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ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEWSLETTER

SENATEROSTRUM

THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Enrollment Management in Very Challenging Times: What the LAO Says and What Faculty Should Do

JANE PATTON, PRESIDENT

There are some serious constraints on colleges today (which is not news) and everyone on campus feels the effects, especially from the budget reductions. From a state perspective, the potential effects on our system from an array of pressures and recommendations are pretty staggering. New laws will place new demands and restrictions on colleges. Serious reductions in offerings have caused a *de facto* shift of our mission and whom we serve. But here's the message for academic senates: The very difficult dialogs—which classes to cut, which hours of services to reduce, which vacant positions to leave vacant, etc.—should be decisions that involve faculty. Do they?

In January, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released a policy brief called *Prioritizing Course En-*

rollment at the Community Colleges (<http://www.lao.ca.gov/laoapp/PubDetails.aspx?id=2392>). It's a short paper; I recommend you read it. While it is critical to remember that these are NOT adopted policies but rather recommendations to the Legislature, it would be naïve to assume their ideas will not get serious attention. The author says, "Given limited resources, we believe that it is more important than ever for the state to target funds that best meet the state's highest priorities for community college services. To accomplish this, we recommend the Legislature: (1) adopt statewide registration priorities that reflect the Master Plan's primary objectives, (2) place a limit on the number of taxpayer-subsidized credit units that students may earn, and (3) restrict the number of times that a student may repeat physical education and other classes at taxpayers' expense."

The policy brief goes on to enumerate specific suggestions to the Legislature, some of which *could* end up in new bills. For example, it suggests that the highest registration priority should be given to continuing students who are fully matriculated; the next priority should go to new students. It also recommends a 100-unit cap be placed on students, and students with more than 100 units would have to pay the full cost of their classes. Finally, the report recommends that state apportionment not be given for repetitions of any activity class (with the exception of athletics and adaptive PE). If any of these ideas end up in legislation, they would become a mandate.

As we wait for the potential outcomes in legislation, colleges are already taking steps to adjust their course offerings, as we have already needed

"All curriculum is, at bottom, a statement a college makes about what it thinks is important."

Cohen, A. & Brawer, F. (2003). *The American community college, 4th edition* (with F. B. Brawer). Jossey-Bass.

to reduce the sections we offer. The requirement to reduce offerings raises the question: what are *your* processes for determining course priorities? Who is deciding which programs need more FTE for next term and which should be reduced?

The Academic Senate's 2009 paper *Enrollment Management Revisited* provided suggestions to academic senates, and the situation we are in today and in the near future will be a test of each college's policies. Where are your faculty?

A few excerpts from the paper:

- ◆ Deciding how many sections of a given course should be offered in the next term as weighed against all the other courses in the college requires a well-informed and very collaborative team. (p. 33)
- ◆ Given that curriculum is the most important function of a college and given that the curriculum is an area of faculty purview, all policies for determining which courses are offered must be made with the faculty front and center. (p. 33)

And from the Recommendations section are the following (pp. 35-6):

In any enrollment management or scheduling procedures, general questions such as the following should be asked:

- ◆ **Who** is making the decisions about scheduling classes, including delivery mode and length of the courses? **What** is the faculty role? **Why** are courses scheduled in a particular mode or time frame? Is the decision based on academic judgment?
- ◆ **Where** and **when** are enrollment management and scheduling decisions made—in silos that do not communicate with one another, such as in administrator meetings and faculty department meetings separately? Or are decisions made in a concerted, thoughtful, data and policy-driven manner?

As we wait for the potential outcomes in legislation, colleges are already taking steps to adjust their course offerings, as we have already needed to reduce the sections we offer.

- ◆ **What** class schedule produces the most success for students? The answer can vary for different populations of students and for different courses; only faculty can make the pedagogical determination. Local senates can make the case that because these questions are “academic and professional” in nature, they should fall to the senate per Title 5 regulations.
- ◆ **What** effect on learning and student success might occur in any given scheduling scenario?

In the short term, we may have some new restrictions put on colleges in new legislation. And in March 2012, the Task Group on Student Success, a group established in January 2011 by SB 1143, will make its recommendations to the Board of Governors, which will include metrics for performance-based funding. Those recommendations will undoubtedly affect enrollment management priorities. So whether your college is modifying its schedule due to reduced allocation, due to any new legislation that springs from the LAO recommendations or due to the eventual SB 1143 task group recommendations, it makes sense to ensure that faculty participate fully in enrollment management decisions. These academic decisions are at the heart of who we are and what we provide. ■

The Relationship of the Researcher with Faculty in Assessing Student Learning

DAVID GROSSMAN, ACCREDITATION AND SLO COMMITTEE MEMBER

At the 2010 Fall Plenary Session, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges approved the paper “Guiding Principles for SLO Assessment.” The paper details the importance of faculty engagement in the development and assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs). Dialog about student learning is a critical accreditation theme and an important element in the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Institutional Effectiveness SLO rubric.

As stated in the Guiding Principle #7 of the SLO Paper, page 21:

In considering both the limitations of assessment data and additional variables that may influence that data, faculty should work closely with college research staff. Researchers can provide guidance and expertise regarding the construction of valid assessment instruments and can help to identify additional factors that may influence the results. Research staff may even provide information or identify means to acquire information regarding factors external to the assessment process. They may also assist in identifying the most useful approach for addressing the specific questions that faculty wish to see answered and in ensuring that assessment data are able to address the questions being posed. Faculty should always retain the

primary responsibility for assessment development and analysis, but they should also work cooperatively with and appreciate the expertise of researchers who may be able to enhance the effectiveness of the assessment processes that faculty create.

Faculty are well aware of the ACCJC’s mandate to be at the proficiency level on the accreditation standards rubric for SLOs by 2012. As we look more deeply at student learning, we recognize the importance of assessment and how it could improve and enhance our students’ prospects for success.

Faculty also know that the process, if done properly, takes time. Due to the state’s fiscal crisis, faculty have taken on more students and have increased their workload.

What if the administration, specifically the researcher, could help faculty make the assessment process more expeditious and efficient?

What if the researcher and a faculty member were deeply engaged in a dialog regarding the faculty member’s passion?

What if the researcher could help faculty refine the question and see it through a different lens, relying on the faculty’s expertise and focused on how the right data could help faculty enhance student learning?

What if faculty could understand that the process is collaborative and the researcher is not the one to offer the solutions?



What if faculty and researcher could forge a partnership, based on mutual respect, to refine and enhance assessment projects?

What if faculty and researcher could forge a partnership, based on mutual respect, to refine and enhance assessment projects?

What if faculty understood that researchers are sometimes able to help quantify the faculty's qualitative data in a way that emphasizes and enhances student learning?

What if faculty and researchers could work together and put the focus on a common purpose: student success?

Faculty want to do what we do best, teach! The assessment mandate has prompted us to forge new and different relationships, especially with researchers, as we look at evidence of student learning to help us improve.

In a perfect world, what would an assessment dialog between faculty and researcher look like? Imagine, if you were walking down the hall and you looked through the open door at a departmental or program meeting with the researcher discussing SLO results, what would you see?

Would you see...

Laughter, humor—not so serious, not strained, no tension, not adversarial.

Two professionals asking questions; both are learning and teaching

A mentor/mentee relationship that shifts between the faculty member and the researcher.

What do you think? Continue this conversation by clicking on the following Survey Monkey link and share your “perfect world” perspective on the value of working with researchers with the Senate's Accreditation and SLO Committee:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/sl/perfectworld>

or email: David Grossman
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Special thanks to Dr. Bob Pacheco for his contributions to this article. Dr. Pacheco is the Director of Research at Barstow Community College. ■

Whither Local Control?

LESLEY KAWAGUCHI, RELATIONS WITH LOCAL SENATES COMMITTEE CHAIR

In the last decade, outside factors have had increasing impact on the California community college system, including legislation, the economy, accreditation, and of course, the budget. These factors have also come on the heels of other critical changes and challenges that the colleges face, including the rising number of students who lack college-level math and English skills, increasing numbers of students seeking access to higher education as the University of California and the California State University systems have had to cut their enrollments, and individuals seeking to retool in the worsening economy. All of these elements taken together form the crux of many conversations, resolutions, and debates that have occurred at the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges plenary sessions and on local campuses in recent years.

One of the core features of the California Community College System is the emphasis on local control. This is why the 72 community college districts have their own boards of trustees, regulations, budgets, and ad-



One of the core features of the California Community College System is the emphasis on local control.

ministrations—and the 112 community colleges have their own local academic senates with their varied processes for handling participatory governance and the 10 plus 1 areas, including curriculum and program review. (See, for example, the results of the Local Senates Profile Survey at <http://asccc.org/resources/surveys>, which will be administered again in Spring 2011.) Because the emphasis is on the community that each college serves, local control is critical in determining what is best for the students and the community each college serves.

“Local control” has been invoked to defend local practices and to fend off what seems to be increasing incursions into areas that faculty and the Academic Senate have long held primacy. Yet, when examining some of the major issues that have provoked recent discussions and debate, local control has been allowed to remain. For example, SB 1440 (Padilla, 2010), which is now California Education Code §§66745-66749, has prompted discipline faculty from around the state to develop Model Transfer Curricula that can be used in the creation of the new associates degrees for transfer. Faculty can choose to develop these new degrees, yet colleges can also maintain their own individualized AA degrees that retain their own local graduation requirements. The proposal to change Title 5 regulations regarding prerequisites and the use of rigorous content review is also permissive—that colleges can choose to use rigorous content review in establishing prerequisites for non-English and math courses that require specific communication or computational skills or they can continue to use both content review and validation studies.

Local control also pertains to the 2002 Accreditation Standards and the emphasis on student learning out-

comes (SLOs) and assessment as driving forces in college planning. How faculty at the 112 colleges choose to develop SLOs and assess them has again resulted in a variety of methods, as has the linking of assessment to budget and planning. All one has to do is ask local academic senate presidents to describe their college budget and planning processes, and I suspect we might see similar features though 112 unique ways in which those processes are carried out, depending on campus culture.

