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SENATE ROSTRUM

ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEWSLETTER

THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Perspectives on 1143 and 1440

MICHELLE PILATI, PRESIDENT

Do you speak ASCCC? Involvement in senate activities at the state level seems to alter one's speech and thinking. I never realized how strange we can sound until I saw a man's face as he watched me on the phone while I was having my oil changed. I was probably saying something along the lines of "Are we ready for the DIG? Have you contacted the members of the FDRG? When is that ICC meeting?" Acronyms once were the norm; now numbers seem to be. "Did you read AB 515? Can you believe what happened to SB 292?" And, today, the numbers are most commonly are confronted with are 1143 and 1440.

I mentioned that thinking also changes—or, rather, it should. When considering policies, practices, and legislation, one needs to move beyond the local conversations. The question is not "What does this do for me?" but rather "What is the impact on the system?" and "How will this play out in 112 local contexts?" This requires one to recognize the diverse ways that anything can be received. In the interest of protecting the vulnerable, one should always consider things from the perspective of the local senate that does not feel empowered, that worries about inappropriate influences from its board or administration. As we all know, we have a diverse system with colleges that are healthy and those that are simply not. As a consequence, a regulation change that would have little impact on one college might create chaos at another.

The acronyms continue to play a big role in the work we do and help simplify our speech—and confuse the uninitiated. Today's numerical concerns are the focus in this issue of the *Rostrum*—a consideration of different perspectives on the implementation of Senate Bill 1143 (Liu, 2010) and Senate Bill

1440 (Padilla, 2010). SB 1143 was legislation that began as a change in our funding that would have had devastating effects on our already financially devastated colleges and ended as legislation that established a task force charged with making recommendations intended to increase success at the colleges. SB 1440 established associate degrees for transfer and was a much-improved version of a bill from the prior year that did little to impact transfer but did much to interfere with local curriculum (Assembly Bill 440, Beall, 2009). While AB 440 mandated that community colleges eliminate their "local graduation requirements" and did little more, SB 1440 offers real benefits to students in addition to forcing us to remove those pesky local graduation requirements. Who needs information and/or cultural competency in today's world?

Over the past few months, discussions about the draft recommendations from the Student Success Task Force have begun. Prior to a draft intended for vetting, those who attended the task force meetings were given copies of earlier versions, and rumor has it that someone posted unreleased documents on Facebook. As a consequence, discussion about recommendations that both are and are not in the document we are considering today began some time ago. The final draft recommendations were formally released on September 30, 2011. Prior to and since that date, presentations of the recommendations have been happening across the state in various venues. I would encourage faculty to read the recommendations carefully and completely. And, after you have digested their contents, read them again. You will likely see something new each time you revisit the lengthy document. I was speaking to an administrator who had read it just once. As his college is in the unique position of currently assessing and orienting all students, he was not concerned

about one recommendation (2.2) that may be viewed as an insurmountable challenge by many. As our conversation continued, he came to realize that a whole population of students his college currently serves would be no more (the so-called “exempt” students) as course offerings are driven by the educational plans of matriculated students and that there would be, if the recommendations were implemented in their current form, high stakes consequences associated with not following a prescribed education plan. It is critical that local faculty develop an understanding of the recommendations so that the ultimate faculty response is an appropriate one. What elements can we support and what elements would we like to see changed? Are there better ways to achieve the stated goals?

We begin our exploration of 1143 with a task force member’s view of what transpired. Jane Patton, past Academic Senate President and task force member, shares the challenge of being on the task force—especially of being a faculty member on the task force. As an audience member, I can report that there was nothing easy about being a task force member; I was honestly thankful to not be one. The next article, “Faster is Not Better, Better is Better”, addresses one of the recommendations—or rather two, depending on how you look at it. There is much emphasis on doing better by our basic skills students—or, rather, doing what we do faster. Regardless of your view on the topic, I hope we can all agree that one size does not fit all and that it is critical that we have options available to meet the needs of all students. Interestingly, as David Morse quotes elements of the recommendations, we see some disconnects in the recommendations that may have not been readily apparent on that first read; the recommendations do nothing to increase resources for counseling, yet all students are to receive a full array of matriculation services and we are to monitor their progress and “A student who is unable to declare a program of study by the end of their second term should be provided counseling and other interventions.” Next, the Smiths (Beth and Phil—no relation) demonstrate the positive effect of having a reliable funding source for improving instruction. Looking at the numbers, one can easily make the case for dollars dedicated to

improving basic skills outcomes as we can show that this truly does work. Recommendation 5.1. proposes changes in Title 5 that would impact supplemental instruction. In “Separating Learning Assistance and Tutoring ” Ray Sanchez considers the current regulations regarding these forms of supplemental instruction and provides a context for considering the related recommendation. And, finally in our consideration of 1143, we visit issues related to noncredit and full-time faculty.

The need to share different views of SB 1440 prompted this themed *Rostrum* and takes me back to what things look like from the system or state level perspective. At a hearing on the implementation of 1440 back in July, an array of concerns about 1440 were expressed—concerns that those intimately involved with the implementation of 1440 were very much aware of, but concerns that might not be universally known. With that in mind, the vision of a *Rostrum* dedicated to varied perspectives emerged. As fate would have it, 1143 grew larger and larger, leading to a less thorough exploration of 1440 and this legislation-based *Rostrum*.

SB 1440 and 1143 both share the challenge of the “devil being in the details.” We have yet to get into the details of 1143, and we may have significant issues with major components of the recommendations. With SB 1440, we are grappling with the timeline. We had a bill signed one year ago with an expectation of full implementation the next year (i.e., now). While



SB 1440 and 1143
both share the
challenge of the “devil
being in the details.”

we were able to use the Transfer Model Curriculum (TMC) process to expedite the curricular element of implementation, the more important element is still in flux: what does this mean for students? How is this going to play out? Stephanie Dumont's article explores what this could look like and what we hope will happen. Elizabeth Atondo points out what is needed to really make this all that it can be: universal acceptance of TMC-aligned degrees with degree completion meaning more than just "the CSU will get you out in 60," but rather "you're done with all lower division work." Community colleges are trying to decide what degrees to develop and may be forced to make judgments with incomplete information; the process of individual CSUs making determinations of "similar" is proceeding at a pace that is inconsistent with the hard and fast deadline that the community colleges have had to meet. We can merely hope that the final outcome is worth the wait. David Morse addresses the importance of a community college degree with integrity—a topic worth consideration

not only in light of 1440, but in a world where "completion" is valued above all else. Let's make sure that we are seeking to see something of worth completed. And, finally, we offer an explanation of what is probably the most highly politicized aspect of this whole process—the decision by the CSU's Board of Trustees to permit waivers of the CSU's American History and Institutions (AI) requirement. The CSU Senate Chair, Jim Postma, explains what transpired and puts the Board's decision in context. We have had many queries from our own faculty regarding this topic as CSU faculty sought support from CCC faculty in their efforts to prevent the Board's action. I hope the article addresses any remaining concerns and confusion.

While we can't prevent aspects of what we do from being legislated, we can act as agents of change who strive to direct implementation efforts in the manner that best serves our students and maintains the quality of our courses, programs, and degrees. ■

In Memory of Edith Conn (1930 – 2011)

Edith Conn served for over 27 years on the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate:

1973-74: South Representative

1974-76: Secretary

1976-77: President

1977-78: Past President

1978-86: South Representative

1986-90: Representative

1990-2000: Area C Representative

Faculty Participation on the Student Success Task Force 2011

JANE PATTON, ACADEMIC SENATE PAST PRESIDENT AND TASK FORCE MEMBER

Recently the Academic Senate forwarded to local senates the draft recommendations from the Student Success Task Force. They are also available at <http://www.cccco.edu/ChancellorsOffice/TaskForceonStudent-Success/tabcid/1894/Default.aspx>

The Board of Governors (BOG) established this task force in response to Senate Bill (SB) 1143, which was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger in September 2010. The purpose of the task force was to develop recommendations for the BOG of strategies to improve the colleges and the system such that student success would be strengthened. The task force convened in January 2011 and met monthly until October.

