SENATEROSTRUM

ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEWSLETTER

Processes and Models for Class Section Cuts

PHIL SMITH, LOS RIOS CCD SENATE PRESIDENT

Given the emphasis on budgeting and planning in our accreditation standards, our colleges and districts have developed detailed planning processes including department- and division-level plans, college-wide master plans, and district-wide strategic plans as well as regular cycles of program review. And yet, in this time of deep budget contraction, I'm finding that many of our plzanning and program review processes seem woefully inadequate for helping us decide how to reduce our curricular offerings. Our existing planning processes simply don't offer much specific guidance about which courses and programs to keep and which to let go.

Embedded in regular planning processes is the assumption that colleges increase or decrease in size only slightly from year to year. It's true that colleges and universities are slow moving organizations, and, typically, trends in enrollment appear over long periods of time. So, it's reasonable to expect that annual changes in college growth or shrinkage will be relatively modest during "normal" budget years. When faced with a sudden, sharp budget reduction, however, colleges need a different kind of plan altogether. As local budgets take a nosedive, what should we do when we need to act quickly and the consequences for getting it wrong are significant? We need a type of plan that helps us prepare for and navigate extreme budget circumstances, much like disaster preparedness plans offer guidance during flu outbreaks, fires, and floods. What our colleges need are budget disaster survival plans.

Research in disaster preparedness tells us that survival is more likely and injuries are reduced when institutions have specific and detailed plans to address disasters before they happen. Of course, dealing with college budget cuts is not as immediate, dire, and life-threatening as having to deal with natural disasters like tornados, earthquakes, or tsunamis, but budget cuts do challenge our livelihoods and the way we operate as educational institutions. Preparing for the worst case allows us to be proactive rather than reactive during times of emergency.

The focus of this article is to explore some principles and methods that can be used by local senates and college administrations to plan for large numbers of class section cuts. The process can roughly be divided into three stages: (1) awareness and understanding of the severity of the problem, (2) making priorities explicit, and (3) ethical and transparent negotiation.

STAGE 1: AWARENESS

In the awareness stage, it's extremely important that those individuals who are developing a disaster preparedness plan acknowledge the reality of a worst-case budget contraction. Psychology research

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tells us that human beings have difficulty accepting new information that runs counter to established worldviews. Many of us have had long careers at our colleges in which we've never experienced a severe budget contraction. It is easy to fall into habits of denial ("This is a manufactured crisis. Our district has plenty of money.") or minimalism ("We just need to get through this year and things will be better next year."). Remember that, in trying to develop a budget disaster preparedness plan, the goal is to plan for the worst-case scenario, not because it's likely but because it's possible. And, by preparing for the worst, we simultaneously prepare ourselves for the continuum of negative scenarios that are bad but not the worst.

Also, at the awareness stage, it's hard to let go of negotiating strategies that worked during normal budget years. There is a belief that one can come out of the budget reduction process unscathed with an effective lobbying effort. The reality, in a sharp or protracted budget contraction, is that we are all participating in a less-than-zero-sum game, meaning that there really are no winners. All parts of the organization are going to lose something, and some parts are going to lose more than others. In developing a worst-case preparedness plan, it does no one any good to sugarcoat this reality.

Regular and thorough communication, a core value of the academic senate, serves us well in the awareness stage. Without such communication, rumors about the budget situation proliferate, promoting needless anxiety and detracting from effective planning. To combat budgetary rumors, it may make more sense to avoid informal, oral discussion styles in favor of formal, written communications that can be referred to when colleagues ask questions about the planning process. Written emails and documents also promote transparency and accountability.

STAGE 2: BEING EXPLICIT ABOUT PRIORITIES

The next stage in developing a budget disaster plan is to make departmental and institutional priorities explicit. Individuals and institutions have preferences about what is important and maintain a rough set of priorities about what is core to the institution's mission. Granted, these preferences and priorities are typically implicit, perhaps even unconscious, yet they begin to

manifest themselves during a time of budget cuts. It is far better for colleges and districts to be explicit about their preferences early, well before budget cutting begins. This allows for rational discussion and dialogue and the development of a consensus set of priorities. As an added benefit, explicit prioritization criteria allow us to explain how budget-cutting choices were made to members of the community and to the press. An example of a hypothetical set of class prioritization criteria is given below:

HYPOTHETICAL CLASS PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

Please use the criteria below in the given order when prioritizing class section offerings. The criteria below should be applied in the given order:

1. Maintain a comprehensive range of class section offerings during the day from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and the early evening 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

2. Maintain courses in the two transfer-based general education patterns: IGETC and CSU GE Breadth.

3. Maintain at least one section of each class that is a required course in the new SB1440 Transfer Degrees.

4. Maintain courses in the college's local AA/AS general education pattern.

5. Maintain at least one class section that is a required course in the 20 most popular degrees or certificates at the college.

6. Maintain a class section that is a restricted elective in the 20 most popular degrees or certificates at the college.

7. Maintain basic skills sections in mathematics, writing, and reading that meet the competency requirement for an associate degree.

8. Maintain a ratio of 10-30-60 for low, middle, and high basic skills offerings.

9. Maintain at least one class section for any required course in any degree or certificate at the college.

10. Maintain a class section for any course that is a restricted elective in any degree or certificate at the college.

11. Maintain other departmental priorities not included above.

STAGE 3: ETHICAL AND TRANSPARENT NEGOTIATION ABOUT CLASS CUTS — MODELS FOR CONSIDERATION

The next stage in the development of a disaster plan for class section cuts is to determine in a transparent and ethical way which specific class sections to cut in the event of a severe budget crunch. There are at least three models for making cuts after departments have a made a good faith effort to prioritize their offerings from the most to least essential.

In the first model, Share and Share Alike, each college department (or division) is asked to make an equal cut, say 10%, to its offerings. This model is easily understood and implemented; however, it takes into account only departmental or divisional priorities, not the priorities of the college as a whole. From a student success point of view, are the class offerings in one department more necessary for degree or certificate completion than those in another? If so, across-the-board cuts may actually hurt the students we serve.

On the surface, this model appears to be the most fair, but in a severe budget crunch proportionate cuts may actually do harm. Consider a hospital that is facing a 10% budget cut. The 10% could be spread equally across all of its departments, but is it really serving the needs of the community if the Emergency, Dermatology, and Physical Therapy departments are all cut by an equal amount of 10%? The health of the community members might be better served by having the Emergency Room take less of a cut and the Dermatology and Physical Therapy departments taking larger hits.

In the second model, Top-Down Disproportionate Cuts, a college-wide group determines a priori different levels of cuts for each department. The goal in setting targets in advance is to better meet student needs for the college as a whole. One department might be asked to cut only 1% while another is asked to reduce by 25%. The target-setting group tries to ensure that the individual departmental reductions balance out to an overall college reduction goal, say 10%. After targets are established, each department is notified of the percentage by which it should reduce its offerings.

The challenge for senates in this model is how to maintain transparency. Who serves on this group that is making these decisions? Does it consist only of administrators? How does this group go about determining in advance which departments should be cut more than others? Is this group using explicit criteria and data, or are the disproportionate percentages assigned to each department being made by someone's "gut instinct"?

In the first two models, the focus is on achieving a particular percentage cut. This approach may work well in a short-lived budget crunch in which the monetary reduction to the institution can reasonably be predicted. If, however, a college is experiencing a budget crunch that is volatile or one that spans several years, then it will be necessary for the college to seek further cuts as new fiscal circumstances warrant. Going back to faculty over and over again and asking for additional cuts can be demoralizing. It's a slow "death by a thousand cuts," anxiety about the future is never alleviated, and colleagues begin to give up and shut down.

In the third model, the focus is not on class section cuts but class section keeps. It's more of triage model in which the institution focuses not on what should be let go but what should be maintained. Leaders focus on identifying the absolute core group of class sections necessary to maintain the functionality of the college for the community and commit to protecting it. This commitment carves out a "safe harbor" in which faculty and students can plan schedules with a reasonable degree of security.

To accomplish the third model, Bottom-Up Disproportionate Keeps, colleges and districts must first identify a worst-case scenario dividing line. By this, I mean a core value or criterion that departments may use to separate their absolutely essential class sections from those that are not. The worst-case scenario dividing line will likely vary from institution to institution. For example, one college might say that class sections needed to support the top 20 degrees and certificates are "safe" and above the dividing line, and all other class sections have the potential to be cut. Another district might say that its core value and intent

is to prevent full-timer layoffs. With that criterion in mind, each department lists enough class sections (in order from most to least essential) so that each of its full-timers can maintain a full load. Once that dividing line is established, those class sections taught as overload assignments or by adjuncts would potentially be cut.

Once the dividing line is established and departments identify those class sections that fall on either side of it, the class sections on the potentially cut side are collected from departments and put into a common "bucket" for review and prioritization by some college-wide group. Once prioritized, this list of potential class sections cuts can accommodate a variety of cut levels and can be used for planning across multiple years.