On the other hand, a few examples illustrate where local control is not always permitted, yet provide us with reminders of how thoughtful discussion, innovation, and creativity are the hallmarks of what faculty can do in shaping conversations and framing discussions. First, many of us remember the seemingly endless debates about raising the math and English graduation requirements. Importantly, these debates occurred on local campuses that then informed voting at the Spring 2005 Plenary Session, eventually resulting in the Title 5 change. This change heightened awareness of the growing student population that needed remediation, prompting the Basic Skills Initiative. The focus on this student population has reinvigorated a core mission of the California Community College System and has led to innovation and creative methods to help basic skills students succeed.

Another example is SB 1143 (Liu, 2010), which has established a task force to examine effective practices and models resulting in student success and metrics used to measure student success. Student preparation and success are part of our 10 plus 1 and should be part of local college discussions on institutional effectiveness and providing what students need as faculty work within their budget and planning processes. Again, these local discussions can help inform and shape statewide conversations.

The latest item that can have a direct impact on local control comes from the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO). In its January 20, 2011, policy brief entitled *The 2011-12 Budget: Prioritizing Course Enrollment At the Community Colleges* (see http://lao.ca.gov/analysis/2011/highered/ccc_course_enrollment_012011.pdf),

the LAO has recommended enrollment management policies to the Legislature that includes “(1) adopt[ing] statewide registration priorities that reflect the Master Plan’s primary objectives [which focus on transfer, Career Technical Education, and basic skills], (2) plac[ing] a limit on the number of taxpayer-subsidized credit units that students may earn, and (3) restrict[ing] the number of times that a student may repeat physical education and other classes at taxpayers’ expense.”

If these proposals find their way into legislation, local control of registration priorities would be eliminated. However, restrictions regarding repeatability of physical education classes and the earlier discussions on activity courses, as well as limiting the number of credit units students may earn through taxpayers’ expense, have raised other issues that would need to be addressed. For example, a student who has amassed 90 or 100 units at one college can attend another. And what of students who received their BAs, but want to retool for another profession, as some of our nursing students have?

However, within the policy brief is an intriguing idea that is worth exploring. As posed in the policy brief: “Under our recommendation, students with more than 100 units would still be eligible to attend a California community college. However, since a state subsidy would no longer be provided, the Legislature could authorize colleges to charge these students up to the full cost of instruction.” In this day of shrinking budgets, might this idea be expanded to include repeatability of physical education classes? While colleges can offer contract education, might colleges be able to offer extension courses?

Whither local control under these circumstances? As the Executive Committee members learned with SB 1440, faculty need to draw on what we do best in the classroom especially when a lesson isn’t going well or as faculty participating in our local colleges faced with daunting tasks—be innovative, flexible, creative, and ultimately, responsive to the issue at hand. In that way, we help to shape the conversation and perhaps influence the outcome to the benefit of our local colleges—and ultimately, our students. ■

Sustaining Sustainability: A Role for Curriculum

BETH SMITH, GROSSMONT COLLEGE, CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIR

The conversation about sustainability and green technologies permeates our society in a variety of venues from newspapers to talk radio, from think tanks to the oval office, and for good reason. Organizations and individuals are broadly interested not only in the future of the planet and the cost to keep it healthy, but also in how they might reduce personal costs for related goods and services such as electricity, petroleum products, paper, etc. In California, community colleges have embraced sustainability efforts in a myriad of ways including recycling, creating new facilities or modifying existing ones, long-term planning, and developing new curriculum. Efforts to develop new curriculum often encounter challenges, and new courses and programs targeting sustainability have not been spared from the usual bumps and bruises along the way. This article focuses on how faculty and curriculum committees can help to provide curriculum opportunities for students to learn about sustainability applications and ecologically minded decisions at both the individual and community level.

An initial challenge is addressing the variety of uses of the word “sustainable.” This term is often included in the college general education (GE) or institutional outcomes, so developing a working definition for community college curriculum is an appropriate place to begin. Some colleges have already moved forward with discussions surrounding what “sustainable” means, and what ecologically sound practices are. Green Technology, <http://www.green-technology.org/gccollege-gcschools/index.html>, presents a definition that encapsulates what many faculty believe to be at the heart of the matter:

“meeting the needs of society in ways that can continue indefinitely into the future without damaging or depleting natural resources... meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Others involved in the field argue that the original focus of sustainability should be on a “trifecta” that includes the interplay between the economy, the environment and society, and that morphing the definition specifically toward green technology waters this down. Regardless of the final definition, the most important consideration is that faculty have thoughtful discussions to define sustainability and once this definition is in place, faculty can begin to create or modify courses, certificates and degrees that incorporate sustainability goals and practices.

Many community college faculty have already been busy integrating sustainability and/or green technology into their curriculum. The Academic Senate Curriculum Committee learned that faculty are typically including these in one of three ways: adding a component to an existing course outline of record, creating a new course, or creating a new certificate or degree program. Some courses naturally lend themselves to incorporation of a discussion of the economy, environment and society, such as in economics, the sciences, and sociology. Other courses are ripe for updating, and students could benefit from the inclusion of these themes in courses such as ethics and political science. Beyond even these, many would argue that there’s potential to include sustainability issues in every course and experience that students have on campus. Faculty teaching the courses in economics, science and sociology might be able to assist with examples of topics to include, current problems that students can ponder solving,

and for those interested in project based instruction, the field is open to many ideas.

Rather than just incorporating sustainability and green technology issues into other courses, some colleges have adopted whole courses on such topics. Curriculum committees have initially approved these as stand-alone courses, but with the potential to lead to a full degree or certificate for students in the future. Here are some of the titles of courses recently developed across the state:

- ◆ Principles of Sustainable Agriculture
- ◆ Principles of Sustainable Urban Agricultural Practice
- ◆ Introduction to Sustainable Energy Studies
- ◆ Our Sustainable Future
- ◆ Tapping into Renewable Energy: Sustainable Building
- ◆ Green and Sustainable Organizational Practices
- ◆ Surviving the Future: The (Re)Emergence of Sustainable Cultures
- ◆ Sustainable Integrated Pest Management
- ◆ Career Opportunities in the Emerging Sustainable Society

These and others are currently offered at more than 24 colleges throughout the state. Some are credit and others are noncredit, showing the creativity and innovation of community college faculty to build coursework to meet the needs of a variety of different students. While curriculum development of new courses may be slowed given the budget reductions and an increased emphasis on scheduling basic college skills courses, many colleges find the interest in these new courses is high and thus they offer a potential avenue for growth. Students, faculty, business partners and community leaders all see these courses as an important positive step forward toward meeting evolving workplace demands. The annual Green California Community College Summit, held this year in Pasadena, finds, “community colleges are a focal point for state—and national—efforts to create a green economy and workforce in California.”

With the introduction of new courses, new programs are unlikely to be far behind. From liberal arts to vocational to noncredit, faculty are busy creating programs to help students gain sustainability skills and knowledge that will better prepare them for the workforce or transfer. One such example is career technical education (CTE) programs, which are increasingly focused on the inclusion of green technology. Many have added courses in areas such as construction or auto technology that teach students to apply practices leading to energy conservation, such as training them to install solar panels or compare synthetic motor oil to petroleum products. When possible, vocational courses provide training in the larger social, economic, and environmental contexts behind these practices.

Building on students’ understanding of the synergy within the economy, environment and society often occurs in liberal arts or science courses that emphasize sustainability themes. In practice, it may be easier to bring together theory and practice through a program rather than in an individual course. Such a program could paint a broader picture of sustainability by including courses from a variety of disciplines. For example, business or agriculture courses may focus on business processes leading to sustainable landscapes or pesticides where economics or the environment may drive decision-making, while sociology or environmental science courses may more specifically address the role of integrating sustainability in local or global communities.

New programs from colleges in urban areas as well as rural areas, representing at least eight colleges from all geographic areas have already been submitted to the Chancellor’s Office for approval. Here are a few titles of new programs under review:

- ◆ Sustainable Urban Landscapes
- ◆ Sustainable Agriculture
- ◆ Sustainable Urban Agriculture
- ◆ Environmental Resources: Sustainable Communities
- ◆ Sustainable Construction Management

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One challenge always facing curriculum committees is the assignment of a course to one or more disciplines. Because sustainability and its related fields represent an emerging field, it is not yet included as a separate discipline in the list of minimum qualifications (<http://www.asccc.org/disciplines-list>). When deciding which discipline(s) are most appropriate for a course emphasizing sustainability, curriculum committees might first consider agriculture, ecology, engineering technology, and social science (master's list), and environmental technologies, as well as ornamental horticulture (non-master's list). The disciplines list also provides two additional options for assigning courses to disciplines when it's not clear that only one discipline fits: cross disciplinary listings and interdisciplinary studies. Cross listing allows a curriculum committee to assign the course to two disciplines, meaning that a faculty member who meets the minimum qualifications in either one is qualified to teach the course. For interdisciplinary studies, the curriculum committee lists the disciplines relevant to the content of the course, and a qualified faculty member will have a master's degree in one plus upper division or graduate units in another discipline from the curriculum committee's list for the course. A new discipline, *Sustainability*, has been proposed and, if approved in Spring 2011, will be added to the master's list.

Offering a vibrant and timely curriculum that prepares students for the 21st century is a goal of all community colleges, and sustainability curriculum helps colleges achieve that goal. Instructors can propose courses to bring sustainability and green technology to our students, and local senates and curriculum committees can offer guidance and support on inclusion of these themes across disciplines. As communities increasingly acknowledge responsibility for sustainable practices, community college faculty have a responsibility to develop the curriculum that assures students have exposure to these topics in appropriate and integrated ways. ■

Green Jobs to Fit That Sustainability Curriculum

DAN CRUMP, AMERICAN RIVER COLLEGE, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

These days everyone is talking about the new “green economy,” about how green jobs are the future. Government and industry are putting billions of dollars into creating jobs in all shades of green, from solar-panel installers to electric-car builders, and Americans are clamoring to get them. Green jobs continue to grow amidst the economic downturn—California’s unemployment rate has hovered around 12.4% for almost a year. According to a report released recently by Next 10 (“an independent, nonpartisan organization focused on innovation and the intersection between the economy, the environment, and quality of life issues for all Californians” www.next10.org), green jobs continue to grow at a healthy clip, even in the wake of the economic crisis. From January 2008 to 2009, the most recent observable year, jobs in the green sector grew more than three times faster (3%) than total employment in California (1%). The Core Green Economy now accounts for 174,000 jobs in California. “The green job data is significant because these jobs are growing in every region across the state, outpacing other sectors, and generating business across the supply chain,” said F. Noel Perry, founder of Next 10. “While green job numbers are modest relative to the overall economy, there are very few business sectors in a state as large as California that employ people across every region. The emergence of this vibrant Core Green Economy can be attributed to California’s history of innovation, as well as our forward-looking energy and energy efficiency policies.”