Fortunately, the task force included five faculty members representing different geographic and disciplinary groups. They included Cynthia Rico-Bravo, a counselor from San Diego Mesa College; Rich Hansen, a professor of mathematics at De Anza College and the president of CCCI, the Independent unions organization; David Morse, a professor of English at Long Beach City College; and me as the president of the Academic Senate (until June 2011) and a professor in communication studies at Mission College. In addition, one appointee from the BOG was Manuel Baca, who is a trustee at Mt. San Antonio College but is also a professor of political science at Rio Hondo College. While it would be impossible to have faculty from all our programs, among these representatives we had the perspectives of student services, basic skills, transfer, and bargaining. So during the nine months of deliberations, five faculty members were at the table. In addition, the task force had more than 15 other

members, including representatives from the BOG, college administration, the business community, K-12, and two university professors. A full list of task force members is available on the website cited above.

In this article, I'd like to give you the faculty perspective about our experiences regarding the process as well as the outcome.

One faculty representative summarized the faculty role in this way: "The faculty on the task force made efforts to shape the conversations, and although we may not have been 100 % successful in how the recommendations should read, we did put up strong arguments." Another said, "In the end I believe that we did make a difference. We had to insist, and insist repeatedly in some cases, on our voices being respected, but I am certain that the draft report would look very different if we had not been there."

The task force released its recommendations on September 30, 2011, and during October task force members and representatives from the Chancellor's Office are making around 15 presentations to groups across the state to seek their feedback. In addition, the Chancellor's Office website provides space for comments from statewide constituents. If you are reading this article before November 8, we urge you to register your thoughts about the draft recommendations, either individually at <http://studentsuccess.ideascale.com/> or with a group on campus such as the senate, union, or your program. Input will be reviewed by the task force in November and will inform the final recommendations to the BOG in January.

The Academic Senate has closely followed every step of the task force and directed its Futures Ad Hoc Committee to devote its attention to the issues that arose and the topics explored over the last year. For example, the Futures Ad Hoc Committee read a great deal about performance based funding, about strategies being employed in other states, and about the literature on improving student success and provided the faculty on the task force with insight, resources, and guidance.

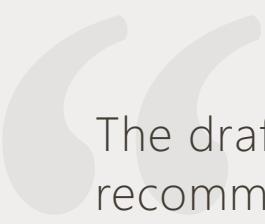
THE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2011)

The draft recommendations could lead to significant changes in the way colleges operate and span such topics as enrollment management and priorities, course sequencing, and student behaviors. It is not hyperbole to say that the recommendations could alter the very mission of community colleges. The faculty on the task force are quick to point out that the draft recommendations are evidence that faculty perspectives did not prevail on a number of fronts, so readers should not assume that the proposals necessarily reflect

our personal or organizational positions. As is the case with all task forces, there was heated discussion and a range of viewpoints advanced and no one perspective won on every battle.

The recommendations propose an array of changes either in the California Code of Regulations (i.e., Education Code, requiring legislation to modify), Title 5 (which is under BOG control), or changes to local policies and practices. In some cases, the BOG already had legislation in the pipeline on topics at least tangentially related to the recommendations (e.g., AB 743 on assessment and AB 1056 on E-transcripts, both of which were signed into law in October), and it is likely that more bills have already been drafted that are not yet public (with some positions that faculty would support and others that we would oppose).

Although it is easy to be critical of aspects of the recommendations, there are strengths in the report, some of which advance positions of the Academic Senate in areas such as remediation, prerequisites, and assessment. One faculty member said, “If implemented well, many recommendations could indeed strengthen what we do in our colleges and systemwide. But of course, the devil is in the details.”



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FACULTY PERCEPTIONS

The faculty on the task force agreed that there were things that the task force should have done differently. For one thing, we wished there had been clear agreement in the group about its guiding principles and an understanding about what would constitute a final recommendation; sometimes the group voted, other times not. Sometimes sufficient time was allotted to reach consensus; other times, not. There were periods when hidden agendas were evident and when it appeared that there were predetermined outcomes. Sometimes the view of one individual controlled the will of the group, and had we taken more time for consensus building, that minority perspective might not have won. The task force should have done more to really test the consensus around the recommendations.

A positive outcome—in discussions as well as recommendations—was the recognition by all around the table that student services is an essential component

of strengthening student success, and because of that the group would have benefitted from having more student services personnel on the task force: We had one counselor, one classified staff from student services, one administrator, and another member had previously served as a student services dean. It appears that once local discussions begin following any BOG action, each college will look at its delivery of support services as well as classroom instruction. Of course, the sad irony is that services have been slashed systemwide.

Various members, both faculty and administrators, felt strongly that the recommendations should forcefully highlight the tremendous fiscal crisis in our system, yet the topic is downplayed in the draft document. The state has not fulfilled its obligation to public colleges, yet it expects dramatic change in student outcomes. That suggestion, on the surface, is pretty bizarre. However, that said, everyone would agree that there are some changes that can occur with minimal cost. Some recommendations will likely never be implemented due to cost implications.

For several months, the task force spent most of its meeting time hearing presentations from scholars and leaders from other states about success strategies and performance based funding. The faculty representatives were frustrated with the large expenditure of time spent passively listening rather than beginning discussion and debate about possible recommendations months sooner, and they are united in wishing much more time could have been allotted to wrestling with the difficult issues. As a result, the time pressures at the end of deliberations caused rushed or insufficiently discussed conclusions.

When the task force broke into small groups, each group always had at least one faculty member, and we felt we had a positive influence on those discussions. A faculty member put it this way: "Most of the people around the table were capable and sincere. When we finally got to discussions, some of them were very interesting. Most of us were open with each other, and the majority did seem to give real consideration to each other's viewpoints." Faculty as well as other group members had a number of opportunities to suggest changes in early draft recommendations, and many of the suggestions were indeed incorporated.

While the task force included student representation, there has not yet been enough student input, so it will be vital to ensure that students' voices are included in the feedback about the draft recommendations, many of which will have a direct effect on them.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Because of the far-reaching implications of the recommendations, the Academic Senate Plenary Session in November will devote a general session and several breakouts to this topic. In addition, resolutions have been drafted on topics from basic skills pedagogy to noncredit offerings to categorical programs. We hope that faculty take the time before the recommendations are finalized to register their reactions both online and through the Plenary discussions and resolution process. The task force will meet in November, the week following Plenary Session, so any new Academic Senate positions can provide direction to the task force members. Please note that this summary barely scratches the surface of the recommendations, which demand extended dialog and thoughtful consideration of potential ramifications.

One faculty member summarized the faculty role in the following way: "We defended the interests of faculty and students to the best of our ability. We need (everyone's) input, in all forms possible, to take back to the task force when discussions continue. And the task force needs to hear it directly from (local faculty). It's not over. We are not done fighting on the recommendations we are not comfortable with."

Regardless of how the final recommendations to the BOG will be written, to me the most critical outcome will be how the implementation occurs—both at the state and local level. The Chancellor has said that he hopes the recommendations stimulate local dialog and change, and that is an appropriate aspiration. As always, both local and state-level faculty will need to be vigilant about their leadership regarding any policy change. Title 5 §53200 makes it clear that "standards or policies regarding student preparation and success" is a responsibility of the academic senate, but that will only remain true if all faculty ensure it is practiced. ■

Faster is Not Better; Better is Better

DAVID MORSE, SECRETARY

During one of the meetings of the SB 1143 Student Success Task Force, as the task force was engaged in a debate regarding one of the proposed recommendations, one of the members stated directly, “What we are doing here is trying to find ways to get students through faster.” While I do not believe that most of the task force members explicitly shared this view, the remark highlighted a general premise that not only appeared at other points during the task force deliberations but has also become a common assumption in many discussions of education both statewide and throughout the country: Speed is good, and the more quickly we can move students through our programs and our institutions, the better off everyone will be.

