

# *Vocational Faculty Involvement In Local Senates*

## *The Academic Senate*

For California Community Colleges

Draft for discussion only

Prepared by the Vocational Education Committee  
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### **Vocational Faculty Involvement In Local Berates**

In 1989 the Vocational Education Committee surveyed all community colleges to attempt to determine the involvement of the vocational faculty in the activities of the local academic senates. Fifty-six senate presidents responded. From senate presidents, we obtained information about how faculty are selected to serve as the representative group at their respective colleges. This representative group is known by different names. It might be the executive council, executive committee, senate or another name depending on the college. The information sought was how a faculty member is chosen to serve on this committee, the amount of involvement by vocational faculty, and whether some kind of involvement was required by the senate constitution or whether involvement was the result of choice. If there was vocational involvement, we wanted to know which vocational areas were involved. We also asked if the senate had a vocational education committee. (see appendix A)

The results were not very surprising. Smaller colleges, as a rule, had a lower percentage of vocational faculty on the representative committee than larger colleges. Smaller colleges tended to elect faculty at large while larger colleges tended to elect by department, although some members may be elected at large. For those colleges with vocational faculty representation, it appears to be concentrated primarily in the business and health science areas. Very few had representation from trade and technical areas. Most senate presidents reported a lack of interest by vocational faculty in serving on the senate, with exceptions of course. Some vocational faculty do become involved and have served their senates in leadership roles. Only four senates stated that they had vocational education committees as regular Senate committees. These senates, all at larger colleges, reported good vocational faculty involvement in senate activities. The committee surveyed members of the vocational education liaison committee. This may be a biased group because they are or have been involved in the local senates, however, it was the only group to whom the survey could be mailed directly. From the vocational faculty, we sought

information about their perceptions of factors which may hinder or encourage vocational faculty involvement. Several issues were listed and the committee members were asked to respond on a scale of 1 - 5 as to their rating of the importance of the issues surveyed. (see Appendix B)

From the viewpoint of the vocational faculty, the most important factors hindering their involvement are the number of clock hours spent in the classroom and when the meetings are scheduled, followed closely by flexibility of hours. It is interesting to note that faculty did not want compensation to serve on the senate. The majority did not want substitutes for their classes, but reassigned time would have been helpful for slightly more than half the respondents. About half reported other committee assignments to be a factor. Vocational faculty are more likely to team teach or share facilities and equipment which requires more departmental meetings for planning and coordination. Vocational faculty, are also required to serve on advisory committees. These assignments may leave little time for senate activities.

The results of the survey can be helpful for senates wishing to increase vocational faculty involvement. The following recommendations may prove useful in increasing vocational faculty involvement:

- 1) election by discipline/department/division
- 2) establishment of a vocational education committee
- 3) meetings scheduled at a time convenient for the faculty

The survey results clearly showed a relationship between the method of election and the number of vocational faculty involved. The increased number of clock hours required means vocational faculty are not as well known out of their area. When an election is only “at large”, the chances of electing a proportional number of vocational faculty drop. Election by discipline/department/division will, of necessity, increase involvement.

Four colleges reported having active vocational education committees. Although all four colleges are relatively large, 100 or more full time faculty, they also report active vocational faculty involvement. The membership of the vocational education committee does not need to be limited to senators serving on the elected committee. Other interested faculty can be invited to join. This interest in the needs of vocational education can help dispell the faculty perception that the senate is not interested in vocational education. A vocational education committee also provides a way of introducing faculty to the senate as well as stimulating interest in senate activities. The third recommendation involves the scheduling of meetings. Many vocational classes are lab classes which require more time in the classroom. Meetings scheduled at the traditional times may be difficult to attend. Perhaps a flexible meeting schedule could be established so the faculty member would not always miss the same class section. It is difficult to find substitutes and faculty are reluctant to miss class and hinder the students education Flexibility of scheduling also shows an interest on the part of the senate to include participation from all areas of the college. Many interesting comments were offered by the participating faculty. The comments ranged from support of senate activities to the feeling that vocational faculty were not nearly wanted by the local senates. If senates wish to increase participation by vocational faculty, particularly trade and industry faculty, senates need to be aware of these perceptions and actively show desire to increase participation by all faculty groups.

Comments about factors which interfere with senate participation appear to fall into the following categories:

- 1) The need to serve on advisory committees
- 2) Participation in professional associations
- 3) Long blocks of lab time and odd hours

In addition, some faculty indicated the following perceptions which discourage vocational education faculty involvement:

- 1) They believe that they are considered second class citizens
- 2) They believe that the senate is not interested in vocational concerns

Right or wrong, these perceptions do exist. The fact that they exist indicates the need for local senates to look at activities and work at changing the perceptions and increasing participation by all faculty. With increased faculty responsibility as a result of AB 1725, every faculty member, regardless of discipline, should be committed to shaping his/her destiny through collegial involvement.