In this model, because the college is prioritizing everything, senates should be aware that the initial workload is quite high; however, it pays dividends if the budget situation is changing rapidly or the budget crisis is prolonged. As with the previous model, senates must be vigilant about transparency with the college-wide group that prioritizes potential cuts. It's particularly important to safeguard against the perception of personal bias. Those on the college-wide group who might benefit from a particular prioritization should acknowledge that fact and recuse themselves from decisions that they have a stake in.

CONCLUSION

Although existing planning procedures and program review documents may offer only limited guidance to our colleges during this time of budget crunch, it is possible for academic senates to organize effective discussions and decision-making about how to reduce class offerings. This article offers a series of approaches, models, and cautions that might be useful to local senates that begin this challenging work. A specific plan that is thoughtful, thorough, and proactive will help all of us survive these difficult budgetary times.

Phil Smith is completing the second year of his term as Los Rios Community College District Academic Senate President. ∎

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,

We're struggling with the definition of "assigned" C-ID designation for the TMC on our campus. The Transfer Documentation that is required for proposed AA-T degrees requires documentation of 1) Assigned C-ID designation or 2)Assigned TCSU number etc. We're not sure what is meant by "Assigned" C-ID designation. On our campus "Assigned" is being assumed to mean approved-yet the only currently approved C-ID courses are the ones that had prior TCSU numbers. Are CCC faculty allowed to self-identify their courses that they believe match the C-ID descriptor for purposes of TMC submission?

Any clarification would be appreciated,

Struggling with definition of Assigned C-ID Designations

Dear SDAD,

When submitting a TMC-aligned degree, you just need to indicate that your courses "match" the C-ID (or TCSU descriptor) where appropriate. So, yes, CCC faculty are allowed to self-identify courses as comparable to existing descriptors for the purpose of these degrees.

Good Luck! ∎

BOT Oh my!

DIANNA CHIABOTTI, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

There are many interesting, and sometimes frightening, stories about faculty not getting their rights and responsibilities given in AB 1725. Some accreditation reports have noted that some colleges do not have processes and procedures that are indicative of mutual agreement with and/or relying primarily on the academic senate. There have been reported incidents of local boards of trustees overstepping into the areas of faculty primacy delineated in Education Code and Title 5. Faculty must be ever vigilant regarding the ways the rights of faculty play out in college and district processes.

We could assume that when such violations occur, there is evil intent; however, I suggest that we assume that members that take the time and effort to become elected to our boards of trustees (BOT) are well intentioned individuals that want to be valuable members of a community college or district but sometimes are unclear about their role or, in their enthusiasm, inadvertently tread on faculty purview. As academic senates we have an obligation to help our BOTs understand the scope of their role and how their understanding of faculty role ultimately helps our students succeed. We need to be proactive rather than reactionary.

One option to consider is having your local senates develop a seminar for your BOT. Ideally this seminar could be a regular component of BOT retreats or orientations, preferably at the start of each academic year and definitely when there are new BOT members. Maybe, as part of the election process, the local senate could offer a seminar for individuals considering running for election. Consider it a community-building event.

In the seminar, set the stage. This should reflect your local culture, yet if your local culture is one of conflict you might consider a change. It is important to remember that in this seminar you are also setting a tone of engagement and interaction with your BOT. So if you lecture at them, you might expect the same in return. If you dialog with them, you set the tone that this is the type of relationship you want them to have with you. Consider things like the room set up and personal comfort of attendees. Put thought into who on your senate is leading the seminar. Engagement and positive affiliation are essential in setting the stage for a long and collaborative relationship. Try thinking of your BOT as your allies. We need them, and they need us, to make our colleges successful and to support student success.

Next, provide clear information about roles and responsibilities. Provide the BOT with copies of Education Code and Title 5 that you reference. You can find some excellent resources at the Academic Senate website to help you build your presentation. For example, at every Leadership Institute, there are PowerPoint presentations (in the archive) regarding the basis for senate authority, spelling out the 10 + 1. Allow time for discussion. Bring any relevant documents that you think you may need. Remember the members of the BOT come to this role with ideas and expectations about their role and you might be causing some of them disequilibrium in thinking by presenting information that contradicts their original notions. Allow for challenging questions without taking the comments and questions personally. Again, set the tone of collegiality and collaboration.

After the seminar, leave the BOT with contact information for your local senate and possibly set up a time to meet again. If your college has a history of conflict with your BOT, it will take time to mend and to rebuild a collaborative connection even if the entire BOT is new. Before discussing serious issues, build a connection. Do not use this time to try to resolve problems. This is a seminar on the roles of your senate; it is not a problem resolution discussion. Someone could be responsible for keeping a parking lot of issues that come up that need resolution so that the problems can be forwarded to the appropriate group or process for resolution.

Take a deep breath. Think positive. Be the force that sets the stage for clearly delineating the roles and responsibilities given to faculty in the 10+1. ∎

The Case for Course Completion as the Single Measure of Student Success

BETH SMITH, TREASURER

(Note: The opinions and positions presented in this article do not represent the opinions or positions of the Academic Senate. The piece is designed to give one perspective on the larger issue of defining and measuring student success.)

Counting helps people. They count their blessings, count text messages, count money in the bank, and count friends on Facebook®. Counting may go wild, however, if the state decides to have multiple measures of student success. Colleges will become experts at counting and storing counts of student performance, program performance, this, that, and everything in between. If there was only one measure of student success that we had to count and for which colleges are accountable, then colleges could focus only on that single metric. Budget decisions, college planning, collaborations on campus, and virtually anything that supports that single metric would easily rise to the top of the college to-do list. And if that is the case, then the only metric that makes sense is successful course completion, and here's why.

Students come to community colleges to take courses. Yes, they also come to pursue programs and transfer, but the first step is enrolling in and passing one or more classes this term. Some students arrive at the door looking for only one or two classes in topics such as CPR, and some attend community college taking a full load to prepare for transfer. They enroll in a term of 16-18 weeks, which seems like a lifetime to many of them. Measuring course completion puts all work in present tense rather than future tense, as in "will earn a degree or certificate or will become transfer ready or will complete a basic skills sequence." Students' lives are complicated, affected by the demands of adult life, and often staying committed to a course and the instructor for 16-18 weeks may be the longest relationship any of them sustain. Keeping students focused on passing their current courses provides a daily challenge for

counselors and discipline faculty, and expecting students to stay attentive and committed beyond the end of one term may not be realistic.

Student success implies a joint venture—a partnership—between institutions and students, with students owning primary responsibility for their own success and institutions creating and maintaining environments where students can find success. To increase student success, we must search out the source of nourishment for the partnership which is the classroom. In the classroom, students are expected to prepare for class and exams, attend class, complete assignments, and contribute to the learning environment of their peers in the class through discussions and group projects. Teachers, on behalf of the college, prepare classes according to the designated content of the course, facilitate and assess learning and students' knowledge and skills in acquiring the expected outcomes, and provide immersion for students into the discipline, connecting it to the world around us, current events, and lives of students. This synergistic relationship between teacher and student is the heart of the educational experience leading to student success and should be the only measure of success of the colleges. We can't risk turning attention away from the classroom with other measures of success.

Colleges are already set up to focus on course completion. Everything that happens at a college is designed around helping students get into the right course and complete it. From placement processes to prerequisites to visits to the counselor, the components of matriculation are designed to assist students with being in the right class. Once the student is in the class, there are tutoring services, supplemental instruction, office hours, and other instructional support options that help facilitate success in the course. Minimum qualifications, hiring practices, and evaluations ensure the most qualified and effective instructor teaches
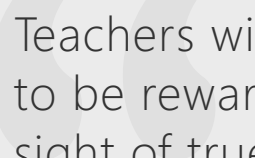
the class. Grading systems are designed for classes, curriculum design is based on course outlines of record, and one reason that faculty must be consulted on governance issues is because of expertise gleaned from the classroom and how policies play out when the proverbial rubber hits the road. Degree and certificate completion are achieved only after students complete courses; the former does not take place without the latter.

While many will argue that degree and certificate completion are important measures of student success, as is transfer readiness, it's important to remember the mission of community colleges and how it is different from the mission of CSU or UC. Students who attend universities are seeking degrees. There is little reason to attend a university to take one course or retrain or learn technical skills. Measuring the universities on degree completion makes sense. Because community colleges serve students with various goals and because our mission is more than degree completion, it makes sense to measure us according to the reason that students come to community colleges—to take courses. It makes no difference whether that course is a basic skills, transfer, career technical education, credit, or noncredit course. Because not all colleges are the same—some offer only noncredit, some have more or less transfer students than others, etc.—using course completion levels the playing field for all colleges.

Retention (defined as a student who does not withdraw and earns a grade for the course) has been suggested as a measure of student success. The number of students that remain in a class until the end, whether passing or not, is on the rise and now averages over 80% across the state[1]. Many people are quick to point out the value and importance of increased retention for students and colleges. However, increased retention can be misleading. When matched against the average rate of successful course completion of 69% for the state[2] for the last 20 years, the result is that more students are actually failing courses today than 10 years ago. This is a staggering result given what has happened in community colleges during the last couple of decades and needs attention as a separate discussion. Without attention to increasing course completion, retention

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1   Chancellor's Office DataMart

2   Chancellor's Office DataMart

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is simply a means of counting students who earn any grade in the course and does not equal success. In order to increase student success, colleges should look to increase successful course completion, and retention will follow.