The prevalence of the “faster is better” philosophy is obvious in numerous discussions and positions regarding curriculum and educational practices. Arguments regarding excess units, enrollment priorities, student advisement, program and degree development, and basic skills instruction all frequently adopt this assumption as a basis for their positions. In doing so, the advocates for this philosophy privilege speed over both academic quality and academically reliable data. The potential damage to students from decisions or changes based on this philosophy is frightening.

BASIC SKILLS DELIVERY

Current discussions of developmental education frequently involve the concept of acceleration. The standard claim, which is almost always supported by research from a paper written by Bailey, Jeong, and Cho¹, is that students who are placed into

long developmental sequences of English, math, and reading tend to drop out along the way, even if they pass the classes they do take. The data in the Bailey, Jeong, and Cho paper does support this claim. However, many follow-up studies to this report and curricular decisions based on those studies have rushed to the conclusion that the problem is simply the length of the sequence without further analysis of the reasons that students drop out. Such studies often claim that long instructional sequences have too many “exit points,” or too many opportunities for students to become frustrated and drop out, and they therefore assume that the solution is to shorten the sequence.

Certainly students should not be subjected to developmental sequences that are longer than necessary, and many of the programs that fall under the heading of acceleration include potentially valid and useful approaches to basic skills instruction. However, the a priori assumption that the root of student success issues in basic skills lies only in the length of the sequence is deeply misguided: students might fail to complete a developmental sequence for many reasons. Lack of proper pre-requisites or prerequisite enforcement, academic difficulties in related areas (such as a student struggling in math due to problems with reading), severe lack of preparation for college work in terms of both academic and study skills, personal or family circumstances, and a host of other factors may also contribute to the low completion and semester-to-semester retention rates in developmental courses. All that is certain is that the length of the sequence is far from the only explanation for this problem, and thus proposed solutions that assume the number of levels in the sequence as the cause of student difficulties without further evidence are inherently flawed.

¹ Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S. (2010). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. *Economics of Education Review* 29, 255–270.

In addition, while some students may benefit from courses presented in accelerated time frames—for example, half-semester classes intended to allow students to complete two levels of the sequence in a single semester—such a structure may actually hinder the academic achievement of others. An accelerated developmental design may exacerbate the problems with time constraints faced by many of our students: when a course moves twice as fast as normal, students must do twice as much work in any given week. What might have been a manageable reading assignment in a two week period becomes an unreasonable demand in just one week for a student with a job and with family responsibilities, and such a student will likely either continue the class without completing the required work, thus increasing the likelihood of a substandard grade, or become frustrated and drop the class altogether. Without taking into consideration the realities of our students' lives, accelerated programs have the potential to set them up for failure.

Yet, despite arguments that other factors should be considered in redesigning or reconsidering basic skills delivery, many individuals and groups continue to press for speed as the primary aspect of basic skills revision. Such an attitude is evident in the SB 1143 Task Force Draft Recommendations published on September 30, 2011, which include a proposed “alternative funding system” for basic skills designed to provide financial incentives for colleges to move students through the curriculum more quickly. When speed is the driving force in curricular discussions, proposals like this one that could so dramatically place quality in a secondary role are almost inevitable.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS: NO “WANDERING AROUND THE CURRICULUM”

The push to move students through the curriculum more quickly is not limited to basic skills; in April 2011, the Community College Research Center published a paper titled “Get with the Program: Accelerating Community College Students’ Entry into and Completion of Programs of Study.”² This

Without taking into consideration the realities of our students' lives, accelerated programs have the potential to set them up for failure.

report states that “Research suggests that individuals presented with many options often do not make good decisions, and there is evidence that community colleges could be more successful in helping students enter and complete a program of study if they offered a more limited set of program options with clearly defined requirements and expected outcomes” (p. 1). In other words, we allow students too much freedom, and they would be better served if we limited their options and forced them to choose a program of study immediately upon or shortly after they enter our institutions.

The Student Success Task Force Draft Recommendations promote the same philosophy: Recommendation 2.5 states that we should “encourage students to declare a program of study upon admission and require declaration by the end their second term.” The draft recommendations go on to say that “Declaring a program of study is much more specific than declaring an educational goal... A student who is unable to declare a program of study by the end of their second term should be provided counseling and other interventions to assist them in education planning and exploring career and program options. If these interventions fail to meet their desired end, students should lose enrollment priority after their third term.” In other words, we would force our 17 and 18 year-old students to declare a career goal and a focus for their education within a year of entering the college, leaving little room for exploration or to consider the many options that are spread out before them.

² Edgecombe, Nikki. “Accelerating the Academic Achievement of Students Referred to Developmental Education.” CCRC Brief 55. Community College Research Center. May 2011.

The “faster is better” attitude is also apparent in Task Force Draft Recommendation 3.1, which would deny enrollment priority to students who accrue more than 100 units or who do not declare a program of study within three terms and follow a formal education plan. The Task Force report clearly states a specific desire to “limit the student wandering through the curriculum” (p. 8) and eliminate “policies that enable students to wander around the curriculum” (p. 28). The vision of those who propose such changes is to diminish student choices and design specific, pre-determined pathways for the purpose of moving students through the system more quickly.

What the proponents of this view fail to realize is that, in the words of J. R. R. Tolkien, “Not all those who wander are lost.” While some students may indeed accrue units that are not necessary for their educational goals, they often do so for reasons involving financial aid or other obligations that require them to enroll in a certain number of units and because the classes they truly need or want are already full. Moreover, exploration of educational and personal possibilities is a legitimate use of units by students who have not yet decided on a career or educational goal. If we can no longer allow such exploration by students who are still searching for their paths in life, then we have indeed diminished the services we provide.

In its origins, SB 1440 was based on a similar philosophy: transfer degrees would be limited to 60 semester units, with no local requirements, in order to move students through a transfer path as quickly as and with the fewest courses possible. Operating under this mandate, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges and the California State University worked together to design transfer degrees that would truly serve student needs and remove obstacles to transfer. Faculty in both systems are proud of the progress we have made in creating transfer degrees and believe that our efforts have truly created transfer curricula that will work in our students’ interest. Yet, despite the impressive progress we have made and the positive outcomes we expect, these degrees would have been in many cases easier to

If we ask not how to move students through our system faster but instead how to do so more effectively, we will be much more likely to provide our students with the higher quality academic experiences they deserve from us.

create, and perhaps more qualitatively sound, if we had not been constrained by the unit maximums that were set in order to limit the students’ time in their programs and move them through more quickly.

FASTER IS NOT BETTER; BETTER IS BETTER

None of this is to say that we should not look for ways to make our curriculum and our system more efficient. Innovation in basic skills delivery and in other aspects of the curriculum, clearly defined educational pathways for those students who are ready to follow them, and assistance for those students who are searching for a direction are all subjects that we should explore and goals we should strive for. But the conversation should be framed in terms of educational benefit and quality, not speed. If we ask not how to move students through our system faster but instead how to do so more effectively, we will be much more likely to provide our students with the higher quality academic experiences they deserve from us.■

