

# ROSENSTRUM

ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEWSLETTER

## Valuing Diversity

*by Hoke Simpson, President*

I will never forget my interview for the job I still hold, 33 years later, as an instructor of philosophy at Grossmont College. I sat in a room with the president and vice president of the college and, for more than two hours, engaged in a heated discussion about teaching.<sup>1</sup> Employing a variation of McLuhan’s “medium is the message,” I argued that the principal lesson taught in traditional college classes was that students should sit still and do what they’re told, that this lesson was the same no matter what the nominal subject matter of the course, and that the primary function of college, therefore, was that of quashing any tendencies to uniqueness and turning out docile citizens who would dependably function within a limited range of social normalcy. Whatever I did in my classes, I assured them, would be designed to undermine and subvert this oppressive tradition. My students might or might not learn much about philosophy, but they would sure as hell learn what college was designed to do to them, and they’d learn a great deal about how to fight it. My interlocutors argued, with equal vehemence, that my attitude was irresponsible both to my discipline and my students.

They hired me the next day. For the next few years, I engaged in what might be generously characterized as “cutting-edge, experimental, non-directive” teaching, until it gradually dawned on me (1) that what my students were learning seemed to be that my classes were an easy ‘A’ if only they were willing to show up and emote, and (2) that my own traditional education had not left me feeling or acting particularly oppressed. (I know, we might argue that it was precisely that oppressive tradition that was the cause of my slow epiphany—but to go there would only prove, again, that the intellect can be a tool of masochism.) My teaching, as a result, eventually worked its way to within the bounds of the normal. In the meantime, the senior members of my department, to their credit, protected me from subsequent administrations, less sympathetic to my need to experiment.

It was not until 11 or 12 years later that I was asked to serve on a hiring committee myself, and was first exposed to the system that is still with us today. The hire was in the department of Computer Science and Information Systems, in which I was, by then, teaching part of my full-time load. Because of my peripheral role in the department, I was not involved in the paper screening or in the preparation of

<sup>1</sup> I had already met with the faculty; the “interview” lasted ten minutes. My first year was to be as a sabbatical leave replacement, and they had clearly already determined to offer me the job based on my recommendations from graduate school.

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the interview questions, but was only asked to participate in the interviews themselves. Prior to the first interview, committee members were handed a sheet of prepared questions, it was decided who would read which of them to the candidates, and the interviews began. I found the process appalling. Both interviewers and interviewees were stripped of their humanity and required to engage in a stilted simulacrum of communication. It was as though authenticity had been banned from the room. No one in this process was encouraged to be themselves: the interviewers were required to be



Hoke Simpson

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# French Fries, Funding, and Student Success: Occasions for Unity

by Hoke Simpson, President

As I write this, I'm sitting in the Roadhouse Café in LAX, Terminal 7, with a two-hour wait for a connecting flight. I was here a few weeks ago with Executive Director Julie Adams for a pause of similar proportions; we got a lot of work done (see accompanying photo), but, as importantly, we both noticed what a pleasant place it was to wait. The Roadhouse has a sign on the outside window, "Last Chance for Good Eats" (a believable enough claim as you're about to board an airplane), it has a Route 66 theme on the inside, and it seems to be a family enterprise—run by a very functional family. Everyone working here is upbeat, they treat one another with care and respect, and they are very solicitous of their customers. My order of french fries (excellent—real potatoes) was greeted with as much enthusiasm as my steak and scampi order at the Palm Springs Doral last night (a meeting of the occupational deans, who don't fool around about their meeting sites). The world needs places like this, places where being there is easy. Sure, we need challenge, danger and excitement, too; but just coming into an airport these days reminds us that there's more than enough of that, and

that it's the peace and tranquility and the welcoming atmosphere that require the work.

Our community college system seems to me to be behaving more like a functional family than it has in the past, a trend that can only bode well for our students. There are several opportunities for faculty to contribute to that trend this year, and I want to urge you to take advantage of them.

First, there are, as always, issues of funding. I have heard from all over the state that campus constituencies have been working together toward the passage of Proposition 47, as well as, in many cases, for local facilities bond issues. We are all hoping for a big payoff on November 5th, and a much-needed renaissance in our facilities.