If only one measure were to be used, it should be the one measure where faculty have the greatest influence, and that's in the classroom. Faculty have means to communicate regularly with students while in the class and can refer students to services to increase student success and invite counselors and librarians into classes to speak about services and instructional support for students. Departments and discipline faculty can monitor academic standards and ensure that grades are not inflated to meet goals of increasing student success. Teachers will continue to be rewarded by the sight of true student success—the hope and transformational behaviors resulting from the educational experience in the classroom.

With all the complexities of community college existence in the 21st century, using one simple and easily understood measure of student success makes sense and is prudent. Using course completion as the single measure puts the energy and attention where it belongs: in the classroom. When the focus is on the classroom, then faculty can maintain standards and rigor for course completion and stay in the driver's seat regarding any notion of student success. Instead of counting everything under the sun, count what counts. ∎

Starting Students Off On The Right Foot And Keeping Them On The Right Track!

KEVIN BONTENBAL, CHAIR, COUNSELING AND LIBRARY FACULTY ISSUES COMMITTEE

Counseling programs in the California community colleges play a key role in helping students succeed. Over the years, the functions of counseling departments have multiplied significantly, further exacerbating the ever-present pressure to serve more students with the same number of counseling faculty. Students are the first to complain of the difficulty of getting in to see a counselor, as evidenced by increasingly long lines at walk-up windows and the two to three week waits to get an appointment. Counselors and other faculty will also attest to this dilemma and are keenly aware of the importance of counselors in assisting students to reach their academic goals.

The significant role counseling faculty play in the success of students has also been reinforced by numerous research based documents such as Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges (Center for Student Success, 2007), Facilitating Community College Transfer: A Master Plan Mandate, (Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates, Spring 2009), Community College Transfer Task Force: Findings and Recommendations Aimed at Strengthening the Community College Transfer Process (Intersegmental Task Force, September 2009), California Community College Transfer: Recommended Guidelines (California Community College Chancellor's Office and California Community College Transfer Center Directors Association, 2006), and Crafting a Student-Centered Transfer Process in California: Lessons From Other States (Institute of Higher Education Leadership and Policy, August 2009).

Resolution, 8.02 S10, "Title 5 Changes to Include Counselor to Student Ratio," further acknowledges the importance of counseling faculty in the success of students. This resolution requests that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges work with the Chancellor's Office to change Title 5 to indicate that the minimum number of required counseling faculty be based on the recommended counselor to student ratio of 1:370 cited in the Academic Senate adopted paper Consultation Council Task Force on Counseling (2003).

As valuable as such a change to Title 5 would be, the reality is that this could take a long time and even if it were changed, not all colleges follow Title 5 regulations to the letter. Recognizing this situation, Resolution 8.02 S10 also encourages local senates to work with their collective bargaining units to add reasonable minimum counselor to student ratios into local contracts, knowing that local contracts in many instances carry more authority in practice than regulation. As with other issues, when local academic senates work collaboratively with their bargaining units, the outcome proves beneficial to faculty and students. For senates in need of assistance with establishing or strengthening their relationship with their local union, the Academic Senate paper Developing a Model for Effective Senate/Union Relations (1996) provides useful guidance.

The precipitous decline in the system-wide number of counseling faculty can be attributed in large part to recent events, including the decimation of categorical funding (given that campuses commonly hire counseling faculty using matriculation funds), a significantly smaller portion of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act than was expected (affecting many campuses that had planned to use these funds to backfill categorical funding), and the fallacy of the 50% law that claims counseling functions do not directly support instruction. As a result, colleges are incentivized to limit expenditures on counseling activities, including hiring. The timing has never been better to recognize the value of counselors in helping students reach their academic goals. Colleges can do this locally by codifying this value into local contracts and on a state level by advocating for Title 5 changes to define a minimum ratio of counselors to students. Together we can help students get started off well and keep them on the right track! ∎

Prerequisites: What Next?

RICHARD MAHON, CHAIR, PREREQUISITE TASK FORCE

On March 7, 2011, the Board of Governors approved changes proposed by the Academic Senate to change Title 5 §55003 regarding prerequisites. The Senate adopted a paper explaining the advantages of Content Review at the Fall 2010 Plenary Session and a second paper providing practical guidance on the establishment of prerequisites at the Spring 2011 Plenary Session. Changes to the means of establishing prerequisites come as California community colleges face the most abrupt and steep budget cuts in their history. At a time when more students seek community college education and the most diverse student population in our history seeks education and training, the state will hand out a sign reading, "no room at the inn." It is crucial in this fiscal climate that colleges use resources to promote the success of all students and use prerequisites to help students through their community college education in a timely way, not to block access to the education our students need.

Faculty leaders seeking to reconsider the means used on their campuses to establish prerequisites should begin by consulting the actual language of Title 5 §55003. While the Senate provides support and guidance in its papers and Rostrum articles, nothing should substitute for familiarity with the regulation itself. More has remained unchanged in §55003 than has changed, and colleges need to meet all the requirements of the regulation.

The first step begins with a review of current local board policy and procedure. Many colleges chose to adopt the parameters suggested in Model District Policy (Board of Governors, 1993), which were often more restrictive than regulation required. If, under their authority granted by Title 5 §53200(c)(1), faculty seek to develop a prerequisite process that would be inconsistent with local board policy, then the local senate will want to begin the process for review and revision of the board policy, since doing so is seldom a quick process.

New language in Title 5 §53200 calls for colleges to develop a plan for the deployment of new prerequisites. Regulation indicates that the plan must address four criteria: (1) the method to be used to identify courses that might need a prerequisite; (2) a continuing requirement to balance the curricula to meet student need as equitably as possible; (3) provision for training the curriculum committee; and (4) research into the effect of prerequisites.

Colleges have considerable leeway regarding the method used to identify courses, but data about current retention and success rates should certainly be part of the local plan. Even colleges with very limited research capacity can get significant data from
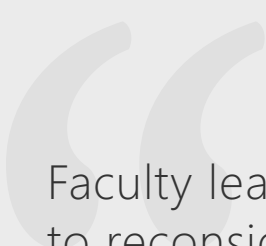
> Faculty leaders seeking to reconsider the means used on their campuses to establish prerequisites should begin by consulting the actual language of Title 5 §55003.

Data Mart, which can be disaggregated by college and program (via TOP codes) and by age, ethnicity, and gender *<https://misweb.ccco.edu/mis/onlinestat/ret_sucs.cfm>*. In a number of areas disaggregated data reveals a success rate of under 50% for some campus groups, and colleges might conclude that such programs would be appropriate starting points for considering new prerequisites. Ideally, local data will help faculty identify specific courses with the most pressing need for scrutiny.

Once a college has established the method it will use, it must also take steps to assure that students displaced by new prerequisites will have other appropriate choices in the curriculum. Already California community colleges cannot meet the demand for classes, and thus in practical terms a good faith effort to balance offerings in basic skills and transferable sections is probably the best that can be done. Even apart from the challenges of implementing prerequisites, college enrollment management committees will be severely taxed for the foreseeable future. Along with the need for a college plan and robust enrollment management processes, colleges must ensure that curriculum committees are trained to implement content review responsibly and must plan for the research into the impact of new prerequisites required by Title 5 §55003. At this point, the Chancellor's Office intends to develop a curriculum inventory code for courses with new prerequisites in order to support the efforts of colleges to monitor the effect of new prerequisites.

Close attention to disproportionate impact has been and continues to be a requirement of colleges using prerequisites. As many observers have pointed out (see for example, Nancy Shulock, Divided We Fail, IHELP, 2010), the students who enter our colleges do not arrive equally prepared, and an effective research program will not only examine the level of preparation of students, but the effect of prerequisites on retention, success, and various completion rates (for certificates, degrees, and becoming transfer ready).

Governing boards continue to need to establish policy or process to ensure that (1) the local process for establishing prerequisites is clear, that (2) qualified faculty teach to the adopted course outline, that (3) prerequisites remain necessary (and revalidation, perhaps during program review, continues to be an every-six year requirement—or two years for career technical education courses), and that (4) students have the ability to challenge prerequisites as appropriate.

Perhaps no single tool in practice has as much potential to improve student success as prerequisites, but like all tools, prerequisites must be used thoughtfully. The steps required by regulation should not be viewed as one more arbitrary set of criteria to meet, but as an attempt to guide colleges and faculty through a self-conscious process that will provide pathways through a college's curriculum that will lead to increased student success. In the straightened fiscal circumstances in which we find ourselves, both colleges and, more importantly, students themselves need paths that will help them find their way through our colleges as effectively as possible. ∎

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Improving Student Access to Financial Aid

ESTHER MATTHEW, COUNSELING AND LIBRARY FACULTY ISSUES COMMITTEE

Resolution 20.02 S09 of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges directed the Senate to encourage local senates to review and, where appropriate, act on the recommendations presented in Green Lights & Red Tape (GLRT), a 2007 report published by the Institute for College Access and Success. In an effort to assist colleges in doing so, this article summarizes the key points from the report.