Stable Funding Key to Student Success

BETH SMITH, VICE PRESIDENT AND PHIL SMITH, AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVE

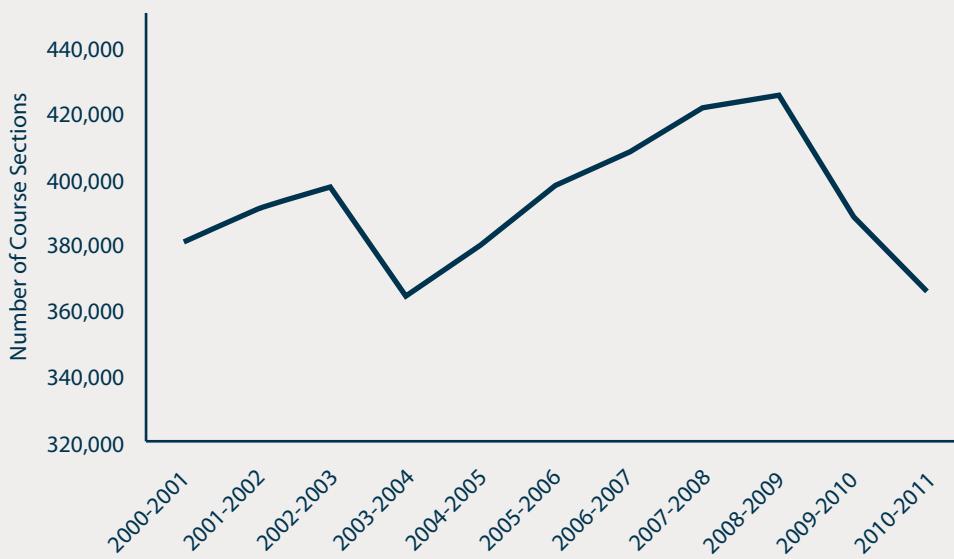
It's down. No, it's up. Then, it's down again. This pattern describes the recent stock market gyrations, but it also describes the roller coaster ride called the annual California community college budget process. Each year, for a good part of the year, the colleges spend time planning and budgeting around an ever-changing funding amount. The process includes the proposed Governor's Budget, the May Revision, and the Legislative Analyst's Office evaluation of the proposed budgets, and, interwoven with official budget proposals, there are rumors, political maneuvering, and trial balloons that colleges and districts must respond to. Having to react to the moving target that is the state budget distracts us from our core mission: providing accessible, high quality instruction. Precious time that could be spent on developing and maintaining an effective learning environment is instead required to monitor the legislative wrangling in Sacramento and the ups and downs of projected revenues within the state.

In stable budgetary environments, the task of enrollment management and funding the student services desperately needed for community college students would be challenging enough, but, in California, with unstable revenues and legislative action on a final higher education budget often slow to materialize, planning for the long term best interests of students is nearly impossible. Decisions are made to chase or cut FTES with the least amount risk and headache, and then we must prepare to do it all over again in just a few months. Critical decisions about the allocation of resources cannot be made primarily on student success because the college is trying to meet deadlines and minimize the work required within this schizophrenic cycle. To promote college success, what

colleges really need is a stable budgetary framework, perhaps two or three years where there is little or no volatility in funding, in which to plan for and implement programs for long term student success. When colleges have stable funding over a fixed period of time longer than one year, it will be much easier to implement the student success initiatives the college determines are in the best interests of students and to make progress on the student success goals the state wants us to realize.

With so much recent attention to student success focused on student behaviors and college pathways, we may have missed an opportunity to address the real obstacle to helping students achieve success: a volatile college budgeting process. There has been no shortage of proposals to modify aspects of community college funding to promote student success. Interested parties have suggested alternative fee structures, extension programs, outcomes based funding, and other ways to stimulate or motivate greater student success. However well-intentioned, these proposals miss the basic mark: a stable budgetary framework and funding for the colleges are needed in order to use instructional and human resources effectively to really improve educational outcomes. When every college spends half of each year planning and budgeting according to the volatile state process, little energy and resources are left to implement the goal of improved opportunities for students.

An illustrating example of the volatility that we experience as colleges is the number of course sections offered throughout the California Community College System. Here, in graphical and tabular form, are the increases and decreases in sections offered for the last



decade. The swings in the data set mirror the budget ups and downs of past decade¹.

Year	Sections Offered	Change from previous year
2000-2001	380,416	
2001-2002	398,741	+4.8%
2002-2003	397,098	-0.5%
2003-2004	364,440	-8.0%
2004-2005	379,813	+4.2%
2005-2006	397,112	+4.5%
2006-2007	407,509	+2.6%
2007-2008	421,045	+3.3%
2008-2009	425,625	+1.0%
2009-2010	388,007	-8.8%
2010-2011	365,703	-5.7%

What is especially telling in this data set is that the amount of change each year is very unpredictable. As academic senates know, a swing of only 3% either up or down causes great ripples throughout the institution. Swings greater than 3% produce monumental challenges in hiring, layoffs, student services, sections offered, custodial services, and other vital college functions.

Is it just a dream that stable funding can produce greater student success? Perhaps not. We have a recent funding model, the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI), that illustrates how stability in funding can lead to gains in student achievement. With the BSI, every college received funding that had an expiration date 2-3 years out, and each

college received an influx of these funds for several consecutive years. Colleges used the opportunity to learn about or implement new curriculum, useful technologies, and tutoring and supplemental learning options. The faculty engaged in professional development activities across the state and, in some cases, across the nation. Colleges tested alternative strategies and decided which ones might work best with the college culture, cohort needs, and general population. More important, colleges were able to gather data and evidence about the success of the implemented strategies to learn which programs need further development or refinement. The sustained period of learning, development, implementation and evaluation that occurred during BSI produced results that are both encouraging and illuminating.

BASIC SKILLS COURSE SUCCESS RATES

Consider the basic skills success rates shown in the accompanying table. BSI funding arrived at the colleges in the 2006-07 year. At that time, the success rate in basic skills courses had been stagnant for about seven years, always hovering around 58-59%. Over the next few years, from 07-11, the rates improved dramatically. Of course, one should always be cautious about drawing conclusions from a short-term trend in the data, as it might be only a minor fluctuation when the data is viewed over a longer period. Nevertheless, for those statistically minded, the size of the population

¹ All data included in this article were provided to the Board of Governors at the September 2011 meeting by Patrick Perry, Vice Chancellor of Technology, Research and Information Systems. Analysis by the Academic Senate.

(e.g., the pool of basic skills students at California community colleges) contributes to the conclusion that the basic skills success rate improved considerably over that time.

Year	Basic Skills
2000-2001	58.0%
2001-2002	58.0%
2002-2003	59.2%
2003-2004	59.4%
2004-2005	58.9%
2005-2006	58.1%
2006-2007	58.4%
2007-2008	58.9%
2008-2009	60.4%
2009-2010	61.2%
2010-2011	62.1%

There are several possible explanations for the upward trend seen in the data. Course success rates in general were also up across the state; however, no rate increased as dramatically as basic skills course success rates. And, of course, the improvement in general course success rates may be dependent on the greater student success in basic skills courses. From 2008-2011, many colleges reduced the number of part-time faculty, a group who tend to teach a large number of basic skills courses. In order to pick up the slack, this reduction would have required more full-time faculty to teach basic skills courses. The greater availability of full-time faculty (allowing, among other things, greater student access to office hours) may or may not have contributed to the rise in successful course completion. It's difficult to be certain as data do not exist for the number of full time faculty teaching basic skills courses over this 4 or 5 year time window. And the demographics of students selecting courses during this time period may be different because of the influx of students who would normally be attending CSU or UC but enroll in a California community college because they are unable to be admitted at the four-year university. Typically, however, basic skills courses are sought by only a limited number of university-eligible students.

But the fact that student success in basic skills courses did improve over the very same time period

that our colleges were receiving stable funding and structural support through BSI seems to suggest that there is some important link between the two. Further, if colleges could have improved basic skills success rates without stable funding, planning, and implementation, then we would have seen some evidence of it earlier in the history of the system. Once the colleges had time to plan and to budget for and realize the plan, we observed an increase in student success rates in basic skills courses. From regional meetings and reports from the colleges, we do know that BSI funding has led to an increase in the quantity and quality of professional development. Stable BSI funding has allowed colleges to develop learning labs, implement local basic skills improvement initiatives, and to attend regional meetings in order to share and learn about best practices in basic skills instruction. All of these efforts were enabled by a stable funding framework that allowed a college to plan and focus on the needs of basic skills students. Given that the BSI funding continues today with the same parameters for spending within three years of the allocation, it is reasonable to predict that basic skills course success rates should continue to increase.