REGIONAL TRENDS NOTED IN THE REPORT

BAY AREA

- ◆ The Bay Area has recorded the strongest green employment gains in the state, expanding by 109% since 1995.
- ◆ From January 2008 to 2009, green employment in the Bay Area increased 8% (5% faster than the state overall), adding almost 3,500 jobs.
- ◆ The Bay Area represents 28% of the employment and 26% of the businesses in California’s growing green economy.

LOS ANGELES AREA

- ◆ The Los Angeles Area represents a significant portion of California’s Core Green Economy, boasting 23% of green employment in the state and 22% of green businesses.
- ◆ Green employment in the Los Angeles Area has grown 20% since 1995, adding 6,600 jobs to the region. This rate of growth far outpaces overall growth in the region, which was recorded at 9% over the same time period.

ORANGE COUNTY

- ◆ From January 1995 to 2009, green employment in Orange County increased 67%, adding 7,700 jobs during that time period. Orange County’s green job rate is growing faster than overall jobs.

SAN DIEGO REGION

- ◆ San Diego was considered a green jobs growth leader in the most recent observable period (January 2008-2009). Green employment in the region expanded by 6.5%, more than double the statewide green jobs growth rate.

SACRAMENTO AREA

- ◆ The Sacramento Area is a green economy growth leader. The region gained approximately 7,100 new jobs from January 1995 to 2009, reflecting a 103% increase over that time period.

INLAND EMPIRE

- ◆ Although slowing over the most recent year, green employment grew 53% while total employment increased 47% between January 1995 and 2009. During this time, approximately 4,400 jobs and over 500 business establishments were added to the region's green economy.

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

- ◆ Although slowing in the most recent year, San Joaquin Valley's green economy expanded by 55% from January 1995 to 2009, producing nearly 3,360 jobs and 390 new business establishments in the region's Core Green Economy.

CENTRAL COAST

- ◆ Green employment in the Central Coast grew 3% in the most recent reported year.
- ◆ From January 1995 to 2009, green employment expanded by 7% and green businesses grew by 52%, adding approximately 170 establishments.

SACRAMENTO VALLEY

- ◆ From January 1995 to 2009, green employment in the Sacramento Valley expanded 40%, adding approximately 1,000 jobs and outpacing growth in the total economy. Green business establishments doubled in number over the long period and increased 6% from January 2008 to 2009.

NORTH COAST

- ◆ Since 1995, green employment has increased 46%, adding roughly 620 jobs, an important addition to North Coast employment, which grew only 15% over the same time period. Green businesses in the region have shown similar growth, expanding 56% to nearly 290 establishments in January 2009.

SIERRA REGION

- ◆ In terms of business growth, the number of green establishments in the region increased 50% between January 1995 and 2009.

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Educational Profit and the Common Good?

LARRY BUCKLEY, VICE-PRESIDENT OF INSTRUCTION, SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY COLLEGE
RICHARD MAHON, RIVERSIDE COLLEGE, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

In August 2009, California Community College Chancellor Jack Scott terminated a Memorandum of Understanding with Kaplan University that had become unpopular and was vilified even before it was initially signed nine months earlier. Initial conversations between Kaplan and the Chancellor's Office had begun with now-retired Vice Chancellor Carole Bogue-Feinour. When Chancellor Scott signed the MOU, he understood the agreement to be uncontroversial and a potential benefit to California's community college students, especially those struggling to get a last required class or two in the midst of the broadest cutbacks to California community college access in memory. It appears that virtually no students took advantage of the "opportunity" provided by the agreement, largely because of questions about course articulation with CSU and UC, and cost.

Reflecting on what community colleges might have learned from the experience, it is now clear that the entire affair served to magnify awareness of the potential pitfalls of proprietary education and has initiated a lively discussion among members of the Academic Senate, Chief Instructional Officers, and even local Trustees. As it turns out, Kaplan is only the tip of the iceberg, or rather, multiple icebergs rising-up in the path of our students. The Kaplan agreement has much broader significance on at least three fronts: affordability and access, diversity, and accountability.

AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS

Using the Kaplan Agreement as a starting point, Kaplan fees were not very alluring for most traditional

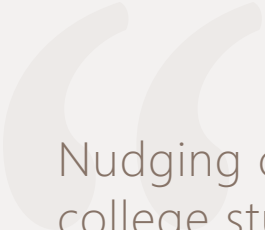
community college students. The Kaplan fee came to about \$650 for a three-unit class as compared to \$78 at a community college. The gap in fees constituted a sizeable difference. For students who need only one or two more classes to complete a degree or certificate at their local community college, taking a course at a proprietary institution, where sections are available, could be tempting. The temptation is all the greater due to the slick advertising and aggressive marketing of so many "for-profit" colleges. For those who chose to attend Kaplan, perhaps the fee difference was tolerable because it meant that they were able to graduate or transfer a semester or two earlier than would have been the case waiting for access to a needed community college class. The difference in cost for a full-time semester would have been substantial, costing \$3,240 at Kaplan and \$390 at a community college, a difference of over \$5,000 per year.

It is no secret that many proprietary colleges boast of their affordability because they persuade students that they can afford high fees through the use of federal financial aid, especially in the form of loans. Nudging community college students down the very slippery slope of borrow today and pay—*whenever! (if ever)*—is hardly the form of financial education we should aspire to for our students. Additionally, the past decade has seen a general shift of federal resources (in the form of financial aid) away from public higher education toward the support of "for-profit" institutions. Even as our State Legislature is debating 6—14% reductions in funding for community colleges, institutions such as University of Phoenix have grown over 200% in the last five years... with fully 80% of its operating revenues

coming in the form of federal financial aid. Who is “footing the bill” for this shift? *Taxpayers*. Taxpayers, who are financing the growth of “for-profit” education, sometimes to the tune of 600% per section more than at a public institution. Who else is “footing the bill?” *Students*. Students like those at Everest College, a “for-profit” trade school consortium whose San Bernardino campus suffered the largest percentage of federal loan defaults of any two-year college in California last year.

DIVERSITY

It is also no secret that for several years now, African American and Latino students have been transferring in large number to University of Phoenix rather than CSU or UC. Not only are private proprietary institutions more costly than community colleges, but CSU and UC are also more expensive, so it would be more difficult to defend public four-year colleges compared to private proprietary schools solely on the basis of cost. Nevertheless, heavy, targeted marketing promoting the myth that “private” institutions offer superior quality instruction to that of public institutions, along with the promise



Nudging community college students down the very slippery slope of borrow today and pay—whenever! (if ever)—is hardly the form of financial education we should aspire to for our students.

of job placement, have led to the financial ruin of thousands of ill-prepared students and the awarding of many dubious degrees and certificates.

For some students and some programs, it might be that proprietary institutions—the Argosys and Phoenixes of the world—are a better fit. Part of a college education, however, is also the experience that students gain outside the classroom, and virtually all of that experience is lost for students who transfer to primarily online proprietary institutions. It seems a significant inequity for African American and Latino students to bypass that experience through disproportionate reliance on proprietary colleges.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Anyone who has been on a California community college campus recently can attest to the relentless emphasis on “accountability,” whether the result of state mandates (Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges) or accreditation guidelines. Those community colleges which have been sanctioned by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) in the past few years could no doubt account for thousands of tax dollars spent, not on educating students, but on complying with accreditation standards. In this climate, it is beyond comprehension how colleges lacking basic facilities (counselors or libraries) and abysmal completion and loan repayment rates, could be regarded as a credible alternative in American higher education when California community colleges are sanctioned for infractions that are miniscule by comparison. The fact is that many proprietary schools lack accreditation. While these unaccredited institutions do not qualify to receive federal financial aid, they draw students with promises of “scholarships” and private bank loans. For students and parents not versed in the vocabulary of higher education and unaware of the relative worth of the degrees and certificates they are pursuing, these institutions can appear to be centers of prestige and opportunity.

In August, 2010, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released a report titled, “Undercover Testing

Finds Colleges Encouraged Fraud and Engaged in Deceptive and Questionable Marketing Practices.” The report was challenged by a number of political and corporate interests, leading the GAO to submit an amended report just a few months later. Nevertheless, *both* reports provided “eye-opening” information that begs greater scrutiny of “for-profit” institutions. Beyond the claims of fraudulent practices, like applicants being encouraged to falsify financial aid forms, the report revealed that in 2010 alone, students at “for-profit” institutions received more the \$4 billion in Pell Grants and \$20 billion in federal loans. The sheer enormity of federal tax dollars suddenly flowing into proprietary schools is cause for concern about the value both students and citizens are getting from this investment. The report revealed that the growth in “for-profit” education has been dominated by fourteen corporations worth more than \$26 billion. While there is nothing inherently wrong with proprietary education, the GAO investigation pointed to the dangers wrought by a system in which employees rely on their continued employment through a marketing and recruitment cycle built on continuous growth and retention. In fact, just two months after the termination of the agreement with California Community Colleges, Kaplan University laid-off nearly 800 employees nationwide. Instability in the business model of many “for-profits” raises questions about the quality and sustainability of their product.

Most recently, the Department of Education has proposed “gainful employment” regulations which would eliminate federal assistance to institutions whose graduates have high debt burdens and low loan repayment rates. “For profit” lobbyists are opposing the new regulations with a multi-million dollar advertisement campaign. However, even a casual observer would recognize that spending \$30,000 for a certificate for a job that pays \$32,000 per year, and saddles that student with \$3,500 in debt payments per year for the next decade, is a losing proposition. Yet, this is precisely the deal many students find themselves in when attending a “for-profit” institution.