Each California community college student's financial assistance options are impacted a variety of factors, including the demands of their sometimes conflicting roles. The first obligation is to ensure student access to financial aid by providing information and assistance to students. At the same time, a financial aid office must be efficient and cope with the difficulties and challenges of the administrative demands. Furthermore, community college financial aid offices receive far less funds for operations than the university systems, which prevent them from providing better student services. These operational and fiscal issues are accompanied with the regulatory constraints of federal and state guidelines, all of which are largely beyond the college's control.

The focus of Green Lights & Red Tape is the varying financial aid policies and practices which significantly impact access to student aid. The findings are coupled with practical recommendations for colleges to consider in support of a student-centered position for financial aid. State and federal policy suggestions have also been included to assist in maximizing the benefits of financial aid for students.

Factors that contribute to the likelihood of college success are enrolling immediately after high school, full time attendance, or at the minimum half time attendance and working 15 hours or less a week. The other factors which encourage student attendance and success are having access to financial aid information, receiving assistance during the application process, and timely aid disbursements. It is these key activities by which financial aid offices and their administrators should be measured.

FINANCIAL AID POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Although there are a number of factors beyond local college control, there are many campus policies and practices affecting financial aid administration which are controllable. Some campus policies give students an encouraging "green light" by helping them to make the most of available financial aid. Alternatively, other practices create obstacles and "red tape" for students looking for aid.

The factors impacting how colleges balance access for students with office efficiency may not be readily apparent. The larger institutional culture, such as campus assumptions, previous experiences, attitudes, priorities, and management styles, influences office operations and shapes perspectives about student needs and resources.

FINANCIAL AID COMMUNICATIONS

California community colleges have the lowest course fees in the country, yet some observers perceive that fees comprise the greatest financial issue for students. As a result, the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver (BOGW) is viewed by many in the community colleges as the primary form of assistance. However, students have many other expenses. This is especially true in California: even though fees comprise less than 5% of all college costs, the high cost of living, when combined with other college expenses, makes up the far larger amount. Students must apply for more assistance by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to cope with the greater financial burden. However, while the majority of those California students in greatest need attend community college, only 34% apply for federal financial aid. Some students may qualify for fee waivers and other

aid after completing the FAFSA, while not qualifying initially after only completing the simple one-page BOGW application. With the emphasis on the BOGW and its attraction to students, colleges can develop better practices by combining the BOGW and FAFSA application processes to help ensure students get the aid they need.

Although many colleges have encouraged students to complete the FAFSA, more can be done to ensure that students get basic financial aid information. When dispensing information, financial aid offices tend to rely on websites, mail, email, information tables, and pamphlets. These methods exhibit a wide range in content and communication styles as well as variations in effectiveness. Students' inaccurate preconceptions about college costs and aid make it difficult to get students to apply. They respond to repetition and timely messages about financial aid. Students need to know concrete and manageable strategies for getting aid and in the terms they are likely to respond to. While acknowledging that financial aid offices are not experts in marketing, it is important to develop a strategic communication plan that includes proactive and creative outreach activities which take into account the unique makeup of the local community. The California community college student population is widely diverse. Colleges should provide culturally appropriate information and do so in languages other than English.

Communication approaches guided by local attitudes include decisions about what information to withhold from students. According to the GLRT research, some colleges opt to withhold information about federal loan programs and provide it only upon request. While federal loan programs are available at all but 16 colleges, students are generally not told about this alternative in spite of the fact that approximately 50% of students indicate an interest in student loans on the FAFSA. "The financial aid administrators we interviewed shared the belief that, for the majority of students, borrowing for community college is unnecessary and potentially dangerous." (p.21) Their preference was for students to work more and borrow only when transferring. Students who may need to borrow are forced to engage in more fiscally risky activities, such as using credit cards or applying for variable-rate private loans.

Students without other options may unintentionally threaten their own chances of success by increasing their workloads or cutting classes from their schedules.

While caution should be used about borrowing, colleges need to develop policies and practices that will actually serve to protect and assist students.

Communication efforts do not need to be carried by the financial aid alone. Inter-office and faculty collaborations can provide a key means for increasing student awareness about college costs and financial aid opportunities. Each campus has various student entry and contact points that can be utilized to support the financial aid office in this undertaking. However, efforts are needed to increase inter-office expertise and to provide staff and faculty with appropriate materials and basic information. There are strong benefits to providing students with regular reminders from a number of sources other than the financial aid office.

Community outreach efforts have primarily targeted high schools and have sometimes included visits by financial aid staff. For smaller colleges with limited resources, it may be better to integrate financial aid into the existing outreach efforts.

Some colleges provide outreach efforts for the larger population of adults. Approximately 50% of low-income adults hear about financial aid through the college. The size and diversity of this group make outreach efforts difficult and therefore are restricted. Generally, flyers are posted strategically in public places and advertisements are placed in newspapers and on radio stations.

Other funds should be used for outreach efforts rather than using the scarce and limited Board Financial Assistance Program's Student Financial Aid Allowance (BFAP). Although beginning with 2003 BFAP quadrupled the state funds for financial outreach and staffing, funding is far lower than in the UC and CSU systems. The college's broader outreach efforts could include financial aid information, eliminating the need for the financial aid administration to carry the costs and leaving resources for other services.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Direct and personal support should be provided once students have access to financial aid information. This is due to the complexities of the application process and varying degrees of understanding among the incoming student population. Colleges are aware of the need to provide one-on-one assistance for students

and are shifting resources in an effort to help. Although such support requires resources and time, colleges have found that one-to-one assistance is effective.

While hands-on assistance is important and effective, current need outpaces the resources, and therefore colleges must also employ additional methods of informing students. Other strategies that have proven helpful are the use of computers to augment services, conducting workshops, and strategically designed financial aid staffing patterns.

In all college systems, both students and financial aid offices must deal with the complex and arduous application process. Unique to open-access community colleges is the wide time range when students apply. Many entering students do not know about financial aid timelines, various programs, and the complex application process. Therefore, students may receive funds after they are needed.

Students under the age of 24 are considered to be dependents, and parental income is considered when in financial aid applications regardless of the amount of support provided by the parents. In a few situations students can be considered independent and can receive a "dependency override." However, the process of obtaining this waiver is burdensome and requires additional documentation. A few colleges refuse to provide overrides, while others view the process as another way to serve students. All colleges should use professional judgment and exercise the option of granting overrides when suitable.

FINANCIAL AID DISBURSEMENTS

Beyond basic federal and state aid, there is a need for discretionary funds and access to student loans. Students who have few available resources and are experiencing a temporary financial crisis can greatly benefit from a college funded institutional grant. The availability of these types of flexible funds can positively impact student attendance.

Colleges have some discretion in the timing of financial aid fund disbursements. However, dispersing unearned aid when students withdraw or reduce course loads puts colleges at risk of financial liability and of having to make complicated and time consuming adjustments. There are a number of ways to limit

the college's liability, such as providing funds at multiple times during the semester rather than at the beginning. This system may assist students in better budgeting and may act as an incentive to continued attendance and eventually to college success. Further, one-credit short-term student success courses are proven to protect colleges from financial risk as well as increasing students' chances of academic success.

Students need to purchase books early, and this is a primary purpose of financial aid funds. Multiple aid disbursements and bookstore credit can meet this need. Additionally, students can benefit from having clearly defined aid disbursement and application timelines so that they know when funds will be arriving. Colleges should strive to develop policies that balance their chances of risk with timely student access to funds.

In summary, attitudes about financial aid, management styles, and priorities impact the way financial aid services are delivered. These non-monetary and controllable factors run the gamut from promoting student access to the practices that create obstacles to student success. The majority of financial aid administrators believe that their role is to support students, while others move toward an office-centered, "hands-off" model. The research has provided specific examples of how colleges balance their sometimes conflicting responsibilities. Each campus should engage in organized efforts to make needed changes toward a more student-centered position. Furthermore, state and federal factors that fall outside the direct power of institutions should be addressed. The federal and state recommendations are not included here but are included in the paper Green Lights & Red Tape (*http://www.ticas.org/files/pub/Green_Lights_Red_Tape.pdf*). If acted upon, these changes could positively impact students' access to financial aid further.