Legislative action that funds the colleges in a reliable and predictable way from year to year has great potential, perhaps even the greatest potential, to positively impact student success. Just like the arguments calling for student fee increases to be predictably scheduled, college funding from the state must also be stabilized to reduce the extra planning and budgeting resources that colleges are required to dedicate because of the wild decision making that often accompanies the erratic swings in funding for districts. Because a change of even 3% (up or down) is huge for a college to manage, the system could argue for smaller, more realistic changes. Such changes could be built into the system budgets, gradually implemented over a period of years rather than sharply, all at once. State government in Sacramento has a difficult time arriving at a final budget, much less one with a long-term perspective, but if the goal is to improve student success, then all avenues and options should be on the table for consideration. Stable, multi-year community college funding has the potential to make a huge difference in student success. ■

Full time Faculty, Yet Again—Building the Noncredit Case

ESTHER MATTHEW & WHEELER NORTH, BASIC SKILLS/NONCREDIT COMMITTEE

Have you ever been a part time or temporary employee? Did that status affect your capacity in that job? What example is set for students when most of their teachers are conveniently disposable employees?

Resolution 19.02 F07 “Benefits of Full time Faculty in Noncredit” tasked the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges to “urge local senates to educate their faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees who may not be familiar with this issue, about the need for an appropriate number of full-time noncredit faculty and how their college and students benefit.” This resolution is still timely given the 2011 Student Success Task Force draft recommendations (September 30, 2011) which, by intent, would impact noncredit, in significant ways.

The case for full-time noncredit faculty is usually built on two foundations: quality of instruction and parity or equality. For noncredit education, these issues seem insufficient when put into the context of current events. The number of colleges offering noncredit instruction grew from 53 in 2005-06 to 71 in 2009-10. This change is likely due to the increased need for more basic skills courses and the enhanced funding for certain noncredit areas (SB 361, 2006). According to aggregated Chancellor’s Office Data, for most, if not all, of the growth, the full- to part-time ratios have stayed well below 20:80 in spite of the enhanced funding. This is true for basic skills programs as well as vocational programs. The percentage is even more dismal in other noncredit areas. Mirroring the trends for credit enrollment, the past few years have shown a dramatic surge in noncredit enrollment due in part to the collapsing economy. During this same period districts have coped with fewer fiscal resources through hiring freezes and early retirement incentive programs, among other activities, that have resulted in unfilled vacancies. These factors have exacerbated the already existing

problem of an over-reliance on part-time noncredit faculty. These trends cannot continue without inevitably hitting critical regulatory and accreditation compliance thresholds which are intended to support institutional development and improvement.

In order to be functional and effective, a college requires a sensible and thoughtful balance of part- and full-time employees based on the needs of the institution and students. The importance of this standard is part of the eligibility requirements to become accredited: “The institution has a substantial core of qualified faculty with full time responsibility to the institution. The core is sufficient in size and experience to support all of the institution’s educational programs” (Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and Western Association of Schools and Colleges¹). The requirement for “full-time responsibility to the institution” imparts the point that faculty members play a central and critical role in running the institution extending far beyond classroom activities. This implies that both the quality of the institution and quality of the classroom experience can be seriously impacted if there is not “a substantial core of qualified faculty.”

The long list of non-classroom activities typically performed by full-time faculty may go undone without them. Generally, compensation for work outside the classroom is not built into an adjunct’s load. Attempts to ensure that the minimum is done may place a financial burden on an already underfunded institution, or part-time faculty may feel pressured into doing the work without commensurate pay. Worst of all, the work may be shifted to administrators, including tasks in those areas where faculty should or are required to have primacy.

¹ Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. (2011). Eligibility requirements for accreditation, p. 3, http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Eligibility-Requirements_June-2011.pdf

Where contracts do exist, the burden of these duties falls heavily on a few. Over years this has led to faculty burnout which in turn makes effective participation difficult. Basically, noncredit providers may be forced into “creative” ways to comply with mandatory activities outside instructional time, which also puts the basic tenant espoused by the Academic Senate at risk: that of faculty participation.

What about in the classroom? Most would agree that a good teacher is a good teacher and it doesn’t matter how many classes he or she teaches. Full-time faculty have teaching loads that are less than the hours their salary encompasses, allowing additional time for the inexhaustible list of classroom-related tasks, such as thoughtful class planning, curriculum development, and course research. Often, noncredit instructors get paid less per class, and part-time faculty have further limitations on the number of hours they can teach in one district, so part timers often work in multiple districts. Is it possible for part-time faculty to perform effectively under these conditions? Yes, if they add 36 hours to the day and work without compensation. The more seasoned part timers often caution their less experienced peers that doing essential work for free in hopes of a contract is fruitless. Even so, the ranks of quality faculty who are committed to working with noncredit students and who still dream of the “golden ring” persist, which is a stellar testament to their caliber as human beings.

Noncredit faculty contracts often require more hours in the class for a given load as compared to their credit counterparts. And contract-to-adjunct ratio guidelines are nonexistent. This practice may have stemmed from the early differences between credit and noncredit courses as cited in the Report on the Credit/Noncredit Policy (ASCCC, 1980). The minimum standards for credit courses were described as follows: “being of appropriate rigor,” “teaches toward a set of instructional goals common to all students enrolled,” “grants units based on performance criteria,” and “are offered as described in an outline that has set specifications.” In contrast, noncredit courses were described as treating subject matter and using resource materials “with teaching methods, and standards of attendance and achievement appropriate for students eligible to attend” and “conducted in accordance with a course outline.” It is important to note that the noncredit course criterion

did not include appropriate rigor, set instructional goals, performance criteria, nor outlines with set specifications. However, over the years noncredit courses have changed through good practice, or by mandate, and now include most of the previously missing pedagogical requirements.

Many factors have contributed to the changes made in noncredit. In larger programs where there are multiple levels of ESL and basic skills, it was natural for faculty to create student assessment for determining advancement to the next level. This was a faculty-driven desire for academic excellence. Transformations were also made through accreditation and program review, the ever-increasing demands for accountability, and changes to guidelines. And now there is the drive to align basic skills and ESL curriculum and assessment for a smooth transition to credit. While the differences between credit and noncredit are shrinking, especially in CDCP (Career Development and College Preparation), the inequities for faculty have stayed the same over the past three decades.

However, the discussion about improving the number of full-time faculty at the colleges is not new. Dating back to 1974, the Academic Senate was concerned with the over utilization of part-time faculty. The issue continued into the late 90s when a resolution called for a paper to focus on part-time issues, *Part-time Faculty: A Principled Perspective* (2002). But the call for parity and equality appears to pertain only to credit faculty. Perhaps noncredit’s early history has led to an uncertainty about the quality of instruction in noncredit. And in turn, this makes the high reliance on part timers a low priority. Yet, while important differences do exist, noncredit courses and expectations of faculty continue to evolve, moving noncredit closer to credit standards.

As a campus leader, please consider this article the next time you are in a resource allocation or governance meeting; consider sharing it with your administration and Board; use it to advocate for your noncredit colleagues and for our students, even if they are not your students yet. Ask yourself this: what are we going to do about these inequities? Are the standards of justice and of sound academic practices different for noncredit and credit? ■

Separating Learning Assistance and Tutoring

RAY SANCHEZ, STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMITTEE PAST MEMBER, FRESNO CITY COLLEGE

The draft recommendations of the SB 1143 Student Success Task Force (September 30, 2011) cover a wide range of issues, several of them touching on ways to improve the delivery of basic skills instruction. However, the task force recommendations do not address one important aspect of this issue that could have a profound influence on student success: the revision of minimum qualifications for learning assistance coordinators and instructors.

The minimum qualifications (MQs) for learning assistance coordinators and instructors are not listed in the Disciplines List because they directly embodied in Title 5 §53415. Moreover, in addition to the MQs, an exception is found in §53415 that states the MQs for these positions are only required if apportionment is claimed. Given the completely distinct and separate instructional function and pedagogical process between “Learning Assistance” and “Tutoring,” and given that the duties and functions of tutorial center coordination are broad and principally instructional in nature, the following solutions are suggested:

- ◆ Move the MQs from Title 5 §53415 to the Disciplines List and thereby under the purview of faculty.
- ◆ Separate the two qualification areas “Learning Assistance” and “Tutoring” (tutorial center coordination) so that each would have its own MQs.
- ◆ Eliminate the MQ exception. By eliminating this provision colleges could not hire non-certificated employees as Tutorial Coordinators or Learning Assistance instructors.