I also hope that academic senates are working with their administrations, staff and students on our voter registration and student mobilization campaign, designed to bring our 2.6 million students into the political process to lobby in their own interest on community college issues, with funding at the forefront of these. This is a project that needn't—in fact, shouldn't—end on November 5th, for

the aim is not a vote on a particular measure, but ongoing contact with legislators and the Governor to create the political will to address the disparate funding of the public higher education segments. If we can successfully get this effort off the ground, we can, in the future, look to more sophisticated and more focused ways to employ community college "voter power." In the meantime, we have the opportunity to bring all our constituent-



▲ Academic Senate Executive Director, Julie Adams at the Roadhouse Café in LAX

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# Information Competency: Moving Ahead Despite ...

At its September 2002 meeting, the Board of Governors was poised to adopt a new graduation requirement for all California community college students. This new requirement for information competency, employing the definition of information competency adopted by the Academic Senate, would indicate to transfer institutions and to employers that our students had the ability to recognize the need for information and to find, evaluate, use, and communicate information in all its various formats. It combines aspects of library literacy, research methods and technological literacy. Information competency includes consideration of the ethical and legal implications of information use and requires the application of both critical thinking and communication skills. [Proposed Revisions to Title 5, Chapter 6, Subchapter 10, Section 55601]

However, just days before the Board was to approve this requirement, the Department of Finance (DOF) declared that a review of graduation requirements would present an “unfunded mandate” to districts; thus, the DOF informed the Board that it was not to adopt this new requirement and that moving ahead to consider it at that time would be illegal.

This frustrating development, a clear intrusion into the right of the system to make its own determinations about educational programs, requirements, and quality, is a source of ongoing discussion throughout the state. The Board, the Chancellor, the Consultation Council, and community college faculty supported this new requirement and had tacitly understood that any attendant “costs” would be borne by local colleges or districts in an effort to improve the educational experiences of all our students.

This procedural setback, however, has not dampened faculty’s enthusiasm for this requirement. Because local districts remain free to adopt this graduation requirement independent of Board action, colleges, led by their faculty and especially their curriculum committees, continue to press

by *Kate Clark and Dan Crump*

forward in identifying how the local curriculum can best meet the local needs of students and the community by introducing information competency. Prompted perhaps by the once-pending adoption of such a requirement, faculty, deans, and other administrators across the state have launched their own spirited discussions.

The Academic Senate will present for adoption at the Fall 2002 Plenary Session, a second paper in what will no doubt be a series of documents published to support these efforts to institute local information competency requirements. This new document demonstrates how six colleges (Diablo Valley, Glendale, Cabrillo, Cuyamaca, Santa Rosa, and Merced) have gone about making and implementing their local decisions. Often beginning with the definition of information competency adopted by the Academic Senate, these faculty fostered a college-wide discussion by asking such questions as these: What courses currently offered address information competency? What sort of additional courses might be offered? How might the components of information competency be integrated into existing courses?

We urge local senate presidents to share the draft document widely (available electronically at <http://www.academicsenate.cc.ca.us>) and solicit faculty comment prior to session; presuming the paper’s adoption in October, we then hope that the final publication of this informative paper in hard copy and on the Academic Senate website will further stimulate your own local innovation.

In support of resolutions adopted in Spring 2001 and Fall 2001, the Academic Senate also urges faculty to consider how such an information competency requirement might be applied to vocational and technical programs, especially to certificate programs of 18 units or more. At the 2002 Fall Plenary Session, the Curriculum Committee and the Occupational Education Committees will jointly sponsor a breakout on this very topic to explore with faculty the relevance of such competencies to these areas of study. We invite you to join these discussions.



*Kate Clark*

INFORMATION COMPETENCY

## Valuing Diversity

“neutral” in their responses; and the candidates were required to pour themselves into the mold constituted by the predictable, insipid, systematically inoffensive questions.

The top finalist was, of course, predictable, insipid, and systematically inoffensive (until she was hired). The best candidate, in my view, was one who was least able to contain herself within this process; she kept verging on breaking out and being herself. In this context, though, she was perceived as “weird” and slightly dangerous—which, of course, she was. Each flash of authenticity threatened to explode the process, to reflect it back on itself and reduce it to a heap of embarrassed rubble.