In order to assist colleges in beginning a review and dialog of existing financial aid policies and practices, a self-assessment survey is available on the Counseling and Library Faculty Issues webpage (go to: *http://www.asccc.org/sites/default/files/GLRT_Survey.pdf*). This survey is intended to serve as a tool for individuals to begin the discussion locally on their campuses about existing financial aid policies and office procedures. ∎

Shift Happens

JANE PATTON, PRESIDENT

PLENARY SESSION PRESENTATION

The theme that the Academic Senate Executive Committee chose for the Spring 2011 Plenary Session was Shift Happens. We chose a provocative theme for the Plenary Session because these are provocative times. Recent world events remind us that in nature, shift literally does happen, sometimes violently and catastrophically. However, when the Academic Senate chose this theme, we were thinking metaphorically —not of life-threatening changes but rather of the potential mission-changing conversations currently underway in California higher education. Let's consider the shifts.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

All of us in California's colleges take pride in being open access. The 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education established the philosophy that our community colleges are to serve all who can benefit. Over the years, colleges have expanded their offerings to include not only the traditional first two years of a baccalaureate program, pre-collegiate courses, and traditional career/technical curriculum but also emerging technologies and courses responsive to the changing workplace. We have developed award-winning English as a second language curriculum and expanded basic skills and noncredit courses to meet community needs, and we provide many developmental levels, from pre literate to collegiate. We have gladly welcomed all who come—whether they need one or two courses or a full program. We have been convinced that students (and society) benefit from whatever they acquire within our doors. But today, not everyone agrees with that supposition. While our colleges are a success story in our ability to welcome all who come with open arms, unfortunately that is seen as not enough.

WHERE WE ARE

National and state pressures to produce more degrees have collided with the reality that often most of our new students arrive unprepared for collegiate coursework. While it is self evident to us that these students require more basic skills coursework and support services, the policy makers and even the president of the United States are not satisfied with the outcomes. Multiple reports such as those from the Public Policy Institute of California, (PPIC), the Institute of Higher Education Leadership and Policy (IHELP), and the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) have identified what they see as our weaknesses, and an array of foundations have launched initiatives to address the deficiencies. Their demands to produce more citizens with degrees, both associate and baccalaureate, put pressure on our colleges to primarily focus on degree attainment. The bottom line: shift is really happening.

WHERE WE'RE HEADED: INEVITABLE SHIFTS

From various indications, it appears our colleges will change in the following ways:

- **Funding**—It appears likely, due to the passage of SB 1143 last September, that college funding will at least partially be based on "performance." A Student Success Task Group has been convened by the Chancellor to examine best practices and identify appropriate metrics. Performance-based funding is very controversial (and is something the faculty have always opposed), and a recent report from the Community College Research Institute (CCRC) compared performance based funding in four states and summarized why many have failed. For our system, the hope is that the system developed in the Student Success Task Group will learn from the mistakes of others.

- The **mission** of CCCs likely will be narrowed. We've heard the Chancellor repeat over and over that we should focus only on transfer, career technical education, and basic skills, period. Colleges have been told to reduce their offerings of courses deemed "recreational" and ensure the bulk of their classes fall into the requirements for the three programmatic areas. But we know that when we alter the curriculum we offer, we are altering our mission and the students we serve.

- **Curriculum**. We have already seen our course schedules morph as a result of funding reductions.

Arthur Cohen and Florence Brawer said, "All curriculum is, at bottom a statement a college makes about what it thinks is important." So, what classes we offer is our statement of what—and who—matter most. In addition, discussions are underway about who should provide adult education: the K-12 system or community colleges? The state is looking for economies of scale, and the status quo may be shifting. It's hard to predict where things will end up, but it does appear that some areas, such as noncredit offerings, will be reshaped.

- **Students**. The demographic shifts in California are evident in most classrooms. The first generation to college students, the second language learners, the large number of Latino students, and the students referred to as the 1.5 generation have all made a huge difference in the student body in most parts of the state. In addition, who we serve will be based on our offerings. It appears we may have a narrower range of students, and because a priority may be given for those students who show they are making progress (per potential legislative mandates), the colleges will likely become more selective and less open-access. As fees go up, competition for seats gets fiercer. The LAO has proposed which students should be at the front of the line, and now proposed legislation mirrors those recommendations. We will have to wait and see where pending legislation ends up, but no one can argue the fact that our students will continue to change.

- **New pedagogies.** There is no doubt that the old way of teaching is often not the best way—certainly not for many of our students. Faculty need strong professional development opportunities to view teaching and learning through new lenses and to re-shape their instruction. Administrators and policy makers will need to support more professional development. The days of instructors working alone in their offices and classrooms are (or should be) over. We all need to do a better job of collaborating—to strengthen both teaching and learning. Faculty sometimes are labeled as inflexible; we have to show that we can adapt to the shifting students and the resulting pedagogical imperatives.

- **Marketplace values**. Pressure is growing from the "customers" (a term that causes most faculty to cringe when applied to our students). But to those outside academe, students are the "consumers"

of higher education—with all the concomitant effects: the customer is always right, and we should adapt to what they want (e.g., all online and short term programs and a rapid time to degree). The signs of marketplace values seeping into academe are increasing. Can those floods be held back?

FACULTY ROLES

The need to have an informed and active academic senate has perhaps never been greater. At a time when major changes are occurring in our colleges, we have more new administrators, and often those from out of state do not have an understanding of the 10 + 1 or of the aims of AB 1725. Simultaneously we have hired a new generation of faculty and retired many senior faculty members who understood the need for strong academic senates. Therefore, it is essential for senates to be seeped in the wisdom of the 10 + 1. Senates need to train their faculty, administrators, and trustees. (See Dianne Chiabotti's article in this edition, and also see previous Rostrum articles: "Administrators Need an Orientation to the Senate" May 2007 and "How Much do you Know About Your Academic Senate" September 2005). Faculty must be at the table in mission-changing decisions at their colleges, not only because of their professionalism and wisdom but because if they are not there, they will create a pattern of non participation and ultimately weaken the role of faculty in governance.

AB 1725 was the major turning point in our history as community college faculty. Those of us who lived in the system before and after that era are certain of the need to preserve and perpetuate the responsibility and authority granted to the college professoriate in our system.

Where we have been is not where we're going. The state budget situation, the national and state demands for more degrees, new legislation, and cries for accountability have coalesced to re-shape the colleges we know and love. As these shifts continue, faculty acting at the state and local level must help to ensure that the mission of our colleges as "democracy's colleges" is not eroded. We should continue to serve the students who are already eligible for a university and who choose to begin in a community college, but we must not let that mission become our only mission. We must not turn our back on the students who need community colleges the most. ∎

Training New or Potential Faculty: Whose Responsibility Is It?

DAVID MORSE, LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE, SOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

In the fall semester of 2010, my college began a mentorship program for graduate students interested in becoming community college faculty. I was asked to work with Lee, a very bright young woman in the final semester of her M.A. program. Lee had no previous teaching experience or pedagogical training, but she had tremendous enthusiasm and excellent potential. She sat in on my classes and office hours throughout the semester, discussed assignments, lessons, and classroom procedures with me, and eventually, with my supervision, presented several different types of lessons in class.

At the end of the semester, Lee interviewed for an adjunct position in my department. However, in the current budget climate, we had very few unstaffed courses, and other applicants for the few available spots had significantly more experience and training. Knowing that I had encouraged Lee to apply, the department chair informed me through an email that she was unable to offer my mentee a class. At the end of the email, the chair asked two questions that inspired this article: "How are the people fresh out of graduate school supposed to gain experience if they didn't teach while they were students? Is it our job to teach them how to be teachers?"

In this context, the issue is not about faculty development in the usual sense; of course, we should all participate in activities that help us learn new instructional techniques and grow as professionals. But my chair's question was not about ongoing professional development for experienced instructors but rather about helping potential faculty members become ready to teach in the first place.

The minimum qualifications for any teaching position in the California community colleges include no requirement involving pedagogical training. Realistically, this situation is as it should be: many of our faculty members, both full- and part-time, in numerous disciplines took their current positions without any formal training as teachers and have had very successful careers. Certainly our hiring pools would be diminished if such a requirement existed, in some cases to such a degree that filling positions would be nearly impossible. This article therefore is not meant to suggest any formal change to the standards through which community college faculty are judged to be qualified to teach.

Instead, the issue at hand involves pedagogical training and guided experience for potential or new faculty members who need and want it. If one does not have the opportunity to work as a teaching assistant or enroll in instructional training in graduate school, then the options are limited. This situation is the dilemma that confronted my mentee, Lee, at the end of our work together: a master's degree in hand, a bright mind and great potential, but no experience and no formal training other than what she learned from shadowing me for a semester and few options for obtaining that training other than full enrollment in another graduate program.

Training in teaching methodology is more common in some disciplines than in others. In some academic disciplines, graduate students are commonly expected to serve as teaching assistants while they work on their degrees, and many universities offer graduate coursework, practicums, and other training programs designed to assist teaching assistants as they step into their own classrooms for the first time. Yet not all universities offer such opportunities in all disciplines, and some students, for a variety of reasons, may be unable to take advantage of the opportunities that do exist. In addition, not all community college faculty attend universities or enter graduate programs, as the minimum qualifications in some disciplines do not require a bachelor's degree, and in such cases extensive pedagogical training may be even less likely. While many faculty members in numerous disciplines have become successful and admirable teachers without direct training regarding instructional methods, most of us will remember many disorienting and often frustrating, though exciting, moments from our early careers. While the experience and background provided by a pedagogical training program is in no way

a requirement for developing into an effective teacher, certainly such a program would be beneficial to any new or potential faculty member and thus to all students who enter that faculty member's classroom.