DEFINING OUR TERMS¹

“Learning Assistance” is assistance that is offered in learning labs or similar venues and is always linked to a primary/parent course. The learning assistance is then

- a. required component of the primary/parent course for all students in that course; or,
- b. optional and provided through an open entry/open exit course (can be linked to multiple courses)

“Tutoring, when provided by the college, shall be considered a method of instruction that involves a student tutor who has been successful in a particular subject or discipline, or who has demonstrated a particular skill, and who has received specific training in tutoring methods and who assists one or more students in need of special supplemental instruction in the subject or skill.” Title 5 §58168

WHY SEPARATE LEARNING ASSISTANCE AND TUTORING?

The endeavor of learning assistance really has nothing to do with tutorial services. Separating the minimum qualifications and apportionment requirements from each other will help clear the muddy waters. And, as is explained below, changes can then be made to one or both that best benefit students and fit with the letter and spirit of the regulations and guidelines for each.

¹ Minimum Qualifications for Faculty and Administrators in California Community Colleges (Disciplines List) uses: Learning Assistance Instructors; Title 5 §53415 uses: Learning Assistance or Learning Skills Coordinators or Instructors, and Tutoring Coordinators; and the June 2006 Regulations and Guidelines, a Chancellor’s Office interpretation of the pertinent Title 5 regulations, uses: Supplemental Learning Assistance and Tutoring.

APPORTIONMENT

There are multiple requirements to claim apportionment (Title 5 §58170), particularly for tutoring, which include a list of eight required conditions. For example, “All students receiving individual tutoring have enrolled in a noncredit course carrying Taxonomy of Programs number 4309.09, which is entitled Supervised Tutoring,” “The designated learning center is supervised by a person who meets the minimum qualifications prescribed by section 53415,” and “All tutors successfully complete instruction in tutoring methods.” However, for those paying close attention, the Student Success Task Force made the recommendation to remove the requirement to tie supplemental instruction (since the task force specifically cites Title 5 Section 58080 and 58172 this means “Learning Assistance”) to specific courses in hopes of increasing instructional flexibility for basic skills students. Will implementing this recommendation further confuse colleges? Will the only difference between tutoring and supplemental instruction be their credit/noncredit status and funding rates? Without ties to specific courses, what are the MQs for supplemental instruction? Why would we keep noncredit tutoring if credit supplemental instruction might accomplish the same thing at higher funding rates?

REMOVING THE MQ CAVEAT

Title 5 §53415, in addition to outlining the explicit minimum qualifications, includes a distinctive and, indeed, vexing final sentence: Minimum qualifications do not apply to tutoring or learning assistance for which no apportionment is claimed. Obviously, this statement means that minimum qualifications are only necessary if a campus wants to claim apportionment. A further implication, however, is that the same duties, including tutor training and the intended result of tutoring, namely an increase in student success, are not valued to the same degree if apportionment is not claimed. In other words, do we see the activities and duties of a Tutorial Coordinator as a faculty position simply because apportionment can be claimed? Or, rather, within the confines of minimum qualifications, while allowing for individual campuses to hire individuals with additional specific content area backgrounds, should the broad duties of tutorial coordination best be handled by a faculty member? The Academic Senate says “Yes!” (Resolution 10.12 S11) ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the date for the 2012 Senate events!

ACCREDITATION INSTITUTE

February 10-11, 2012

Sheraton Park Hotel at the Anaheim Resort

ACADEMIC ACADEMY

February 24-25, 2012

Doubletree Anaheim/Orange County

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

March 21-23, 2012

San Francisco Airport Westin

SPRING PLENARY SESSION

April 19-21, 2012

San Francisco Airport Westin

FACULTY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

June 14-16, 2012

Temecula Creek Inn

SLO INSTITUTE

July 12, 2012

Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport

CURRICULUM INSTITUTE

July 12-14, 2012

Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport

A Student's Perspective

STEPHANIE DUMONT, AREA D REPRESENTATIVE

LDTP, AB 540, SB 1440. Counseling faculty have met each of these transfer reform efforts with a healthy dose of skepticism, and for very good reason. For starters, legislators, not practitioners, hatched these reform ideas. The notion that folks with strong political motivations, who are so far removed from the everyday work of California community college educators, have been responsible for setting the transfer agenda is unsettling at best. And in our experience when policy is created legislatively and the implementation details begin to emerge, we see immediately the negative effects of unintended (or intended) consequences on our students. It begins to be clear that what may have initially seemed like a laudable attempt to streamline transfer by some, actually had the opposite impact.

The jury is still out on SB 1440, now law and referred to as the STAR (Student Transfer Agreement Reform) Act. What is clear is that an AA-T or AS-T will be an appropriate pathway for some students, but not others. Here is a scenario in which the AA-T/AS-T makes sense:

I'm in my second semester of community college in California. On the advice of the counselor who presented at my new student orientation, last semester I completed English and math, along with a career planning class which helped me in narrowing down career choices and an Introduction to Business course because I'm considering business as my major. This semester I am continuing with my math and English because in my first individual meeting with my counselor she stressed how important it was to complete my math and English sequences, since those classes teach skills that are the foundation for success in other subjects. She explained they are also admission requirements to the university and that I can improve my competitiveness for admission if I get them done early. When I registered for my second semester I was still undecided about my major, so along with math and English I am completing two courses on the IGETC pattern.

I'm now eight weeks into my second semester, and I finally feel like I have some direction. The business course helped

me realize that while I originally thought about marketing, majoring in business would confine my creative side. I enjoy technology and I learned in my career planning course that pursuing something in the area of the arts would be a good fit for me, so I'm now leaning towards graphic design. I always expected to stay close to home when I transferred, and I hear my local CSU has a well-respected graphic design program, but my counselor is encouraging me to think big because I've had a secret desire to relocate and branch out on my own. She talked to me about these new degrees at CSU that guaranteed me admission to the CSU system, while also fulfilling requirements for an associate degree. It seems like a good idea to earn an associate degree from community college in case I'm not able to transfer as planned and have to return to work. These Associate Degrees for Transfer sound great because I can be competitive for admission to campuses away from home, as well as receive priority admission to my local CSU in a similar major. My counselor advised me that graphic design is a popular major and sometimes has more students applying to that major than the CSU has seats, so priority admission would be very helpful. The good news is that even if my major is impacted, I won't be held to supplemental admission course work. I will have a good shot at getting into impacted programs as long as I maintain a strong GPA. And I even get a little GPA "bump" because I'm an Associate Degree for Transfer applicant! Once I get in, I will not have to take more than 60 units to finish my degree, so I can be assured I will graduate in a timely manner.

I left my counseling appointment full of hope and confidence with an education plan in hand that gets me an Associate of Arts for Transfer in Studio Art. It's such a relief to have my future mapped out. Now I can focus on performing my best in the classroom. My prospects are looking bright!

My counseling colleagues and I will continue to approach legislatively driven transfer reforms with caution. After all, it's our professional responsibility to advocate for what is in the best interest for the majority of our students. But that does not preclude us from seeing the positive aspects of efforts to streamline transfer and recommending those pathways to students when appropriate. ■

A Degree with a Guarantee?

ELIZABETH ATONDO, LOS ANGELES PIERCE COLLEGE, ARTICULATION OFFICER AND CURRICULUM CHAIR; CONTENT DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CCC ARTICULATION OFFICERS REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Senate Bill 1440 has the potential to streamline the transfer process through the state-wide adoption of portable associate degrees. We have developed these degrees through the Transfer Model Curriculum (TMC) process. Ideally, the TMCs contain coursework that provides students with a foundational understanding of their major as well as what they need to be prepared to study at the upper-division level after transfer to a CSU campus. Students who complete a TMC-aligned degree in their chosen major are awarded an AA-T or AS-T degree. The potential benefits for our students who complete this degree are significant: they are guaranteed admission to the CSU system. Additionally, they will have obtained an associate degree, a significant milestone in their educational career, as well as be prepared to transfer and continue their baccalaureate studies.