The interviews completed, I went to the dean and expressed my dismay at what had come to pass in our hiring procedures. The contrast, I pointed out, between this recent, Kafkaesque experience and my own hiring interview could not have been more stark. The people interviewing me wanted to know who I was, and genuinely encouraged me to show them what I was made of. And they, in turn, did not hesitate to convey to me their own deeply held convictions. The result was an impassioned dialogue that left me feeling that this place was one where I truly wanted to work. I could not imagine a candidate feeling that way about our college as the result of the interviews we had just conducted. In fact, if I wanted to communicate that our college was a haven for those who were most comfortable when repressing their humanity, seeking others equally at ease with a denial of their personhood—a community, in other words, of crazy people—I could find no better way to do it than through the process we had just engaged in.

That meeting with the dean was the beginning of what has been a 20-year effort to inject humanity into a process that has become the norm in the California Community College system. I am now convinced that the effort should be abandoned, and with it the process itself.

What has brought me to this point is a series of reflections on the “crisis” in our hiring policy brought about by the Third Appellate Court ruling on Proposition 209 in the Connerly case. By striking down the statutes and regulations governing affirmative action, the court is seen to have struck a blow to efforts to achieve diversity within the community colleges, and to have presented us with the challenge of achieving diversity through other means. To accept that challenge is to seek to iden-

tify the obstacles to achieving diversity, and then to find ways to overcome them.

Whatever else Ward Connerly and Proposition 209 have done, they have not robbed us of the tools sufficient to achieving our goal. That much at least is clear from the dismal record of our progress. If we are going to think anew about how to diversify our faculty and staff, then, we need to move beyond the desire for new regulations to replace those struck down, and begin with the as yet unanswered questions: What has kept us from getting there so far? and, once the obstacles are identified, How do we overcome them?

One obvious place to look for the impediments to diversity is at the attitudes of those serving on the hiring committees. Are they pro or con, actively seeking to hire diverse candidates, or actively—or passively—resisting? My own experience on hiring committees in my district suggests that this is a genuine source of our problems. And my experience as a human being living in America also suggests that these attitudes are heartbreakingly difficult to change. We must continue to try, and we must eventually succeed if we are to succeed as a civilized nation; but we cannot hang our hopes of achieving diversity in our ranks in the short term on changing peoples’ hearts.

We can, however, change the process which seems as though it were designed, however unconsciously, to give comfort to the opponents of diversity and to silence its advocates. The process I have described above, the one we have all employed for decades and which we take for granted in all of our discussions, is one which does just that. I have no doubt that the process was designed by well-intentioned people to promote fairness and to eliminate bias and cronyism in hiring. The process is fatally flawed where diversity is concerned, however, for it identifies “fairness” with “uniformity” or sameness, whereas to celebrate diversity is to embrace variety or difference. From the interviewer’s perspective, even those who might champion diversity are shut down, for this process allows no championing, no overt encouragement nor overt challenge. From the candidate’s perspective, we must recognize that in hiring procedures the medium truly is the message, and our process screams “No variety wanted here!”

So, if we abandon our current way of doing things, identifying it accurately as a major obstacle to the achievement of diversity, what do we do instead? We invite candidates to lunch or to dinner, we sit down with them and engage them in serious discussion, we challenge them to show us what they’re

really about, and we let them see who we are as well. And, sure, we have them teach a real class of real students—and we don't worry that they aren't the same students for each candidate or that each candidate might teach a different topic. In short we treat candidates and ourselves like human beings interested in discovering if they want to be one another's colleagues for the next thirty years.<sup>2</sup>

But how can we guarantee fairness in such circumstances or, beyond that, ensure that we don't just choose as colleagues those who are most like ourselves? Short of absolute guarantees, we can, in fact, do a great many things to promote fairness and the championing of diversity. We can ask that every academic senate form a committee on hiring and diversity, and that this committee establish, with the full support of the administration, a training program for all members of hiring committees. We can ask that such programs seek, in the words of a recently adopted Academic Senate paper, to