In addition, even those graduate students and others lucky enough to experience programs that offer direct pedagogical training at a university might improve their teaching with further mentoring that would prepare them to work at the community college level. As an English department chair for six years, I saw numerous applicants for part-time positions who had worked as graduate assistants and who were very qualified to teach freshman composition but who were less familiar with the specific issues raised when one is working with basic skills students who read at a sixth grade level and who often have to place the demands of family and work before school. Community college students face different challenges than university students, and thus even potential faculty members who have received pedagogical training might benefit from guidance regarding ways to address the academic needs and personal situations particular to our student population.

Some colleges have developed programs that attempt to address this situation. The newly established mentor program at Long Beach City College pairs a graduate student intern interested in community college teaching with an experienced faculty member for a semester, allowing the intern to observe classes, receive guidance from the mentor, and ultimately participate in teaching the class. The long-standing Project Match program in the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) follows a similar structure, and some other community college districts around the state offer various programs for training potential faculty members.

However, even where such programs exist, they are in many cases limited. The Long Beach City College program, which is still in its pilot stage, served only five interns in its first semester; the LACCD's Project Match, one of the larger programs of its kind, admits 50 interns per year among its nine colleges but has had as many as 600 applications for those limited spaces. Clearly the demand for such programs exceeds the capacity for admission.

Furthermore, intern programs are limited to applicants with no teaching experience. The Project Match website (http://www.laccd.edu/project_match/) states that applicants must "have no paid college (2 or 4 year) professional teaching experience prior to applying or

during the course of the internship," and such restrictions are common to mentoring programs. Potential faculty members who may have received limited experience at the university level during the course of their graduate study but who could benefit from guidance regarding community college instruction are therefore excluded from such programs and have few options for gaining the training they need.

Thus, in many cases the questions asked by my department chair—who trains potential faculty members that need or desire preparation for teaching as they begin their careers, and is such training the responsibility of our colleges?—have no clear answer. Some programs exist at certain colleges, but they are often limited in scope, do not include many new or aspiring teachers who could benefit from formal guidance and training, and rarely involve direct training in instructional theory or methodology.

The most common term used in discussions of a variety of issues throughout the community college system at present is "student success." Yet if our greatest concern is truly the success of our students, we should take all available steps to ensure that our faculty is as well-trained and prepared as possible. Each year new, talented part-time instructors enter our classrooms for the first time, many of whom would benefit from additional training and experience that could help them to understand effective pedagogical and classroom management techniques in general and community college students in specific. If our goal is to ensure the success of all of our faculty members, and therefore the success of our students, we should consider assuming the responsibility for offering training to those new instructors who need or want it.

Local senates might choose to work with their faculty development programs and human resource offices to explore avenues for addressing this issue. A coordinated effort involving faculty expertise and administrative support would be necessary to establish and fund an organized approach to training new and potential part-time faculty. Creation of such a program might require significant commitments of time and resources, both of which are in short supply in our current environment. Nevertheless, local conversations about ways to provide training to new part-time instructors who need it are an important aspect of ensuring student success by hiring and where necessary developing the most effective and knowledgeable faculty possible. ∎

The Integrated Interview—Re-thinking the Faculty Hiring Process

DIANNA CHIABOTTI, CHAIR, BASIC SKILLS COMMITTEE
MICHELLE PILATI, VICE PRESIDENT

At the Academic Senate's Student Success: Basic Skills Across the Curriculum Institute, one breakout was on hiring faculty and what we can do to ensure that we hire the "right" faculty—whomever that might be. While a discussion of the how and what to do was planned, what emerged from this interactive breakout was a new concept—viewing the faculty hiring process, from beginning to end, like a really good course outline—integrated, purposeful, comprehensive, and explicitly planned. While the presenters and attendees explored this concept in some detail, an overview is probably needed to help the rest of you follow our train of thought.

Like a course outline of record, the interview process has many parts—parts that we often do not explicitly and thoughtfully link together. Prior to even developing the description for a hire, we should begin by developing clear objectives. We're always very good about explaining what we want a new hire to teach and how we want him or her to appreciate the diversity of our students. But how often are we clear about what it means to fit into our campus culture? And, more importantly, how well do we design the rest of the interview/hiring process to facilitate achieving our desired outcomes?

Developing objectives. The first things to consider and determine are your hiring objectives. Ideally, the discipline faculty or the department would meet and have a serious dialogue about who this person needs to be—both objectively and subjectively. What strengths does the new hire need to have? What particular challenges will he or she face? What perspective might be needed in the department? The development of the objectives should be the product of extensive dialogue such that the whole committee has a common understanding of what characteristics are desired in this new faculty member.

The next challenge is crafting the job announcement to capture the objectives. Aside from your college's required information on each faculty vacancy announcement, the discipline faculty/department must decide what minimum qualifications are expected from a candidate and what desired qualifications the ideal candidate possesses. To broaden the pool of applicants, you may only wish to have the standard minimum qualifications from the Discipline's List. Depending on the position, however, more rigorous minimum qualifications than stipulated by the List may be desired. If your new hire needs to have particular experience, a license or certificate in a particular area, or be bilingual, these supplemental criteria may be used. After

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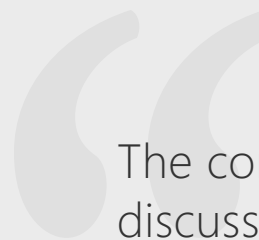
determining the minimum **required** qualifications, a determination of **desirable** qualifications should be made. Your desirables, as well as your minimum qualifications, should clearly connect to your objectives. In the context of the integrated interview, your "desirables" are the course content that supports and is necessary to achieve the course objectives. Committees should identify the desirables that, when teamed with the minimum qualifications, will result in a candidate that meets the characteristics of your ideal candidate.

Assessing the candidates—application materials. After establishing objectives and describing what you are looking for, the next step is determining how you will assess candidates in terms of the stated objectives. What should applicants submit? Once you have objectives and your announcement, you need to consider how you will evaluate your candidates—both on paper and in the actual interview. This is where we often lose that notion of "integration." What is wanted in a candidate is often not linked to the information the candidates submit or to the questions asked in the interview. Do you request that applicants submit answers to supplemental questions that are directly linked to the characteristics you desire in the person that is hired? When you request supplemental answers be submitted, be sure that the questions asked will give you the information you want. The committee should discuss ideal answers to the questions to help determine if the question will result in providing the information it wants to know about each candidate.

Assessing the candidates—interview questions. The next phase of "assessment" is determining what interview questions should be asked and what form the interview should take. After determining what each candidate will submit, the committee needs to develop interview questions. This process should be completed prior to reading the applications so that the content in the applicants' packets does not, even subconsciously, guide the questions you ask. If you tend to use standard questions from the interviews of the past, do you know if they were useful? Tracking the utility of elements of the hiring process makes a lot of sense—but do we do this? If not, doing so is highly encouraged. If a question has not been useful

> "The committee should discuss ideal answers to the questions to help determine if the question will result in providing the information it wants to know about each candidate.

in the past, it continuing to use it borders on inane. And if a question works out really well, shouldn't you record that for posterity? And then the interview questions—do they have anything to do with your objectives? As the questions for the interview are developed, the committee should refer back to the original list of objectives (i.e., characteristics you are looking for). What questions should you ask to continue building on the information you need from each applicant? Discuss if the question is written to get you the information you really want from the candidates. Are they sufficiently focused, yet open enough, to elicit the best potential answer? Every attempt should be made to ensure that questions you ask relate directly to the objectives you set for the faculty hire and thus should relate to the minimum and desired qualifications.

Further, you should explore the format of the interview process. Will the applicant complete a teaching demonstration? If so, you need to develop a prompt that addresses your objectives. Will candidates do another task, such as write a letter to a student that is unhappy with his or her grade? It is important to constantly consider what you need to know about a candidate and what a candidate needs

to be able to do to ensure that she or he is the best person for your college and meets the objectives.

After applications are received, campuses have many different processes for determining the completeness of the information received and if an applicant meets the minimum qualifications. The initial screening ideally culls out applications that are clearly incomplete but does not eliminate any applicant for other reasons that may not be substantive. While this is typically a Human Resources function, if there are concerns about the process, additional information should be sought—what were the reasons some applications were screened out at this early phase?

Before the committee reviews the applications, there should be a process in place to make sure that the criteria used during the paper screening process clearly links back to the objectives that were established. Is there a component of the paper process that begins delving beyond academic preparation and experience and starts exploring the candidate further? Are the candidates' answers to the supplemental questions assessed for content? The ideal answers that were developed with the questions should be used as a guide when reading the applications. Remember that the questions were developed to specifically assess the characteristics that were wanted in the ideal candidate. The candidates' responses should provide this information to the committee. Also, determine if some questions should be weighted more heavily than others. During this first screening phase, how many of the stated objectives are assessed? Are you careful to prioritize screening criteria in a manner that is both appropriately inclusive and exclusive? It is imperative that you are clear about your criteria so that you do not lose sight of your goal to hire the candidate that has the characteristics that you need and want. Some sort of rating form or assessment form is helpful in this process when it is completed by each committee member for each application. Every attempt should be made to have the assessment of each application be directly related to your already developed objectives. The committee should consider the objectives when making a determination about whom to interview. It is important to remember that you want the best person that meets your stated objectives; it might be better to interview someone

and further explore the person's qualifications if your have doubts.