THE BOTTOM LINE...

It is clear that Americans have developed something of an infatuation with proprietary colleges, which is the result of an ideological assumption that activities taken under the profit motive will automatically produce superior results. Americans have long appreciated free enterprise, but we have also considered some areas of life as not driven primarily by the profit motive. The recent shifting of so much of our education system to large corporate entities has not made Americans better educated any more than the growth of corporate health care has made us healthier. The process has simply refined the art of narrowing services to those most able to pay for them or obtain federal assistance to finance them, a system that is not sustainable over the long run. Increasingly, we run the risk of promoting a system in which only the wealthiest and most educated members of society will have access to the best and most storied institutions, while the poor and least educated will only have access to third-tier for-profit schools, along with their debt, all to the detriment of accessible, quality, public higher education.

Given the history of institutions like privatized prisons and community services, the rise of private corporate interests into the world of higher education is not an auspicious sign, for students or for society. It is not the case that all human activity is best motivated by the desire to profit. Of course, proprietary education is not intrinsically evil. There are many legitimate and quality for-profit institutions that have served students well in California for decades, some for the better part of a century. The task for community college faculty, administrators, and advocates is to assist our students and communities in understanding the potential pitfalls and risks posed by attending for-profit institutions. Actively educating and protecting our students from the actions of deceptive, questionable, and fraudulent “competitors” has not historically been a necessary priority. However, in these turbulent and uncertain times, our vigilance in defending our students and the mission of California Community Colleges has never been more crucial. ■


Pay Now or Pay Later: The Future of California

RAYMOND HICKS, ESL FACULTY AND SENATE PRESIDENT ELECT AT SANTA ANA COLLEGE

Considering how important worker training is to the economic recovery both nationally and statewide, it is essential to increase the investment in education, particularly at the community college level, where much of the job training takes place. However, the danger looms of reductions to vital programs and to already scarce resources. Since an educated workforce is the foundation of any substantial economic recovery and sustainable future growth, more investment in education is required. Therefore, in light of global economic competition, it is urgent that California strengthen its investment in the future, for the cost of not doing so is actually much higher.

In the past, many high-growth industries have located in California to take advantage of a solid labor pool. Through previous investments in a well-developed education system, California has created an excellent labor base to provide critical thought and inspiration, resulting in innovative developments in technology and science. While talent worldwide has relocated here, much of the talent has been home grown. Currently, the educational system that worked so well in the past is deeply strained while the last drops of value are squeezed from it. Even now with high unemployment rates, the demand for certain skilled workers is growing, yet the qualified candidates do not exist. Unlike the last downturn of this magnitude, the Great Depression, the needed skill level to gain even entry-level job positions is much higher. At that time, manual labor could get employment in construction projects, like the Tennessee Valley Authority or Hoover

Dam. Now to add value to an enterprise, skills are more likely to require picking up a computer mouse than picking up a shovel. Consequently, the investment needed to create the required skills is much greater, demanding a stronger commitment to education. It follows that if California wants to attract, as well as to cultivate, high-value state-of-the-art businesses, it needs to provide a mentally-nimble workforce prepared for the ever-changing demands of the new world. Regrettably, along with the need for advanced education and workforce retraining, community colleges must confront aging infrastructure at many college campuses, along with an increasing number of underprepared students.



Without investment, the California workforce will not possess the skills needed to provide the value added that an employer needs for a business venture to compete in the global markets.

Limited resources leave the system weakened, and the colleges risk becoming less productive in their mission of educating. A self-fulfilling negative spiral ensues as the public perceives the mission a failure, thus demanding cuts, just when investment is most critical—effectively preparing the workforce to participate in a recovery. Without investment, the California workforce will not possess the skills needed to provide the value added that an employer needs for a business venture to compete in the global markets.

From a historical perspective, the educational master plan has provided guidance, not just as a plan for education, but also as a system to create economic growth and prosperity. Instituting open access to education relieves the pressure that actively destabilizes society caused by the sentence of poverty and the resultant creation of an elite class that has access. However, the effect not only gives people a chance at a piece of the pie, but makes society's pie bigger by adding quality to the workforce and catalyzing economic growth. Productivity gains add value to the intellectual capital of the state, creating rising wealth, prosperity, and living standards for all residents.

By spending less on education, California ensures that an entire group of people, as well as the state as a whole, will miss out on future prosperity. Of course, the disenfranchised group, especially the late teens and young adults, will not sit by idly. Education is always available, but it is not necessarily in a place and form that is productive to society. Education is provided at private schools, public schools, schools of the street, and prisons. The latter focuses on the acquisition of skills that work against the public good. However, they provide attractive and immediate benefits to the disenfranchised. If California is unable to or unwilling to educate the segment of the population in the greatest need, it will sow the seeds of furthering crime, and increasing welfare and prison costs. One could almost picture an advertisement with a newly-arrested prisoner near a school, stating, "They wouldn't educate me here, so I found my education elsewhere."

While questioning government spending is an important way of identifying waste, true capital investment based on valuable returns on investment is not wasteful, even in these severe budgetary times. For the money, community colleges provide the best education bargain anyone can make. All residents in the state benefit from the investment in intellectual capital, as they do in infrastructure investment, such as roads, bridges, and hospitals. The opportunity for a quality education is one of the resources that should be available to everyone in the society. Education once received does not sit by statically. It has a multiplier effect by creating further economic growth opportunities. Therefore, the people who equate public education with public welfare ignore the eventual return on investment that the state gains in productivity and the bolstering of the tax base. It is counterproductive for educational resources to become scarce while educational needs are at their peak. California, and the United States as a whole, has always done best by feeding the entrepreneurial spirit and maximizing the creative opportunities for its citizens. Opportunities do not exist without a meaningful education, and a meaningful education does not exist without a fully-supported public education system as its foundation.

What confronts California is dire. From the academic community, Nancy Shulock, Executive Director of the Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy, writes on how we must "invest in success." She tells of underfunded students in need of developmental education, who don't succeed fast enough and don't make it through to a certificate, to a degree, or to transferring to a four-year college or university. From the business community, the Director of the Milliken Institute argues that the U.S. economy cannot grow and compete globally without a significant commitment to education, which requires a substantial value change for Americans. As a culture, Americans tend to misappropriate excessive amounts on over-sized houses and high horse-powered automobiles, while foreign competitors spend on education. Community colleges cannot control what skills students have

UPCOMING EVENTS

Registration is still open for the following 2011 events!

Faculty Leadership Institute

June 16-18, 2011

Claremont Hotel and Spa

Berkeley

Curriculum Institute

July 14-16, 2011

Marriott Mission Valley

San Diego

SAVE THE DATE

Fall Plenary Session 2011

November 3-5, 2011

San Diego Sheraton Hotel and Marina

before they enter their doors, yet they can take the students from whatever educational level they enter and start making improvements. This type of investment requires more patience and a deeper commitment but is a worthwhile undertaking in the state's future.

The mission of the California community colleges is vast. The colleges should not be criticized for failing at their jobs when they are not. They should be supported for their extensive accomplishments. They take students with little-to-no language skills and educate them. They take high-achieving students and transfer them to top-tier schools. They take workers with obsolete skills and retrain them. No other system even attempts this. That they do it as efficiently and cost-effectively as they do is truly laudable. The breadth of responsibilities and achievements should be understood by everyone, especially their critics.

We are in need of a call to action. The State of California's future has been compromised. It is on a deteriorating path and has hit red-alert status. Clearly, the benefits of education and the comprehensive work done at the California community colleges are not self-evident to the population at large. As uncomfortable as it may be for faculty to step out of the educator role and lead a public marketing campaign to inform the populace, much like the "Your tax dollars at work" signs did years ago, it has become mission critical to do just that. Somehow the message that everyone in the state benefits from the value added by the educated has been lost. It may be the next burden of the Academic Senate to launch an aggressive campaign in the communities of every campus of every district for active support of the largest educational system in the world and the benefits it provides to all. I intend to make the importance of this investment part of my regular communication with students and people in my community. What about you? ■

Articulation for Non-Experts: Understanding the Processes and the Jargon

MELYNIE SCHIEL, COPPER MOUNTAIN COLLEGE, TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION COMMITTEE
DAVID MORSE, LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

We have articulation experts among us. They speak in a code that leaves us bewildered but certain that all is well because they come across as so knowing and so confident. “I don’t have time to figure out what was just said,” we may think. “I have papers to grade and office hours to hold. I am an expert in my field and our articulation officer is an expert in his.”

Some of us make attempts to demystify articulation jargon. As “non-articulation” members of the Academic Senate Transfer and Articulation Committee, we have found that an effort to understand the language and processes in this area can yield substantial benefits. A few definitions and explanations can save time, empower the use of at-your-fingertips articulation tools for program review, effect participation in intersegmental coordination efforts, and aid communication with any articulation officer.

HERE TO ASSIST YOU!

A look around in the ASSIST website can be extremely beneficial. ASSIST displays reports of how course credits earned at a California community college (CCC) are applied when transferred to a California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) campus. This website has informa-

tion on our colleges’ UC transferable course agreements; the CSU baccalaureate course list; the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) course list; the CSU General Education pattern course list; CSU US history, constitution, and American ideals courses; UC transfer admission eligibility courses; campus-specific general education courses; lower division major preparation agreements; and course-to-course articulation. We know what you are thinking: “They’re getting into that articulation speak again...” Hold tight and keep this web address close to you: www.assist.org.

ARTICULATION OF OUR COURSES

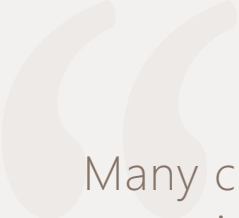
Articulation of our courses to California’s universities begins with curricular review. To make a course transferable to a CSU, it must be designated as baccalaureate level. Many curriculum committees “designate a course as transferable.” A more appropriate statement may be “designate as baccalaureate level” because this phrase better encompasses the extent of the CCC curriculum committee authority in transfer. Our community colleges are authorized by CSU Executive Order 167 (1973) to designate a course as transferable to a CSU; however, the designation only establishes that a course be accepted as CSU transferable, not as fulfillment of any specific requirement. For the UC system, community colleges do not make such designations; rather, our articulation officers submit the course to the UC

system for review and possible acceptance for UC transferability.