Ideally, the AA-T and AS-T degrees would work for our students in the same way the CSU GE Breadth Certification Plan and the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) currently do. Both these general education plans are offered at all our colleges and are accepted by all CSU and UC campuses as full completion of lower-division general education requirements. Imagine the clear transfer path our students could follow if completion of an AS-T/AA-T was accepted by all CSU campuses as full completion of both lower division general education and major preparation requirements.

The current reality, however, is that each CSU campus individually determines if and how the AA-T and AS-T degrees will be accepted, resulting in varying curricular requirements depending on the combination of CCC and CSU major requirements.

Further, a complex set of CSU admissions rules means the degrees may be required for priority admission to impacted majors or campuses, yet students who complete these degrees may still find themselves having to take additional lower-division major coursework after transfer or, conversely, major coursework at the CCC before transfer that does not fulfill major requirements at the receiving CSU campus. The interaction of these varying curricular requirements and admission rules means the AA-T/AS-T may be advantageous for some students, disadvantageous for others, and neutral for some. The goal is for the degree to be advantageous for all students.



Additionally, communication to local colleges about the program has focused on encouraging degree development and promotion, not on student counseling and advising. We have a professional responsibility to let our students know what their transfer options are and the benefits of each. At this point in time, the complexity of SB1440 implementation makes effective student counseling a challenge. We need to focus on the development of clear and consistent counseling tools so that we can best advise our students.

To be fully successful, an AA-T or AS-T degree should guarantee the completion of all lower division major and general education requirements at all CSU campuses that offer an aligned major, as defined by the major codes published in CSU's Undergraduate Majors/Degrees Matrix. In this scenario, CCC transfer student Anna, pursuing a major in Business Administration, can complete the TMC-aligned AS-T degree in Business Administration at any of our colleges and transfer to any CSU campus knowing that the coursework in her degree will fully satisfy all CSU lower-division major and general education requirements. This would truly make the AA-T/AS-T valuable to all transfer students by serving the dual purposes of an associate degree and full preparation for the upper division major.

If we can't achieve the ultimate goal, then one useful alternative would be that any CSU campus accepting the TMC must guarantee that a TMC-aligned AA-T or AS-T will fulfill all lower division major and general education requirements at that CSU campus. This would enable community colleges to provide students with a list of the CSU campuses where the AA-T and AS-T degrees are fully accepted. In this scenario, our CCC transfer student Anna, can easily see the range of CSU campuses that do accept the TMC-aligned AS-T degree in Business Administration as full completion of major and general education requirements. Based on the CSU campus Anna is planning to attend, she can then make an informed decision on whether she should complete the AS-T degree or pursue the traditional transfer pathway, an option still available to all our students.

Another alternative is the acceptance of a TMC-aligned AA-T or AS-T by all CSU campuses that offer an aligned major as defined by the CSU major codes

We have a professional responsibility to let our students know what their transfer options are and the benefits of each.

but not necessarily as full completion of lower-division major requirements. In this scenario, some students may be required to complete additional lower-division major requirements as part of the 60 units remaining after transfer. In this case, our CCC student Anna, pursuing her major in Business Administration, could complete the TMC-aligned AS-T degree at any of our colleges and be assured that she will not need to complete more than 60 units after transfer to any CSU campus. However, she may find herself at a CSU campus that requires her to take additional lower-division major requirements after transfer that could have been completed at the community college prior to transfer.

The CSU system should be commended for its progress toward accepting every AA-T and AS-T degree at every CSU campus offering an aligned major. Community colleges can best support this effort by adopting AA-T and AS-T degrees targeted to the efficient completion of CSU lower division major coursework. The success of this program depends on the partnership between the community colleges who must design degrees useful for transfer and the CSU campuses that are charged with accepting them as fulfillment of lower division requirements. It is only through open and candid communication, thoughtful design, and shared commitment that the ultimate goal of these degrees—associate degree completion, full transfer preparation, and statewide portability—will be achieved. ■

Transfer Model Curricula: Preserving the Integrity of Transfer Associate Degrees

DAVID MORSE, SECRETARY

Senate Bill 1440 (Padilla 2010) was created to serve two purposes: to streamline transfer from community colleges to the California State University system and to encourage and help more students to complete associate degrees before transferring. In the first year after SB 1440's passage, much attention has been focused on aspects of the bill that facilitate or, in the view of some, complicate transfer. As faculty work to ensure that the implementation of the legislation is as beneficial to students as possible, we must remember that transfer is only one half of the bill's intent and that associate degrees granted by the California community colleges, including the associate in arts or in science for transfer (AA-T or AS-T) developed under the specifications of SB 1440, must still meet appropriate standards of quality and integrity as complete degrees that can stand alone in order to be meaningful and useful for our graduates.

The Academic Senates for California Community Colleges and the California State University have worked together to ensure the quality and integrity of the associate degrees for transfer by developing Transfer Model Curricula (TMCs) in the most popular transfer disciplines. This intersegmental, faculty-driven effort has called together discipline experts from around the state in order to determine the most appropriate and useful preparation in each specific major or field of study. However, the TMCs, while offering outlines for the content of the associate degrees, have in no way ignored the fact that the degrees are designed for transfer to the CSU system. CSU faculty have been involved in all TMC discussions, lending their voice and expertise to the determination of requirements that are appropriate for both a legitimate associate degree and lower-division preparation for transfer. Likewise, California community college (CCC) articulation officers have participated in the discussions held by the discipline faculty, offering

their perspectives and expertise regarding transfer. In this way, the process for the development of the TMCs balances the content of the associate degrees with the facilitation of transfer in order to ensure the integrity of both aspects of SB 1440's intent.

Still, some voices have asked that the requirements for the transfer degrees be made more flexible. At the Spring 2010 Academic Senate Plenary Session, as the Academic Senate approved Resolution 4.03 S10 endorsing the overall concept of the transfer degree legislation, an alternative resolution sought to eliminate the aspect of the bill that called for "18 units in a major or area of emphasis." Instead, this alternative resolution and a clarifying amendment (4.04.01 S10) proposed that the major requirements for a transfer degree be limited to the courses listed as lower-division preparation in the ASSIST database for the specific CSU to which the student wished to transfer. While this proposal was not approved at the Plenary Session, some parties around the state still advocate for a similar minimization of major requirements in order to create more flexibility within the associate degrees.

In considering such proposals, we must bear in mind not only their impact on the transfer process, but also how they would impact our associate degrees. While some disciplines list multiple courses as major preparation in ASSIST, others would require almost no expertise in the discipline named in the degree's title. For example, various CSU campuses require no more than two courses as lower-division major preparation for various political science tracks, and one CSU requires no lower-division courses for its communication studies major. Therefore, if the lower-division preparation in ASSIST were the only major requirements, a student would be able to receive an associate degree in political science from a California community college while having taken as few as two courses in the supposed major field

and no courses in the communication studies example. Similar examples exist in other disciplines. Certainly no outside observer in business or industry could take seriously the claim that a student who completed such a degree had any meaningful level of knowledge in the subject area. Thus, minimizing the requirements in the major in associate degrees for transfer would defeat one of the primary purposes of SB 1440, the idea that transfer students should receive associate degrees that have meaning and value for them.

Economic difficulties, health issues, and numerous other factors can interrupt a student's educational progress, and for such reasons some students who transfer to the university system will be forced to delay completion of the baccalaureate degree for an extended period and ultimately may never finish a university degree. In such cases, the associate degree will stand as the student's highest academic achievement and will therefore be an essential tool in the student's quest for secure employment. In order to give students in such situations the greatest possible opportunity to adjust to their life circumstances, we must make certain that degrees intended for transfer are not viewed as lesser degrees that have value only as means of accessing further studies.