Assessing the objectives—the interview. This is probably the most important assessment you make– this "method of evaluation" should be clear and systematic. It is important that the committee is able to focus on each interview and how the candidate meets the objectives or how the candidate does not. This is not the time to change objectives because you "really like" a candidate. You have engaged in a thoughtful process this far, so stay focused on what is needed in that department and at your college. Consider your interview process—is it designed to identify the candidate that really meets your objectives? Or is it so mechanical and planned—and predictable—that it yields little information? As the pace of hiring slows due to the current fiscal crisis, why not re-visit and perfect your processes? If we are looking at adding few faculty to our ranks in the years to come, why not ensure your process is designed to ensure the best hire possible? ■

> "Every attempt should be made to have the assessment of each application be directly related to your already developed objectives.

Interdisciplinary? What Were We Thinking?

WHEELER NORTH, SECRETARY

Have you ever been to the arcade where the water pistols are used to shuffle the horses along on a race? It seems like it is always the same two horses neck and neck for the win. If these two horses represented questions from the field regarding minimum qualifications, they would be named equivalencies and interdisciplinary. This article focuses on the latter of the two in a FAQ format.

Are interdisciplinary questions curriculum questions or minimum qualifications (MQ) questions?

Both—Typically these questions tend to spill into both areas. On one hand it is often challenging to understand what it means to meet the MQ of interdisciplinary, and on the other assigning a course to the interdisciplinary discipline is equally confusing.

How does someone meet the qualifications for interdisciplinary?

At a minimum the person must have a master's degree in one of the component disciplines and upper division or graduate coursework in one or more of the others. The qualification does not limit which component discipline must be the master's and it does not define how much coursework is needed beyond the master's. But it is a minimum qualification, so more or higher specificity is allowed.

Which disciplines can be included in the interdisciplinary?

While several of the master's disciplines in the Disciplines List do point to the interdisciplinary category, this was done because they are typically comprised of multiple discipline components. However, any two or more master's disciplines from the master's list may be included in an interdisciplinary course assignment. Thus a course on human moral development could be assigned to interdisciplinary studies with the components of humanities, anthropology, and history, thereby requiring a master's in one of these and coursework from one of the others. Curriculum committees are vested with the authority to best determine which components are appropriate for a given interdisciplinary assignment. Like any discipline assignment, this should be appropriate to the inherent nature of the course.

Can someone have a master's in Interdisciplinary?

No—At least not with that title because a degree so titled doesn't exist. While "interdisciplinary" is listed as a separate discipline, it is intended to be used in those cases where a college decides that faculty need to possess qualifications beyond a master's degree to teach a course so assigned. But there are exceptions, and therefore this listing is worded a little oddly. In the first part it provides for a "Master's in the interdisciplinary

> "Curriculum committees are vested with the authority to best determine which components are appropriate for a given interdisciplinary assignment.

area, OR…" There are seven disciplines listed with the wording "see Interdisciplinary Studies" which are inherently interdisciplinary master's degrees (Ecology, Ethnic Studies, Geography, Gerontology, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, and Women's Studies). Thus a course designed to prepare teachers to be qualified to teach in the physical sciences could be assigned to Physical Sciences OR the candidate could have a masters in one of the component disciplines such as physics or chemistry and upper division/graduate coursework in one of the others.

Can a course be assigned to interdisciplinary and cross listed?

Cross listing a course means that two or more faculty, each possessing different minimum qualifications, may teach that course. Assigning a course to interdisciplinary means that the faculty must possess qualifications from two or more disciplines. In one sense these two are opposites of each other because the former expands the pool of possible candidates and the latter reduces it.

Can someone be deemed qualified through an equivalency to interdisciplinary?

Yes—Although it might be a relatively complex analysis to get there. But, using the above example, a candidate possessing significant coursework and experience in physics, chemistry, and math could be deemed equivalent to a master's in physics and therefore also qualified in physical sciences because of coursework in the other areas.

What if we can't find someone that meets these qualifications?

If the course truly needs these qualifications, one option is to take a broader look at the overall program and see if there are other ways to organize the program structure so that no one course needs the more specialized interdisciplinary qualifications. It is also important to examine the motives for assigning courses to interdisciplinary. Just because someone has a Master's in drama/theatre arts with graduate coursework in economics doesn't mean he or she should assign a course to interdisciplinary to assure that no one else can teach it.

> "Assigning a course to interdisciplinary means that the faculty must possess qualifications from two or more disciplines.

Do persons possess California Community College lifetime teaching credentials qualified to teach an interdisciplinary assigned course?

Yes—As long as the subject areas they have credentials for meet two or more of the component disciplines in the interdisciplinary area. They may also meet the requirements by having a credential in one of the component areas and upper division/graduate course work in the other(s). It is not uncommon to find those possessing the lifetime credentials to have a rather eclectic mix of credentials. As mentioned above, courses should be assigned to interdisciplinary because the course needs it, not because the faculty needs it. However there are times where such a course was designed, the program needed it, and the credentialed faculty was conveniently available. Then that person retires! Unfortunately the solution here may require a deeper look into the program's organization to make hiring qualified faculty a viable possibility once that person retires.

Are you confused yet?

Sorry about that. A philosopher might argue that a good question inspires a good answer but a great question inspires more questions. Many of the questions we get about interdisciplinary issues are very specialized and are too detailed to be answered in a generic format such as this. Thus your Academic Senate Curriculum Committee Chair and Standards and Practices Committee Chair are always available to answer those more detailed questions as they come up. Please write to info@asccc.org ∎

Testimony to the Little Hoover Commission

JANE PATTON, ED. D., PRESIDENT

Note: The Little Hoover Commission (http://www.lhc. ca.gov/) is an "independent state oversight agency… whose mission is to investigate state government operations and—through reports, recommendations and legislative proposals—promote efficiency, economy and improved service." This year the Commission is considering ways to improve California Community Colleges. Below are excerpts from the testimony provided to the Commission by President Patton in April. The Commission posed several questions to those they invited to testify.

Q: What is the role of faculty in the governance of community colleges—local and state level?

A: In all of *higher* education, unlike the K-12 system, the faculty members join with administrators in what is commonly referred to as "shared" or "participatory" governance. How the shared governance plays out may vary depending on the state's regulations and laws, on the segment (two- and four- year institutions), or on the tradition and culture of the institution. In California, both laws and regulations establish the roles of community college faculty in college governance as active, contributing participants.

Education Code §70902 (b) (7) requires that "The board of governors … ensure … the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards."

Elsewhere in Education Code, the faculty, through their academic senates, are given responsibilities in such areas as the minimum qualifications of faculty (§87359), hiring policies (§87360), and degree requirements (§87615). Section 70901 establishes "Minimum standards governing procedures established by governing boards of community college districts to ensure faculty, staff, and students the right to participate effectively in district and college governance, and the opportunity to express their opinions at the campus level and to ensure that these opinions are given every reasonable consideration, and the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards."

The Board of Governors for California Community Colleges, through Title 5 regulations, grants authority to faculty in more than ten distinct areas. Here are a few citations that illustrate the role of faculty through the academic senates:

◆ The Governing Board shall adopt policies delegating authority and responsibility to its Academic Senate. (§53203)

Academic Senate means an organization whose primary function is to make recommendations with respect to academic and professional matters. (§53200)

◆ Section 53200 lists the specific areas of Academic Senate purview:

- Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites
- Degree & Certificate Requirements
- Grading Policies
- Educational Program Development
- Standards & Polices regarding Student Preparation and Success
- College governance structures, as related to faculty roles
- Faculty roles & involvement in accreditation process
- Policies for faculty professional development activities

- Processes for program review
- Processes for institutional planning & budget development
- Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon

- Section 53200 states that a District Governing Board is required to consult collegially with the Academic Senate and develop policies on academic and professional matters through either or both of two methods:

  - Rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate

  - Reach mutual agreement with the Academic Senate by written resolution, regulation, or policy

Local community college districts develop Board Policies which spell out the local agreements between the Board and the academic senate regarding governance responsibilities.

There are many examples of faculty exercising their responsibilities in the areas above. Here are just a few:

- Faculty develop new curriculum in all disciplines and recommend approval by the local board. They oversee all curriculum development and renewal through their curriculum committees, which are overseen by the academic senate.

- Faculty revise graduation requirements, such as requiring an ethnic studies or diversity course for graduation. At the state level, the Academic Senate recommended that the Board of Governors modify the state level graduation requirements such that in 2009, all graduating students had to complete freshman composition (e.g., English 1A) and Intermediate Algebra.

- Faculty play an integral role in college processes such as program review, accreditation self studies, and program initiation and discontinuance.

> "All colleges have participatory governance committees such as a college council, where faculty and administrators participate jointly in reaching the decisions of college.

All colleges have participatory governance committees such as a college council, where faculty and administrators participate jointly in reaching the decisions of college. The academic senate is an organization distinct from the union or faculty bargaining association. Senates focus only on academic and professional matters and not on issues related to bargaining. All community colleges in California have an academic senate, and nearly all have a union or bargaining association.