If community colleges want a course to fulfill a *specific* purpose at either CSU or UC, it must be articulated as part of a general education pattern or to satisfy a requirement of a student's major.

GENERAL EDUCATION

A common transfer purpose for many courses is to fulfill a general education requirement. Students are not required to complete a general education pattern to be accepted at a CSU or UC, but doing so saves most students time and helps them to avoid taking extra units. The most broadly applicable general education pattern is IGETC. If a student completes this pattern, he or she meets the lower division general education requirement for any CSU or UC. The IGETC pattern benefits



Many curriculum committees “designate a course as transferable.” A more appropriate statement may be “designate as baccalaureate level” because this phrase better encompasses the extent of the CCC curriculum committee authority in transfer.

many students but comes with a warning for students pursuing high unit majors. These students are advised to concentrate on completing the prerequisites for the major, as certain departments, schools, or colleges within a university consider the applicant's completion of their major preparation in the selection process.

As an alternative to IGETC, students who are focused specifically on transfer to the CSU system can also follow the CSU General Education Breadth pattern. A student completing this pattern meets the lower division general education requirements for any CSU campus. Once again, completion of the CSU Breadth pattern is not a requirement for transfer but offers significant benefits to students in terms of time, efficiency, and costs.

When faculty develop new courses, they may wish to consult with their articulation officer to ensure that the class is likely to be accepted for addition to IGETC and/or CSU Breadth. Such a practice can help increase the probability of strong enrollments, as courses that fulfill specific transfer requirements will have greater benefits for students and will therefore be more popular.

MAJOR PREPARATION

With the ongoing implementation of the transfer degrees authorized under SB1440 (Padilla, 2010) and Education Code §66746, practices regarding major preparation articulation agreements may change in some cases. In the standard practice for establishing major preparation articulation, community college articulation officers ask the four-year institutions to accept the courses we teach as meeting lower division requirements for a specific major. If courses are rejected, CCC faculty may choose to make adjustments to the course outlines and resubmit. In other words, the final decision regarding which courses are accepted for major preparation lies solely in the hands of the university system. This practice remains the process for establishing major preparation for the UC system, private institutions, out-of-state colleges and universities and for CSU

transfer students who do not complete the transfer degrees established under SB 1440.

However, major preparation for SB1440 degrees will work differently. This bill empowers community colleges to develop associate degrees consisting of 60 transferable semester or 90 transferable quarter units, a minimum of 18 semester units of 27 quarter units in a major or area of emphasis, and completion of either the IGETC or CSU GE-Breadth general education patterns. If these requirements are met, the CSU system is obligated to accept students completing these degrees into a major similar to the focus of the associate degree. Thus, the previous practice for establishing course-by-course articulation for major preparation will be unnecessary, and the final decision regarding major preparation for these degrees will rest in the hands of the community college faculty. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is working in cooperation with the CSU Academic Senate to establish Transfer Model Curricula (TMCs) for SB 1440 transfer degrees. These TMCs will generally be constructed broadly enough to allow local colleges to adapt them to their own needs, and colleges that do so will be able to create degrees that allow students to transfer to any CSU in the major or similar major designated by the CSU of the degree without a need for course-to-course major articulation agreements.

CAN, C-ID, LDTP, ABCDEFG...

In order to help colleges speak a common language regarding course articulation, the Academic Senate is developing common course descriptors in each discipline as a part of the C-ID project and in conjunction with the development of the TMCs.

Many faculty remember the CAN (California Articulation Number) system that was in place for a number of years. The CAN system involved a brief description of a specific course common to numerous colleges. Courses that were approved as matching the CAN descriptor were assigned a common number (such as CAN English 2 for freshman composition) that was listed after the local course num-

ber in college publications, thus establishing an indication of course comparability for articulation purposes. CAN was followed by the LDTP (Lower Division Transfer Pattern) project, a CSU-led attempt at developing common standards for transfer preparation. LDTP was not funded beyond 2009.

In 2007, the Course Identification Numbering System, C-ID, was initiated by the Academic Senate. C-ID establishes a supranumbering system similar to that which existed through CAN but in far greater detail than the brief descriptors that many saw as a significant limitation in the effectiveness of the CAN system.

To develop a course descriptor under C-ID, discipline faculty come together in statewide meetings to agree on essential course content and methods of evaluation. That content is then vetted more fully with discipline groups through the C-ID website and is finally developed into a descriptor similar to an abbreviated course outline. Local colleges can then submit their courses to be matched against this descriptor, and local courses which are judged by faculty representatives to match the descriptor are assigned the supranumber, which may then be published alongside the local course number to facilitate course equivalency and articulation decisions. Further information about C-ID can be found at www.c-id.net.

AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU SEEK...

As you dive into seemingly murky articulation waters, be sure to bring your tools, get your articulation officer on speed dial, and ask questions until you fully understand the answer. We are all very busy with our own teaching responsibilities and other obligations. In our system, acronyms are overly abundant and sometimes confusing. Yet all faculty can benefit from understanding the basics of articulation in order to more fully assist students, to more effectively design courses for transfer, to participate fully in ongoing statewide efforts such as the C-ID project and the development of TMCs, and to understand how our local curriculum relates to the outside world. ■

Why We Resist the Business Model

DAVID MORSE, SOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

In Fall 2007, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges passed Resolution 13.04, presented by Greg Gilbert of Copper Mountain College and titled “A Document in Support of an Academic Culture.” The resolution stated in part that “just because our students pay fees, they are not customers; and just because managers have adopted such titles as Chief Instruction Officers, Chief Executive Officers, and Chief Business Officers, they are not corporate officers but managers whose jobs are to provide the necessary resources for all faculty to serve our students and missions.” Greg Gilbert’s statements in this resolution reflect a long and ongoing struggle of faculty as we resist the corporatization of higher education and the adoption of a business model for our colleges. Some college administrators and outside observers of our academic system fail to understand why faculty express such vehement opposition to the characterization of education as a business, and even some faculty members fail to understand why such a characterization is so dangerous. Many of us frequently find ourselves in the position of explaining why the business model of education is detrimental to our institutions, our educational programs, and, most importantly, to the success of our students.

STUDENTS ARE NOT CUSTOMERS

If I order a pizza from Domino’s, I become a Domino’s customer. I tell them what sort of pizza I want, and, if I have the money to pay for it, I receive my pizza. Indeed, if I am unhappy with my pizza, or if the order takes an exceptionally long time to arrive, Domino’s management will go to great lengths to ensure my satisfaction, in some cases even granting me the product in question or some future order

for free. In no case will Domino’s judge whether I deserve the pizza. They will not take my money and say, “In three or four months we will determine whether you’ve earned your order.” As long as I can pay, Domino’s has no interest in determining whether I meet any sort of standard to be eligible to eat their pizza.

In other words, businesses do not evaluate their customers. If we accept the characterization of students as customers, we likewise implicitly accept the cliché that “the customer is always right.” As Jane Buck, a retired Delaware State University psychology professor, states, “The concept of students as customers cannot possibly have a positive influence... Pandering to students rather than expecting them to do work in order to get a decent grade is not a very good idea, to put it mildly” (Clay 2008). The characterization of our students as customers leads to an abdication of our responsibility to hold students accountable for the quality of their work. If we strive constantly to satisfy our students’ immediate desires for success without ensuring that they acquire the knowledge and skills we know they need for long-term achievement in their lives, we must lower our academic standards and either alter or relinquish our methods of evaluation. The integrity of our instruction and the education of our students are both therefore inevitably damaged.

THE CORPORATE MODEL THREATENS ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND QUALITY

If academic institutions are run as businesses, then their practices will be focused on bottom-line fiscal productivity. Evidence of this trend is clear in calls for merit-based pay systems and faculty evaluation procedures that involve statistical measures of



“If academic institutions are run as businesses, then their practices will be focused on bottom-line fiscal productivity.”

student performance. Such incentivized compensation and evaluation practices may be reasonable in the business world, but they do not translate to an academic environment. As Robert Engvall (2010) states, “The first difficulty with using market standards in academia is that we ‘produce’ educated individuals and articles and books, not widgets that can be counted and easily valued” (p. 5). Academic success cannot always be measured in quantitative terms, and the ‘products’ of our work can be defined in many ways that often are neither immediate nor objective. Therefore, in areas of evaluation and reward, as in many others, the business model does not apply to academia.

If corporate attitudes are allowed to infiltrate the academic world, then the resulting fiscally-driven culture will constrain the ability of faculty to properly educate students. “Corporate models for operating colleges and universities value short-term profits over long-term investment in education ... Professors are commodities to be exploited and traded, and academic administrators are managers whose decisions make shared governance and due pro-

cess inefficient and unnecessary” (Andrews 2006). If faculty are evaluated and retain their job status based on fiscal productivity or on their ability to keep student-customers satisfied rather than on the quality of their own performance in educating the students, they will be forced to alter their instruction in multiple ways. Likewise, if administrators are encouraged to see consultation with faculty as an inconvenient obstruction to reaching economic goals, then the training and expertise of the faculty will be disrespected and the integrity of the academic program compromised.

EDUCATION IS NOT A COMMODITY

Most importantly, the business model does not translate to higher education because the goals of education and the corporate world are in fundamental opposition to each other. The Academic Senate paper *California Community Colleges: Principles and Leadership in the Context of Higher Education* (2009) makes this point through the following comparison:

Where the successful business develops a product or service that is designed to meet (or meet more

effectively) an identified need, thus establishing a relationship of dependency for the customer, colleges and universities are their most successful when their graduates have developed the intellectual independence to be successful anywhere (it is a hallmark of many graduate programs that they accept few of their own undergraduate students, believing that both the student and the institution are best served when students pursue graduate studies elsewhere). The point of education is to develop intellectual *independence* in the student. (p. 11)

The same paper follows with a more succinct statement of the same difference: “Perhaps most important, where businesses need *customers* to be dependent on their product or service, the point of education is to make learners *independent* of the authority of teacher and textbook” (p. 11). Thus, because the motivating outcomes of business and education are not only different but even conflicting, imposition of a business model on an academic institution would fundamentally alter the mission and integrity of that institution.