ACADEMIC SENATE  
VOCATIONAL FACULTY PARTICIPATION SURVEY RESULTS

**Appendix A**  
Responses By Senate Presidents About Elected  
Senate/Governor Composition

**55 Participants answered the following questions.  
The percentages of the responses are listed below:**

1. The number of full time faculty

Less than 20	1	2%
20 - 39	4	7%
40 - 59	4	7%
80 - 99	5	9%
100 -- 199	19	34%
200 - More	18	33%

2. The number of full time faculty that teach vocational courses

Less than 5	1	2%
5 - 15	13	24%
16 - 25	7	13%
26 - 35	9	16%
36 - 50	7	13%
More than 50	16	39%

3. Must these seats be filled by vocational faculty

Yes	- 22	40%
No	- 30	54%

4. Designated seats for vocational members on Senate

Yes	- 20	48%
No	- 23	52%

5. Does Senate have a vocational education committee

Yes	- 6	11%
No	- 49	89%

## Appendix B

### Response By Vocational Education Faculty

**48 Participants answered the following questions.  
The percentages of the responses are listed below:**

1. The number of vocational faculty on the elected Senate:

0 - 6%	6 - 6%
1 - 10%	7 - 6%
2 - 25%	8 - 2%
3 - 4%	10 - 4%
4 - 6%	Not answered: 8%
5 - 10%	

2. Are seats designated to be filled by vocational faculty?

Yes - 42%  
No - 48%

3. Is there a willing and available pool of faculty seeking elected seats?

Yes - 37%  
No - 50%  
Undecided - 13%

4. Are you now or have you ever served on the Senate?

Yes - 85%  
No - 8%  
Unanswered - 6%

5. The factors affecting vocational faculty involvement:

Issues	1	2	3	4	5
	Very Important		Moderately Important		Unimportant
a. Number if clock hours in classroom	64%	23%	14%	2%	2%
b. When meetings are scheduled	44%	27%	17%	4%	4%
c. Other committee assignments	14%	25%	17%	4%	4%
d. Reassigned time	25%	14%	17%	8%	27%
e. Additional compensation	12%	10%	21%	17%	37%
f. Substitute coverage for assignment	23%	24%	10%	12%	23%
g. Flexibility if these hours	27%	14%	23%	10%	12%
h. Are all faculty required to participate in college activities	6%	12%	10%	8%	8%

**55 Senate Presidents And 48 Vocational Faculty Were Asked  
The Following Questions. The Combined Results Are Listed Below.  
103 Participants answered the following questions.  
The percentages of the responses are listed below:**

1. The process of election to Senate.

Total responses to this question: 103

a. by discipline/department	44%	
b. at large	36%	
c. both (a) and (b)	50%	
d. other (please explain in comments section)		8%
e. don't know	6%	

2. Number of vocational faculty on elected Senate

1 - 12%	7 - 5%
2 - 28%	8 - 4%
3 - 7%	10 - 2%
4 - 10%	12 - 3%
5 - 7%	15 - 1%
Don't know - 6%	

## **Summary Of Comments Of Local Senate Activities On Vocational Education**

If our nurses were not active on campus we would not know there were any Voc Ed People around. You are right! The folks in Voc Ed do feel they are not well represented. (Neglected, in fact.) We have always had good participation by our Vocational Faculty on Senate Committees and Activities. A number of our college committees have designated seats for Vocational and Academic Faculty.

Most Voc Tech people don't get involved because they are "up to their gills" in their own departments. (Stay current, advisory meeting, industry contacts, etc.)

Unfortunately, many academic area Senators do not understand vocational education.

State-wide they do not understand the type of training it takes to become proficient in our fields. Way too much emphasis on degrees instead of work experience.

Voc Ed received as "second class" instruction. Academic Senate "controlled" by old boys! So called academic area not Voc Ed.

Will be more important than before potentially both in positive and negative sense, i.e., Voc Ed can contribute by participating or be left out and cry later.

Senate is beginning to address issues of substance at this time.

Need to be there to "protect" Voc Ed interests.

On the local level the effect is minimal. On the state level where policy decisions are made, Senate activities are very critical.

Effects are seldom dramatic. The fact that we aren't involved just contributes to our invisibility and to a separation of the school into transfer and Voc Ed cultures. Bad for the students, for the school, and, ultimately, for society.

Beginning to take notice of Voc Ed needs. Voc Ed Committee of Senate has been increasingly active and this heightens the Senates' awareness and support.

Voc Ed Faculty need to identify themselves with the college more to gain support of their issues from Senate.

A lot. It is very important to have vocational faculty represented at local and state level.

Directly related to individual's participation in the Senate.

Supportive.

Minimal .

We have a very active Senate affecting the entire college. I have without success tried to involve more vocational faculty in the process.

Local Senate is very supportive. President is vocational and has been for years.

We are becoming more involved and vocal in the process of maintaining and revising curriculum and staffing of occupational programs.