In addition to the fact that faculty work in their academic senates on myriad academic matters and that faculty participate on and often lead college-wide governance groups, many colleges have faculty serving as department or division chairs. These individuals retain faculty status and are often reassigned from some of their teaching responsibilities to lead operations of their department or division. These faculty chairs work alongside deans and vice presidents, providing the essential instructional perspective to management decisions.

At the state level, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is led by a 14 member Executive Committee elected by senate representatives from each of the colleges. Their responsibilities are to represent the faculty voice on academic and professional matters at the state level, including the Consultation Council, which provides advice to the Chancellor and the Board of Governors and an array

of advisory groups and initiatives. Examples of some efforts led by the Academic Senate are as follows:

◆ The implementation of the curricular changes mandated in SB 1440 to develop new associate degrees for transfer to CSU.

◆ The new system called C-ID (for "Course Identification") which assigns a common number to courses that match approved course descriptors for the purpose of articulation across institutions.

◆ The recommendation to improve the determination of course prerequisites, endorsed by the Board of Governors in March.

◆ The Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS), which brings together the faculty senate leadership from the UC, CSU, and the CCCs to oversee such academic matters as IGETC, the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum.

The roles of faculty via the academic senates in the 112 California Community Colleges are well established in Education Code, Title 5 regulations, and local policies. A passage from a book about college administration summarizes the overall role of faculty well:

The teacher in an institution of higher learning is an officer of the corporation…and not an employee or hired person in the usual sense. To misconceive the basic nature and role of the college or university faculty member threatens the whole concept and function of the higher learning…. The college or university is fundamentally different from business, military or governmental organizations. In a college or university, the faculty members are responsible members of a self-governing community whose relative autonomy is crucial to the nature and process of the higher learning. This point is extremely complex and very difficult to make clear, yet on its acceptance may hang the welfare and perhaps even the survival of institutions of higher learning…. the individual faculty member is a self respecting officer of the organization who after proper evaluation by senior members of the community becomes a permanent part of the organization. (Principles & Values for College & University Administrators, by Pulias & Wilbur, 1984).
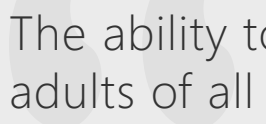
Q; How does the broad mission of California Community Colleges affect classroom instruction? What are the benefits and challenges of open access? Discuss the state's policies on adult education.

A: The broad mission for California community colleges makes classroom instruction the most challenging type of teaching—and the most rewarding. Our students are diverse in every way, and we faculty have to find ways to connect effectively with all types of students—students who vary in background, goals, preparation, commitment, etc. Beyond the classroom, the broad and varied missions create an environment where students can develop and find the paths that best suits them. The developmental learner can become a transfer-ready student, and the university-ready student can discover a career technical education (CTE) pathway that perhaps suits his or her interests and goals better than the educational course he or she originally had envisioned. A CTE student can further develop his or her job-related skills and/or prepare for study at a university. The structure of the community college brings all types of students to a college environment where they can then get what they need—be that basic skills, job skills, or preparation for transfer. The California community college is an environment prepared to meet the needs of students of all ages and goals.

Community college faculty in California are not only accustomed to the diversity of our students but are welcoming of the range of backgrounds, needs, and abilities. Faculty are committed to the promise of the Master Plan for Higher Education, which said that community colleges would serve all who can benefit. The benefits of open access far outweigh the challenges. Every other institution of postsecondary education is restrictive in admissions. Community colleges are the only opportunity for postsecondary education and a second (or only) chance for a large segment of society. While colleges always have and will continue to serve those who are already well prepared for college and economically advantaged,

serving the rest of our community is an important part of our mission and one which not only benefits the individual but also the society.

The list of success stories from students who say that going to community college changed their lives is long. Sometimes students only need a few courses to get a promotion at work. Sometimes if they come for one or two classes, they end up staying and earning a degree. The data that suggest that although X students enrolled only a fraction earn a degree often provide incomplete information. Did each student who enrolled plan to earn a degree or transfer? Did the student take a few classes, then leave to start a family and return a couple of years later? Did a student take a few classes and then decide to go to another college to finish? Or, as is the case in urban areas, is the student simultaneously enrolled in more than one college and not completing at one college counted as a failure? Because our students are not traditional, residential, full-time students, they are more transient than university students. While we know that evidence is growing to suggest that students would do better to attend full time rather than part time, and while finding ways to provide incentives for such behavior for many students is

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logical, it is important to realize the complex nature of community college students, who cannot be compared with the 18 year old attending a university full time. If the State of California is to meet the projected needs for an educated citizenry, it is critical that that the educational pipeline be open at every entry point. Only community colleges can do that.

However, the problem of underprepared students arriving at colleges needing multiple years of remediation has grown, and faculty have seen the effects. These students require support services such as counseling and tutoring; they require several semesters or years to catch up, and in the meantime many drop out. There are many challenges in serving the wide range of basic skills learners in our colleges, and an array of solutions are needed to address them. An additional effect we have seen is that because faculty have not been able to attach appropriate prerequisite courses to the transfer level courses (such as requiring completion of English 1A before taking a history course where a research paper is assigned), students have been enrolling in certain classes prematurely, lacking the needed knowledge and skills to succeed. They then drop out, repeat the class, or fail. All of these behaviors are bad for the student, the college, and the state. Fortunately, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recently succeeded in convincing the Board of Governors to modify the requirements for applying prerequisites, and it is our hope that students will be given a better signal about the preparation needed before enrolling in the most challenging courses. We will not see the effects of this change immediately, however.

The ability to serve adults of all ages is a strength in our system because the students can have a place to come to change careers or begin a career, for example after raising a child or serving in the military. The great range of abilities is a particular challenge, however, and there are discussions underway between the California Department of Education and the community colleges about the adult education function and where it should reside. Community colleges, if funded appropriately, can serve the range of adult needs well, as evidenced in a number of successful programs in the state. Presently the local college districts have the option to coordinate with

K-12 districts and determine who can best serve that population.

Faculty believe it is vital to remember why the name of our colleges changed from "junior" to "community." It is because we serve our local communities and respond to their needs, whether they need workers for a new industry or whether the large immigrant population needs to learn English. The function of "junior colleges" remains in our mission—to prepare students for universities. But we are much more than that.

Q: Does the system need more uniformity/ centralization? What are current initiatives?

A: There are several state initiatives underway whose aim it is to centralize and coordinate the 72 community college districts. These will establish some level of "uniformity" in curriculum and promise to identify and label commonalities and simplify movement between CCCs and the CSUs. Efforts are also underway to centralize some functions of the institutions. However control needs to be at the local level to ensure responsiveness and sensitivity to local needs. We are community colleges—and, therefore, control must rest in the community.

The initiative getting the most attention today is the implementation of SB 1440. It was signed into law in September and requires each college to develop new 60-unit associate degrees designed to transfer to CSU, which will grant the student CSU admissions priority and guarantee upper division status as well as a promise to complete the baccalaureate degree with 60 additional units. The state Academic Senate determined that although the bill did not require coordination of efforts, the students (and state) would be better served with a coordinated response. As a result, the faculty from CCCs and CSU are developing a "Transfer Model Curriculum" or TMC in each of the transfer majors. The TMC establishes a common structure for a community college transfer major and seeks to identify common community college coursework for a given transfer major so that a student can prepare for multiple CSUs with a given course of study. After just a few months' work, four TMCs are being used as the basis of new associate

degrees, and more than ten more are in the pipeline. Associate degrees aligned with a TMC will mean that students will have a clearer pathway and faculty will be assured about the level of preparation of transfer students. While it is not required that colleges follow the TMC, it appears that most are choosing to do so.

Several pieces of legislation over the years have called for "common course numbering" in higher education. Although it is evident after a cursory examination of the intricacies of curriculum that switching every course to using the same number is impossible, what can be done is to add a supra number to existing courses so that the supra number tells the student that completing a course at college X will be accepted in lieu of an equivalent course at college or university Y. Previous numbering systems (Course Articulation Number-CAN-System and CSU's Lower Division Transfer Pattern—LDTP) have been abandoned and a new system is currently in place: the Course Identification Numbering System or C-ID (www.c-id.net). The faculty from the three segments are implementing the new system, which is functioning as the foundation for implementing the new associate degrees for transfer. The heart of its success is the involvement and commitment of faculty to develop and implement the system.

Another effort under preliminary development is called CCC Assess, which is identifying assessment for placement instruments in mathematics, English, reading, and English as a Second Language (ESL) for centralized delivery. Centralized delivery at the system level can offer a reduced cost to colleges and prevent students from having to re-take an assessment if they attend a second college. While colleges will not be required to use these assessments, the financial advantages and benefits to students will be very attractive to colleges, incentivizing greater commonality in the assessment tests that they use. In addition, efforts to improve data collection and transcript information are being developed through the Chancellor's Office.

In short, there are important and beneficial ways to coordinate and encourage uniformity. These systems above do that while providing appropriate local flexibility. ∎