Because of their focus on fiscal productivity, corporate models of education tend to place more value on efficiency than on quality. “Our problem is that teaching is not about delivering a product. Education is not a commodity” (Reznik, Grill, & Marzillier 1995). Goals based on production and adherence to an economic bottom line lead to a sacrifice of the principle that our primary purpose is to provide education, not to turn out a product. Academic institutions exist not for profit, but rather, in the words of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), “for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society,” (AAUP, 1992). A misguided emphasis on fiscal efficiency endangers the most basic values to which faculty are committed: free exchange of ideas, service to students’ best interests, and a well-rounded and in-depth educational experience.

For these reasons and others, faculty have resisted and rightly should continue to resist all attempts to

characterize higher education in corporate terms. The potentially detrimental impacts of the business model on both the integrity of our institutions and the education of our students are too severe to allow for any other position on this issue. Our professional responsibility to ourselves and to the students we serve requires that we remind community members, well-meaning but non-academic organizations and foundations, legislators, and our own administrators that the practices and models of the corporate or business world cannot translate or be applied to higher education.

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Professional Development (with the emphasis on “Professional”!)

JON DRINNON, FACULTY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR

SEC. 70. (a) *There is a direct linkage between those sections of this act which constitute the further professionalization of the faculty and the moneys required to enhance the programs of the community colleges for “transitional program improvement,” as specified in Section 84755 of the Education Code.*

I don't think I need to give you three guesses to come up with the source of this quotation. AB1725 of course. In 1988, when this legislation was enacted, the Legislature fully recognized the professional nature of what we do and the need to fund ongoing professional development so faculty could maintain their currency to adjust to shifting student demographics and needs and develop their professional skills. The legislators of the time thought it was critical enough to earmark a 2% funding level for professional development. Shortly after enactment the funding was reduced to .25%, a fraction of what we need to accomplish the original intent of the legislation. And, as we are all painfully aware, since then due to the recent budget cuts and the lack of focus statewide on the importance of professional development, the figure has dropped dramatically, in many cases to 0 depending on the situation at your college or district. Approximately thirty seven percent (36.6%) of 58 colleges responded in a recent Academic Senate faculty development survey they had NO annual faculty development budget.

In spite of the fact that professional development and innovation is hampered by a lack of funds

to meet the needs of our students, the California Community College system nonetheless continues to come under a constant barrage of criticism from a variety of directions, with faculty taking the brunt of much of the criticism. Suggestions for reforms stream in, some valid and others totally erroneous. A system-wide move towards a focus on student learning outcomes and assessment descended from on high, reforms that have admittedly been transformed into a faculty driven movement to improve student learning, faculty teaching and assessment driven pedagogy. Others want reforms that move community colleges from a system of funding that emphasizes open access to funding based on student “success” tied to completion of courses and programs. Where is the discussion of providing needed resources for professional development in the face of all these additional duties and responsibilities and ideas for reform? The legislators who wrote AB1725 actually anticipated just this thing. They said:

*SEC. 70. (1) “Phase I of transitional program improvement,” as used in this section, means a period of reform during which community college programs are improved and enhanced to prepare an appropriate environment for the subsequent professionalization of faculty. In this connection, the Legislature finds and declares that it would be an unsound and wasteful policy to expend moneys to professionalize faculty without first making the program changes necessary to enable that faculty to assume a more effective role in the educational process. **It is the intent of the Legislature that those changes,***

combined in proper sequence with the professional improvement of faculty, will improve the overall quality of education within the system. It is the intent of the Legislature that moneys appropriated during Phase I fully fund any state-mandates created pursuant to this section. (emphasis added)

Clearly the Legislature's intent was to couple funding program reform with funding faculty professional development. They knew that one cannot be done without the other. The Academic Senate has repeatedly taken the position that faculty need to be fully involved in the creation of program reform as well as the implementation, tasks which **require regular appropriate levels of professional development funding**. If the funding levels for professional development were kept as originally intended (2%), faculty might well be in the forefront of the student success reform battle advocating for reforms that we deem necessary from the inside. As far as faculty are concerned, AB1725 is the law that represents the foundation of our modern community college system, but the foundation is cracking around the edges. We need to find a way to fight for just enforcement of AB1725. We don't need a new law. We just need proper enforcement of what we already have.

The Academic Senate has a number of resolutions that ask the Senate to campaign in one way or another for increased funding for professional development. One of the most recent, 12.01 F09, asks us to "explore with local colleges the historical and current funding levels for faculty development committees, faculty representation, decision making processes, and types of activities that are funded by faculty development committees and present findings in an appropriate venue" and to consider "future actions to support local senates relative to faculty development functions." The Academic Senate Faculty Development Committee conducted the aforementioned survey to which an impressive 58 colleges responded. It was clear from the survey that funding for professional development committees across the state has been cut dramatically since the budget crisis. The results of the survey are available upon

One of the most salient and also disturbing findings was that 75% of respondents indicated that they had no stated goals or outcomes for their committees. Under those circumstances how can we possibly organize any movement for change?

request. One of the most salient and also disturbing findings was that 75% of respondents indicated that they had no stated goals or outcomes for their committees. Under those circumstances how can we possibly organize any movement for change? The committees are cast adrift without direction, without any sense of hope for the future. Add to that the fact that our statewide organizations do not have a unified plan to fight for appropriate professional development funding, and we have a recipe for failure. Whenever funding for professional development is brought up people always give up before they even start. They say, "Be realistic." Or "Now is definitely not the time." Or "Let's wait until things improve." I say, now is the time. It is now or never. We can do this, but only if we form a unified coalition of like minded professional development groups to lobby for enforcement of the law, to fight for adequate funding for faculty professional development.

Part of the Faculty Development Committee charge from 12.01 F09 was to disseminate the results from the survey, which we did at a very well-attended

breakout at 2010 Fall Plenary Session and in this *Rostrum* article, and to come up with future directions. We vetted a resolution on the future at the breakout that met with approval by the attendees; the resolution, 12.01 F10, Developing Goals for Faculty Development Committees, was approved unanimously by the body. The resolves urge local senates to require their committees to develop goals; and senates, professional development committees and administrations to explore alternative funding for committees, BUT most importantly it resolves that:

the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges create a coalition of Faculty Development groups inviting participation of the following: the Faculty Association for California Community Colleges (FACCC) faculty development committee, California Community College Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development (4C/

SD), the faculty unions, the Chancellor's Office, and other interested parties with liaisons between the groups to develop a strategy to push for the 2% level of faculty development funding that was guaranteed by passage of AB 1725.

From personal experience I have seen the impact of transformative politics with other movements in the past—the anti-war and civil rights movements in the 60s and 70s, the environmental justice movement in the 80s, 90s to the present. Citizen organizers Harry Boyte and Sara Evans say this transformation creates *free spaces*,

*settings which create new opportunities for self-definition, for the development of public and leadership skills, for a new confidence in the possibilities of participation, and for wider mappings of the connections between movement members and other groups and institutions.*¹

These movements for social justice empowered and transformed the community into activists who had the ability and will to fight for change and win through collaboration with other individuals, groups and institutions. That is exactly what our resolution calls for. We need to transform ourselves into activists who firmly believe in our cause and have the will to succeed. We need to come together to create a unified movement. The Faculty Development Committee is convinced that solidarity and concerted action will change the course of professional development funding from perpetual decreases to what the law requires, a perpetual 2% of our budget. We already have AB1725. We just need it enforced. But we need to work together. ■

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¹ Sara M. Evans and Harry C. Boyte, *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America* xix (1986)

Open Access and “Excess Units”

RICHARD MAHON, RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE, EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMITTEE CHAIR

Spurred in part by a press release from the Chancellor’s Office, delegates passed two resolutions on the topic of “excess units” at the Spring 2010 Plenary Session. One resolution urged that the Senate “research and develop an understanding of the causes of student accumulation of ‘excess units’ for the determination of ways that such unit accumulation can be appropriately minimized” (13.02) while a second resolution “affirm[ed] that high unit counts beyond direct necessity for degree or certificate completion or for transfer are not inherently negative” (13.06).

What is meant by an “excess unit?” The most recent wave of controversy began with the following statement in a January 29, 2010, press release from Chancellor Jack Scott: “A recent study by the California Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) indicated that in the 2007/08 academic year, taxpayers spent about \$28 million on excess units [sic] taken by students to achieve a bachelor’s degree. In general, community college students transferring to a California State University graduated with an average of 162 units when the minimum required is 120.”¹

In this data-enchanted age, the first question to ask would be whether or not this information is accurate; it turns out that it is not. The CSU system has been monitoring the number of units with which

its native and transfer students graduate, partly in response to a little-noticed policy initiative explored by Governor Schwarznegger to consider a per-unit fee hike for students who could graduate but chose to remain enrolled. In the 2007-08 academic year (the most recent for which there is data), CSU research revealed that 5,864 transfer students graduated with over 144 units, the CSU-defined threshold for “excess units.” But those students comprised only 13% of all transfer students and thus the “excessive” behavior of a small minority was mistakenly generalized to the entire transfer student population.

To its credit, CSU set the threshold for “excess” at 144 units out of recognition that a variety of compelling reasons prompts students to enroll beyond the 120 unit minimum, including change of major, the completion of minors, double majors, or selection of a major with limited lower-division preparation possible in community colleges. Thus CSU has already decided that units earned beyond the minimum necessary to graduate are not inherently negative.

