenches and on the front lines all over the state know that talk is cheap, whereas a quality education is not.

What are some of the experiences that have weighed against creating an atmosphere of commitment and collaboration in the areas of improving transfer and student success rates? For one, the divisive discussions of the 50% law have been particularly painful to counselors. Because our salaries fall on the "wrong" side of the ledger, we are challenged to "prove our worth" each time we seek replacements or new counseling positions. Then there is the failure to provide adequate funding for ASSIST. ASSIST is our backbone tool, yet it is now \$400,000+ short of the resources needed to be fully operational. And now there is the Governor's January budget: CalWORKS cut \$58 million, \$26.8 million cut from Matriculation, \$5.2 million cut from Faculty and Staff Development, \$10 million cut from the Fund for Student Success, \$19.8 million cut from Telecommunications and Technology Infrastructure, and \$1 million cut from the Nursing Program Expansion. What kind of message would you say that sends to community college faculty and to our students? Community colleges have long suffered under discriminatory funding, with full funding of programs long overdue and students short-changed, and now the cuts are hitting the bone. So, as nice as it may be to hear how important transfer and success are from our leaders, it would be much nicer if the resources were there to back up their "talk." Resources go where the priorities are, and the message is that our students, our faculty and what we do are a low priority in California. This hardly sets the stage for commitment, collaboration and creative approaches to student success.

"TRUST IS IMPORTANT IN SETTING UP THE IDEAL ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING."

I propose that what seems obvious, whether for Monty's training methods or our students' success, as to the necessity for creating an optimal educational environment, should also be obvious to our leaders. However, they refuse to "see" and seem blind to the obvious when budgets are slashed and priorities are misplaced. I look forward to a day when trust in our administrators and legislators is merited based on their recognition of what education truly needs, when faculty are truly respected and valued for the incredible work we do for the remarkable students we serve.