- ▶ convey a sense of the educational, vocational, and social value to students and the campus community of a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives among its members;
- ▶ reduce trainees' fear of, and induce a positive appreciation of, cultural differences;
- ▶ communicate clearly that discrimination based on cultural and racial difference is wrong, and illustrate the damage—social, socioeconomic, and psychological—that has occurred as a result of discriminatory practices;
- ▶ communicate the importance of campuses becoming cultural models for students: that, by providing an environment which honors diversity and is free of prejudice, the college can produce in students attitudes that will contribute to the elimination of bigotry in the larger community;
- ▶ provide trainees with specific strategies and techniques for promoting inclusiveness in job descriptions, advertising, paper screening, and interviews, as well as eliminating unintended exclusiveness; [and]
- ▶ persuade trainees that good hiring practice demands reaching the broadest pool of poten-

<sup>2</sup> As far as I have been able to determine, there are no legal obstacles to such an "opening up" of our interview procedures. In fact, interviews in the UC system appear to be conducted in much the fashion that I have described. The rigidity of our own procedures seems to be grounded primarily in a fear of lawsuits.

tial candidates and hiring the candidate who will be the greatest asset to students and the campus community.<sup>3</sup>

We can ask, as some colleges already do, that no one be permitted to serve on a hiring committee unless they have undergone training, and that there be a requirement that all potential committee members be "re-certified" on a regular basis. And we can ensure adherence to this policy by having the academic senate make all appointments to hiring committees in consultation with discipline faculty. Our aim would be, in part, that those who are frightened by their own humanity, who, that is, are afraid of difference, would either get over it or self-select themselves out of what they perceived as an onerous process.

We can charge academic senates with the development and oversight of part-time hiring policies that ensure the same level of professional consideration as is accorded to full-time hires.

We can ask academic senates to take the lead in initiating and sustaining internship programs, such as the SDICCCA program in San Diego.

I am not suggesting for a moment that the process under which I was hired 33 years ago be taken for a model. In fact, in almost everything but the interview, that process was deeply flawed. We have indeed come a long way since then in terms of our awareness of the value of diversity and of the factors that contribute to our achieving a more diverse faculty. But we have also made some mistakes, mistakes that I believe impede the achievement of our goal.

In conclusion, the Third Appellate Court ruling did not revoke section 87360 (b) of the California Education Code, the section that makes faculty hiring policies the product of joint agreement between academic senates and their governing boards. Those policies must now be reconstituted in the light of the Connerly decision. I am suggesting that academic senates must take responsibility for realizing the value of diversity in their own ranks, and that this might best be accomplished by first removing the straitjacket that identifies fairness with uniformity, and replacing it with an open process that permits diverse candidates and the champions of diversity among the faculty to affirm the value of human variety and difference.

<sup>3</sup> A Re-examination of Faculty Hiring Processes and Procedures. Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, adopted Fall 2000.



Renee Reyes Tuller

# If I Have to Explain, You Wouldn't Understand

by Renee Reyes Tuller, Counseling and Library Faculty Issues Committee Chair

There is a saying in the biker world (I mean the Harley Davidson world) that seems apropos to our state of affairs on the front line as community college counseling faculty.

That saying is: 'If I have to explain, you wouldn't understand.' What do I mean and how does it relate to riding a Harley Davidson motorcycle?

Well, my husband opened my eyes to the biker world—the love of the outdoors, and the “feeling” of freedom in riding on the open road. The beauty of that “feeling” makes everything else seem insignificant. It is meditation on wheels—words just cannot explain this “feeling” better. Bikers have a hard time explaining “that feeling” to folks who don't understand “that.” In other words, if a biker gets into a situation when there is a need to explain “it”, then you just wouldn't understand “it”. There is a deep connection of bikers to bikers since within that subculture there is no need for explanation; they share that mutual appreciation for that freedom of riding. No words need to be spoken, no justifications for the choices made. There is an “us” reality, and for those that don't understand, a “them” reality.

In the last 20 months as your South Representative for the Academic Senate, I have had the opportunity to realize how this “us and them” phenomenon in the biker world is oh so similar and prominent in the educational world within the California community colleges. When I get around “them,” I realize how absolutely complicated it is to explain the frontline truth that in the counseling “us” world we know so well as faculty. “They” want us to explain why our transfer numbers to CSU and UC are not rising more steadily. “They” want “us” to explain why we need retirement positions replaced with another full-time counseling position. “They” want “us” to explain why we need new positions to accommodate the growth happening at so many community colleges in the state.