While 13% is a small percentage, the need of a significant number of students for the equivalent of an entire fifth year to complete a bachelor’s degree might be a concern. If these students wanted to remain enrolled in an educational program, a fifth year enrolled in a graduate or professional program might be a better investment in their long-term goals, but it would be presumptuous to assume this without actually examining the actual programs and transcripts of the students concerned. The cost of higher education in California has certainly not been declining and at least in the eyes of those stu-

1 “California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott Delivers Address on the Need to Improve National Transfer Rates to Universities” [http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/News/press_releases/2010/Jack%20Scott%20Address%20at%20AACRAO%20Conference%20in%20Chicago%20FINAL%20\(2-14-10\).pdf](http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/News/press_releases/2010/Jack%20Scott%20Address%20at%20AACRAO%20Conference%20in%20Chicago%20FINAL%20(2-14-10).pdf)

“Since the LAO focuses on baccalaureate units, the developmental courses community college students take are not part of the BA total, since they are not transferable courses.”

dents, there must have been something of value in the earning of those “excess units.”

While there are many anecdotal reasons why students remain enrolled, the budget cuts suffered by the CSU system have no doubt led to many classes being cancelled or offered less frequently, and the likelihood that students needed to remain enrolled an extra semester to complete required coursework does not seem far fetched. If this is the case, it is ironic that students are blamed for behavior caused by the California economy.

How much of this problem originates on community college campuses? Two rules make it unlikely that community colleges have much role to play in the issue. Since the LAO focuses on baccalaureate units, the developmental courses community college students take are not part of the BA total, since they are not transferable courses. In addition, California law prohibits students from transferring more than 70 semester units to a four-year college. Thus the majority of the excess units taken at CSU campuses are not excess units CCC transfer students bring with them.

A final concern should be raised by the LAO’s statement. While degree programs are the coin of the

realm for the CSU (and UC) systems, that is not the case for community colleges. The statutory mission of California community colleges, as defined in Education Code §66010.4, includes mandates to serve students in ways that do not fit into degree-defined packages. Students who learn English or receive short-term vocational training in noncredit programs, degree holders who return to community colleges to retrain when their profession changes (or evaporates), graduate school bound students who take academic courses at community colleges rather than waiting to take them later, in fact provide a savings to taxpayers by taking courses at the least expensive—for both taxpayers and themselves—institution possible.

The concern that students are receiving ‘too much’ education is amplified with the LAO’s publication of “The 2011-12 Budget: Prioritizing Course Enrollment at the Community Colleges.”² That document acknowledges that “in effect, CCC enrollments are currently being ‘rationed.’” Part of the LAO’s solution is to “recommend that the Legislature place a limit on the number of taxpayer-subsidized units that a student may earn at a CCC. We believe a 100-unit threshold would provide a reasonable maximum for state funding purposes.”

Because both UC and CSU are selective systems (UC takes the top 1/8th and CSU the top 1/3rd of California high school seniors), California already directs a higher percentage of its college-attending students to community colleges. It is a sad state of affairs when students are now begrudged even that level of access. Having skimmed on public access to four-year colleges, now the Legislative Analyst ponders limiting community college education even further.

What kind of future should Californians look forward to when the state looks at the desire of its citizens to seek an education as a liability and defines the pursuit of education beyond the minimum required as “excess units”? ■

2 http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis/2011/highered/ccc_course_enrollment_012011.pdf

Student Success, Novel Idea?

DIANNA CHIABOTTI, NAPA VALLEY COLLEGE, BASIC SKILLS COMMITTEE CHAIR

Student success has hit the press and airwaves as though it is a new idea, an innovative concept. It is bandied about as if no one had ever thought of such a novel idea. Well, California community college faculty have *always* thought about and planned for student success. Faculty are dedicated to supporting and facilitating student success. In fact, student success is the core guiding principle of our work.

The California community colleges have numerous missions that have guided course offerings, program development, and provided the foundation for which student success has been gauged. Colleges have provided core work for students intending to transfer, career technical education (CTE) programs for those enriching job skills or entering a profession, and noncredit programs for students that need a program that does not follow the more traditional format. We have also provided fee based programs, contract education, lifelong learning, and concurrent enrollment. Recently it was suggested that we even offer bachelor's degrees.

As the budget quagmire continues, our once diverse, community-serving, and responsive mission statement has been focused more narrowly. Colleges have been told to focus efforts on CTE, basic skills, and transfer. In doing so, we will actually change the role of community colleges in our communities, and we will turn even more students away. Lifelong learners, elder adults, and personal enrichment students will find little or no access to our campuses. In narrowing what missions our colleges fulfill, we are running a clear risk of decreasing the health of California's older adults, decreasing

the appropriate methods for stress reduction in those that take enrichment courses, and changing the culture of community colleges. We may even be risking our open access philosophy and decreasing overall student success. The even greater impact is that we are risking the overall emotional well being and general feelings of life satisfaction of our population. I wonder how the limiting of the mission will ultimately affect California's future.

Faculty have many urgent and difficult discussions to have and questions to consider, questions such as "Who do we really serve?", "Which group of students should we stop serving?", "What is our definition of student success?", "Who are we willing to turn away?" As we have these discussions on our campuses and as we look toward unprecedented times, it is imperative that our colleges' decision-making processes are followed. It is essential that faculty are a core participant on campuses in all decisions covered under the 10+1. And, more importantly, faculty must not allow anyone to tell us that student success is a new idea. Faculty have always been driven by student success, and we need to assert and share our expertise. No matter what decisions are made, student success will be at the core, just as it always has been. ■

Faculty have always been driven by student success, and we need to assert and share our expertise.

To Lick It or Click It: That is the Question

WHEELER NORTH, STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMITTEE CHAIR

In Fall 2010 delegates adopted Resolution 1.04 F10 asking the Executive Committee to explore using technology in hopes of improving our spring session elections process. The Standards and Practices Committee discussed the Senate's election process and offers this article as information about why technology cannot be used in the Senate's election process.

Like any public election, our process needs to be validated and show proof that those who voted were eligible to vote. Similar to the process used for all general voting in America even when they are using technology to accept and count votes, the Senate requires a written signature on each ballot. So the act of getting a delegate signature for each vote cast must still occur, which is the part of the election process that is most time consuming. Currently, available technology does not lend itself to accomplishing this validation process without human verification.


Unlike general elections, however, the Senate's elections are interdependent, where prior elections determine the candidate slate for subsequent elections (called "trickle down"); thus, normal anonymous one-time/one-sheet voting methods used on voting day are not possible.

The Committee considered available technology including clickers, scantron forms, texting devices, as well as other official voting devices. Obviously there is a significant cost associated with some of these options, where others might rely upon our delegates to self-provide. But the question becomes one of how we ensure each delegate has such a device and that the device can be used in a timely manner. Other

technical snafus that can occur, and add workload to staff, are things like failing batteries in the clickers. If this happens midday, the user may never realize his/her vote is not being counted.

The other factor limiting us is not having dedicated facilities. Many board rooms, Congress, etc., have fixed facilities with voting technology built in and a budget to support all that. We, on the other hand, must remain portable, as would the technologies we use, and we have a budget that barely supports the use of white paper and a dash of toner.

Even with the limitations of technology, using technology would only reduce the time it takes to count votes, which is not the part that is time consuming,



Even with the limitations of technology, using technology would only reduce the time it takes to count votes, which is not the part that is time consuming, given the total pool of 125 or so delegates and half of the elections being $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ of that.



given the total pool of 125 or so delegates and half of the elections being $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ of that. Assuring validation while keeping the actual ballots anonymous is what takes time.

Another observation is that there has only been one, possibly two elections that ran beyond the resolution voting period. Since that time our process was changed so that we now run elections simultaneously where possible, and this has helped tremendously as has the change to the “pick, lick and stick” ballots.

The other point to reflect on is that there is no evidence that the later elections are being influenced by early departees (e.g., more candidates winning from Areas A and B, or north—since spring sessions are always in the north).

The Standards and Practices Committee also considered if the Senate could use technology for our resolution process. As mentioned above, factors such as failing batteries, training curve for voters and the chair, other technical snafus, distribution of devices and assurance that device holders are delegates and registered attendees all add up to a probably significant block of time just in logistics and function.

So the question is how much time would technology save? Well in typical votes the time it takes a chair to call for ayes and nays is pretty limited. The time it takes for the chair to call for a show of hands (standing) is also fairly limited and gives us a chance to stretch. So it would appear that the only real time saved might be during the serpentine votes, of which we only really have four or five in a more ‘voter-challenged’ session. Thus it is not clear our resolution process would be improved much, in terms of time, by the use of this kind of technology.

In summary, is this a solution looking for a problem? As many are becoming prolific gadgeteers, where any box with buttons and knobs has to be a good thing and is sure to make life better (and this effect will be magnified if the box has a screen on it or it connects us to something/one), we are becoming culturally fascinated with technology. However, in terms of practical need, at this time it is difficult to establish that any potential improvement by using technology would occur in terms of reduced time and increased accuracy of our election and voting processes.

So, on the question of lick it or click it, stick with lick it... at least for now! ■

United We Succeed: Responding to Criticisms of the California Community Colleges

MICHELLE L. PILATI, FUTURES COMMITTEE CHAIR

Higher education in the United States is under attack; references to support this statement are really not necessary to those of us in higher education. We see advances from various fronts relating to all aspects of the way we perform the service that we perform. And, for a variety of reasons, community colleges are the bull's eye of the higher education target. This is natural: we serve more students than any other segment of higher education, our students are less-prepared and less-supported, our missions are multiple and sometimes in conflict, and we are more likely to have embraced distance education. Time and time again the California community college system is the subject of reports that are received with high regard, despite the lack of peer-review, the often explicit bias, and unjustified leaps from data to policy recommendations.

While the “completion” agenda (calling for an increase in course, certificate, and degree completions, absent quality controls or support to facilitate success), ongoing budget shortfalls, new accreditation challenges, and other influences erode and detract from our ability to serve our communities, we also must face critical reports that capture the attention of the general public. At the end of 2010, the California Community College System was faced with one such report—followed by another that aimed directly at the largest district in the state. The first, Moore and Shulock’s *Divided We Fail: Improving Completion and Closing Racial Gaps in California’s Community Colleges*, is the focus of this article. The second, Moore and Shulock’s *Divided We Fail in LA: Improving Completion and Closing Racial Gaps in the Los Angeles Community College District*,

provided an analysis comparable to that conducted in the first, but with the Los Angeles Community College District as its focus. But the purpose of this article is not merely to respond to this one instance of criticism—but to remind us that we must work together to counter such reports. We need to move beyond being offended by conclusions that we view as unwarranted and approach such reports in an academic and intellectual manner, helping those who read such things uncritically to develop an appreciation for where they (the reports, that is) are flawed. This report is selected as a sample; there are many similar reports that have been received unquestioningly by the general public but need to be appropriately dissected and examined. While the California community colleges are certainly not above criticism, data gathered and interpreted with the end-goal of supporting an existing policy agenda does not serve us well.