Under Title 5, all associate degrees granted by California community colleges must include a minimum of 18 semester units in a major or area of emphasis. While the origins of this requirement are unclear, one can assume that it was intended to set a minimum standard necessary to uphold and ensure the quality of the degrees. If we allow students to graduate with a degree in a specific discipline without ensuring that the students have adequate training or background in that discipline, we do them no service; rather, we diminish the public regard for both the students' work and effort and the quality of our programs. The 18 semester unit requirement therefore does not place an unnecessary burden on students, but rather benefits the students by ensuring the quality of their preparation.

Even in terms of transfer, minimized lower-division requirements would not in all ways benefit students. A long-standing and well-known issue regarding transfer is that requirements for the same major differ at various CSU campuses. Thus, a student who wishes to transfer to CSU Northridge in history but who might also

wish to consider CSU Long Beach in the same field would have to meet two separate sets of lower-division requirements. Indeed, this inconsistency is exactly one of the frustrating and confusing aspects of the transfer process that SB 1440 was designed to address. However, if major requirements for the associate degrees for transfer were based on the lower-division preparation in ASSIST, this situation would in no way be changed, and students would continue to be subjected to inconsistent transfer requirements. Only a statewide effort that develops a comprehensive lower-division preparation plan that all CSU campuses can accept will alleviate this problem, and such an effort is exactly what the TMCs seek to offer.

Some advocates for minimized major requirements have also pointed out that those of us who attended four-year universities for our entire undergraduate experience often were not required to complete 18 units of major preparation in our first two years. This claim is, of course, accurate; however, it overlooks the fact that such an experience at a university did not necessarily have the same intended outcome. While a community college education is often equated with the first two years at a university, those two years at a community college are intended to offer a benefit that a lower-division university experience does not: an associate degree. Those of us who went directly into the university system did not receive a degree as recognition of our efforts in our first two years. If community college programs of study are to continue to provide this additional benefit for students, then we must ensure that we uphold the standards and quality upon which our degrees are based.

Certainly, as we develop the TMCs and our local associate degrees for transfer, we must continue to consider how best to make the transfer process as seamless and easily navigable for students as possible. However, we should not allow transfer requirements and concerns to override considerations regarding the integrity of the degrees that our institutions grant. As faculty we are the guardians of academic quality, and this issue has the potential to impact in profound ways the quality of the programs in which we teach and the way we are viewed by the public. We must always remain conscious of the important balance between the two purposes of SB 1440: facilitation of transfer, but only after the student has completed a meaningful and appropriate degree. ■

What Happened in the CSU with American Institutions?

JIM POSTMA, CHAIR, CSU ACADEMIC SENATE

A little background: Title 5 §40404 requires that California State University graduates demonstrate competency in specified areas of U.S. history and government. This requirement, commonly known as American Institutions (AI), is typically met by taking two 3-unit courses, one in U.S. history and one in American government. Transfer students typically take these courses prior to transfer, and most “double count” them with two of their GE courses. The UC has a similar requirement but considers the students’ high school experience as meeting this “competency.”

SB 1440 (Now the STAR Act) imposes a strict 60+60=120 unit structure on the associate degree for transfer and the similar CSU baccalaureate program and does not allow for other requirements to be added beyond these limits. Because the AI requirement is not framed in terms of units, it does not fit well into the STAR Act structure.

The CSU Academic Senate attempted to insert the current AI practice into SB 1440 but was unsuccessful. CSU faculty have attempted to include the AI courses into the Transfer Model Curricula as they have been and are being developed, and AI has been incorporated as required courses into a small number of disciplines and would be allowed as electives in most others, but this situation creates the possibility that STAR Act transfer students might not have met the requirement prior to transfer. CSU departments might be able to incorporate these courses into their post transfer requirements if there exists sufficient room within the 60-unit cap.

This problem was researched and discussed informally from October 2010 until April 2011. The research discovered that the existing language of Title 5 did not allow the AI requirement to be waived by any

mechanism, in sharp contrast to all of the other components of CSU degrees. In April, the CSU Executive Vice Chancellor decided that a mechanism for waiving the AI requirement needed to be created in case such flexibility was needed to accommodate the unit limit of the STAR Act. This proposal was scheduled to go to the Board of Trustees in May for information, and then the normal process would have it decided upon at the July Board meeting.

That schedule did not allow for the normal consultation processes with the CSU Statewide Academic Senate or the campus senates to be followed. At the May Board meeting, the Senate asked that the decision be postponed until the November Board meeting to allow for this consultation. The Board denied the request at that time but agreed to consider postponement at the July meeting. In the meantime, campus senates and the ASCSU exercised what consultation processes were feasible at the end of the academic year, including two gatherings of CSU history and political science faculty. These discussions resulted in a series of letters, petitions, formal resolutions, and informal communication to the Board decrying the lack of proper consultation, arguing that postponement would have no effect upon student progress and STAR Act implementation.

In July, in spite of the large number and broad range of objections and requests for postponement, the Board voted to approve the policy which allowed for waivers of AI requirements. The consultation that had occurred did result in narrowing the context of the proposal specifically to the STAR Act transfer degrees and a few other unrelated contexts, such as second bachelor’s degrees. It also brought the proposal into parallelism with the similar waivers for General Education requirements that were already in Title 5, thus raising the expectation that requests for waivers would come through the normal campus curriculum-review processes.

It was clear from the Board discussion—though not reduced to formal policy—that the CSU is expected to implement the provisions of the STAR Act to the fullest extent possible. This was evident not only from Board members’ statement but also from the obvious inference in faculty arguments that waivers were not needed to implement the provisions of the Act.

There were—and continue to be—significant misunderstandings of the AI waiver proposal. The AI requirement is still in existence for all of our students, and if waivers are approved, such approvals will only be granted for a single baccalaureate program at a single campus and only for STAR Act transfer students. Faculty have a range of options to choose from as they consider how to fit within the unit limits of the Act, including modifications of major requirements, upper-division GE, double-counting opportunities, and waivers of GE, AI, or campus requirements.

Conversations are just beginning in the CSU departments about how to fit into the STAR Act requirements—if they don’t already. While these discussions can lead to a request to the campus president, who would then seek permission of the Chancellor, I believe that few of them will land on this AI waiver approach.

We’ve been assured by our CCC counterparts that current advice and practice will be sustained in their system, thus the large majority of students will continue to meet the AI requirement prior to transfer and will likely choose to do so by taking advantage of the GE double-counting opportunity. ■

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,

Can and should our senate participate in lobbying legislators? Isn’t that the job of the union?

Just Wondering

Dear J.W.,

Great questions! What the ASCCC has been monitoring in Sacramento is an increased interest by legislators in community colleges. Proof of this increased interest is evident in SB 1440 (Padilla, 2010) about the transfer degrees and SB 1143 (Liu, 2010) about student success. Both of these pieces of legislation created major changes within community colleges, and in the case of SB 1440, the CSU. Efforts to influence these bills were conducted by the Faculty Association for California Community Colleges (FACCC), the Academic Senate, union leaders, and others. Some faculty or senates also participated locally in providing information and education to legislators about the pros and cons of these bills and others under development.

Senates are encouraged to educate, not lobby, legislators at their local area offices or in Sacramento. Faculty members can make visits and calls and send emails to the senators and assembly members who represent the college, providing the legislators with faculty perspectives and positions passed by the state or local academic senate. You are encouraged to join with your union colleagues when making visits or developing materials to send to legislators. The senate and union may not always agree on a bill or topic so it’s best to plan ahead for the meetings and agree on common talking points. The job of advocacy and education is not solely a job for the union. It’s a job for faculty.

The Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS), which has representatives from the UC, CSU and CCC Academic Senates, recommends that faculty from all three segments join together in advocacy and education of legislators. The common message for faculty of these groups is the value of higher education for the citizenry, the role of higher education in economic recovery for the state, and the dependence of all our students on robust, accessible education at all institutions of public higher education. Materials are available online to support faculty in these endeavors at <http://icas-ca.org/advocacy-materials>, and more materials are scheduled to be added this year. ICAS thanks FACCC for the excellent resources that suggest best practices for a successful visit to a legislative office. Check out FACCC’s website for more information about advocacy too, <http://www.faccc.org/>.

Good luck!