In order to understand any data, context is required. Numbers do not exist in a vacuum. Comparing community college students to students in other segments of higher education is no more appropriate than comparing the golf skills of Tiger Woods to those of an amateur at a local country club: one has extensive training and experience and is noted for his skills, while the other is someone on a green with a club acquiring and practicing skills. Intersegmental *and* intrasegmental comparisons are generally inappropriate without the proper controls. Any analysis or claim regarding our students must be made with caution due to the diverse communities served by the community colleges. Furthermore, lamenting changes over time, absent a consideration of context, is yet another inappropriate comparison. While no one is likely to challenge the

statement that “College attainment in California has actually been declining with each younger generation...” (Moore & Shulock, 2010, p. 1), to highlight such a statement without delineating the many factors at the state and national level that serve to explain such a decline is unfair. Longitudinal examination of any trend in higher education is going to be altered by broader societal changes, especially when considering segments of higher education that are open access and serve multiple missions.

Moore and Shulock conclude that the real problem does not stem from a lack of college participation, but a lack of completion—an issue that is further exacerbated by the growing Latino population enrolling by preference in the community colleges, where, according to the authors, “transfer to four-year institutions is problematic.” (p. 1). No discussion is provided as to why certain populations opt for the community college over the direct route to the California State University or University of California. And no reference is made to the large number of students who do transfer successfully and fare as well as or better than native university students.¹ There is a presumption that policy change is the sole answer, and an answer that will emerge from the compilation of data: if we merely could track cohorts of students effectively this would inform practice and policy. If this is the case, then we are on the verge of finding the answers to all our problems as the ability to track students and to make meaningful comparisons within our system has been dramatically expanded in recent years; the implementation of Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) by the California Community College’s Chancellor’s Office and the Bridging Research, Information, and Culture (BRIC) Initiative lead by the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges signal the system-wide recognition of the value of data, as well as efforts to review it and use it to guide decision-making. The development of ARCC reflects the recognition of the value of data, while the BRIC initiative recognizes the

need for objective analysis of data by qualified experts who consider relevant data to inform decision-making. Colleges know what is effective; they offer programs that are aimed at helping just the students that *Divided We Fail* argues that we need to serve. Yet such programs and efforts have been decimated by budget cuts that intentionally permit colleges to continue offering classes to generate revenue while dramatically reducing the non-revenue generating programs that support student success and facilitate completion.

As with many critical papers, *Divided We Fail* contains ideas with merit. Alas, the bottom line is ignored: no policy or statutory changes that require funding will ever be implemented at the system level without an identified source of funding. Moore and Shulock state, “The Board of Governors should change system policy, and seek statutory changes as necessary, to ensure that all degree-seeking students are assessed for college readiness and are directed appropriately into courses that will expedite their transition to, and success in, college-level instruction.” (p. iii) This proposal has two fundamental flaws. First, money is needed to implement such change. Second, it lacks a clear definition of “degree-seeking.” Definitions of “degree-seeking” can vary considerably, from definitions based on expressed student intent to those based on some behavioral indicator. If we are to funnel all “degree-seekers” in a given direction at the beginning of their college career, then a broad definition will necessarily be employed and the impact on colleges great. Even if a broad definition is employed and most students are identified as “degree seekers” (necessarily skewing completion data in a negative direction by using too generous a definition), is it appropriate to establish policy that ignores the other groups of students served by community colleges? The authors imply that we should only be working to assist those students who are “degree-seeking.” Don’t all students need assistance in reaching their goals? Such a policy suggestion encourages a shift in priorities towards degree-seeking students and away from the other missions of the community colleges. The goal of the community colleges is to effectively serve all students, regardless of their end-goal and how it factors into external measures of accountability.

1 “Data from the California State University demonstrates that community college transfer students perform as well as, or better than, native four-year university students.” [http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/News/press_releases/2010/Chancellor%20Scott%20Reacts%20to%20Gov.%20Schwarzenegger%20Signing%20SB%201440%20-%20FINAL%20\(9-29-10\).pdf](http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/News/press_releases/2010/Chancellor%20Scott%20Reacts%20to%20Gov.%20Schwarzenegger%20Signing%20SB%201440%20-%20FINAL%20(9-29-10).pdf)

Legitimate and reasonable statements in *Divided We Fail* frequently are followed closely by suggestions that are problematic or difficult to support, such as “The Legislature should take steps to guard against erosion of the historic transfer function of community colleges by investigating recruiting practices and completion rates at for-profit colleges...” (p. iii). This statement presumes that the Legislature has the power to “fix” transfer (which is certainly impaired by the inadequate funding that universities receive to make room for prepared and eligible transfer students, as Moore and Shulock do note) and that community colleges have lessons to learn from for-profit colleges. Absent the provision of additional funds, it can be argued that the practices from for-profit colleges that community colleges could adopt that lead to increased completion would require a compromise in quality. We could award credit for having lived or worked for some certain number of years, pay people to “recruit” and retain students, and offer unstructured design-your-own programs of study. Our transfer partners would likely, and appropriately, take a dim view of such questionable preparation.

Any useful study should begin with appropriate operational definitions. As noted earlier, definitions of “degree seekers” vary and, while overly broad definitions would be appropriate upon student entry into a system of higher education, once a student has completed some coursework a more appropriate definition can be applied. Here is where Moore and Shulock commit one of the most disturbing errors in their paper: “The analyses focus on students identified as ‘degree seekers’ (a term we use to include degrees and certificates) based on having enrolled in more than six units during the first year.” (p. 3) While “degree seekers” could be defined in many ways, this definition is deeply flawed. No constraints were placed on such important issues as the courses being taken, the units enrolled in, or the level of the courses. While the courses were identified as being “credit” courses, they were not necessarily courses that would be taken by students who were actual degree-seekers. A professional returning to earn units for promotion or advancement would be captured by this definition, as would a parent taking a few courses to better support his child’s studies, a returning student who needs a few courses to apply for studies

elsewhere, or a high school student taking a few classes to get an early start on college. The source for this definition is cited as “Adelman, C. *Proposed amendment for the Student-Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-542) to produce a full and honest account of college completion rates*. Obtained through personal communication on June 2, 2008.” A relevant definition of “degree-seekers” at the community college level cannot be based on a suggestion made over twenty years ago regarding federal data collection in the context of investigating student progression within one segment of higher education within the state of California. Such a definition necessarily skews the data contained within the paper: the more common proxies for degree-seekers used by researchers within the California community college system likely would not have yielded the devastatingly negative findings upon which the paper is based. Furthermore, Adelman’s interests appear to be focused not on accurately tracking community college students, but upon preventing anomalies that lead to reporting inaccuracies in other segments of higher education. Once again, comparisons between community college and other segments of higher education are inappropriate and problematic. While one may safely assume that all students entering universities and registering for any number of units are “degree-seeking”, making enrollment a valid proxy for “degree-seeking” at the university level, no such assumption can be made for students in the community colleges, be they in California or elsewhere.

The recommendations in Moore and Shulock’s *Divided We Fail* are representative of the sort of problematic suggestions for change that confront community colleges with increasing frequency. I want to encourage each and every one of you to be advocates for our system, and for the good that we do and to be educators of the general public. Our messages tend to be more academic and complex: our clever titles don’t make it into headlines, nor do we hold press conferences to tout our accomplishments, nor partner with organizations that will see that our publicity needs are met. But we can educate our boards, our communities, and our legislators. Such outreach on our part is necessary to combat the attacks on our system from reports such as *Divided We Fail* and other efforts to promote systemic change without a sufficient understanding of our successes and our needs. ■

Julie's Inbox

The Academic Senate receives many requests from the field, and most of them come through the Senate Office into the inbox of our own Executive Director Julie Adams (hence the name of this column). As you might imagine these requests vary by topic, and the responses represent yet another resource to local senates. This column will share the questions and solutions offered by the President and the Executive Committee. Please send your thoughts or questions to Julie@asccc.org.

Dear Julie,

Our college continues to have flex days despite the lack of funding from the state. We are pleased to have professional development opportunities but also worry about compliance. Faculty want to count almost any activity for flex credit, and we need some guidance on how to make the flex activities work for faculty and the regulations. What do we need to do?

In fits over flex

Dean IFOF,

Congratulations on your continued commitment to quality flex activities for your faculty. Title 5 is very instructive on this topic, and two sections are especially important: §55720 and §55724. The first gives a college the ability to have a flexible calendar with a specified maximum amount of time allotted for flex activities each year. The second provides the list of categories that flex activities must fit in order for your college to be compliant when it chooses to have a flexible calendar. With or without professional development funds, any district that chooses a flexible calendar with flex days must be compliant with §55724.

The categories for “designated staff, student and instructional improvement days” are as follows: course instruction and evaluation; staff development, in-service training and instructional improvement;

program and course curriculum or learning resource development and evaluation; student personnel services; learning resource services; related activities, such as student advising, guidance, orientation, matriculation services, and student, faculty, and staff diversity; departmental or division meetings, conferences, workshops, and institutional research; other duties assigned by the district; and the necessary supporting activities for the above. Your college should track faculty participation in the activities that qualify for flex credit.

Your senate may want to define the final area, “necessary supporting activities for the above,” so that there is an understanding of what does and does not qualify for flex credit. Some faculty have questioned the inclusion of meetings in flex activities, but since they are allowed, your senate may want to limit the number of hours required for meetings or minimize the time that meetings take away from other activities intended to improve cultural competence or instruction or direct service to students. Don't forget that all flex activities must be certified by your local administration to meet the requirements in the regulations, and a certification form must be submitted to the Chancellor's Office every July 1.

Good Luck! ■