Counseling faculty are consistently put on the defensive unlike other faculty on campus. The reality for many counseling faculty is “If we have to explain, we know you won't understand.” For the sake of this article, I am going to try to explain.

“We” are the faculty on the front line who are counseling and educating the most diverse students on the planet in the largest educational system in the world. We must wear a number of hats in accomplishing this mission and adapt quickly to the ever changing needs of our students. In a nutshell, we are our students' advocates, teachers, mentors, healers, tutors, parents, sisters, brothers, holistic guides, diplomats, cheerleaders, academic and personal coaches, friends, politicians, and drill sergeants. We are the lucky ones to witness first hand the enormous changes our students go through to attend class, to achieve simple goals, to transfer, and overcome unbelievable odds. We feel our students' journey as we guide them like sherpas up the Himalayan mountains. We feel their pain, we rejoice in their victories—however small or large. We provide the ingredients that will never be explained through numbers and statistics that are so heavily relied upon by “them” in measuring our success. We are that powerful a force in many of our students' lives. We know that.

As counseling faculty we also know that many of our colleagues and administrators on our own campuses do not fully recognize, understand, acknowledge or value what we really do. Recently, I heard a story of a college president who walked into the counseling department and saw the hordes of students waiting in the lobby. The president asked a counselor, “What are all these students doing here?” The counselor said, “It's fall registration. This is our busiest time.” That seems trivial, but to have a college president not understand this, shows the lack of understanding about what we do.

With \$22 million dollars cut from matriculation, \$30 million cut from CalWORKs, and all

of the \$5.2 million Staff Development monies eliminated, the target of the cuts show an obvious attack on where we are most vulnerable—student services, specifically counseling. I have asked my colleagues across the state—at conferences and on the counseling listserv—“How are the budget cuts affecting your college?” Many counseling faculty responded to that question. Here are just a few responses.

At one college, all adjunct counseling resources have been eliminated. At another college, all counseling positions have been frozen. At a number of colleges, since all staff development money is gone, there will be no college conference money for counselors to attend the counselor training conferences at UC and CSU. At another college, the Learning Disabled students will no longer have tutoring. Many CalWORKs programs are eliminated or will have a skeleton crew to transition the CalWORKs students to other programs. At one college, there was a reduction to their counseling contracts for seven counselors that were moved from 215 days to 195 days, a 20-day reduction. The total savings was \$38,943 and the loss to students was over 4,000 student contacts. This same college asked counselors to return to work for reduced pay. Several counselors chose to take the lower rate of pay to protect their jobs. They were told there wasn't any money, and then more money was found. One college simply slashed 38% out of the counseling department. Some colleges are consolidating positions, eliminating others and downsizing support staff. Another counselor mentioned the issue of “college starter” programs, whereby the K through 12 students can attend the community college—yet the state is not funding such programs. Instead the state is slashing the budget and allowing the youngsters access to community college education.

These are only a handful of examples of the fallout counseling faculty are seeing as the budget knife has cut into the heart of counseling and student services. Many counseling faculty are trying to do the best they can with the set of cuts that have hit them and to see as many students as possible. However, the consensus is “we” know our students are being hurt. This is happening at a time when our colleges, “they,” are asking “us” counseling faculty

- ▶ *Why our transfer numbers are not rising more steadily.*
- ▶ *Why we cannot open for longer hours and on the weekends.*
- ▶ *Why we cannot start an online, web advising program.*
- ▶ *Why we cannot start an ambassador program.*
- ▶ *Why we cannot do more outreach with less release time.*
- ▶ *Why we cannot offer more classes.*
- ▶ *Why specialists cannot be in different department areas.*
- ▶ *Why we cannot be more involved on committees.*
- ▶ *Why we cannot see more students in less time.*
- ▶ *Why we cannot provide more career counseling workshops, transfer workshops, probation workshops, time management, stress management and life skills workshops.*

“They” want “us” to explain why we can't do more with less. “They” want more transfer numbers, more graduation numbers, more outreach numbers, more application numbers, more FAFSA numbers. The goal is to have more, more, bigger and more impressive numbers to display and revel in.

How do we get those larger numbers? Outcomes, Student Learning Outcomes is the current mantra in the planning circles that are humming the answer to our prayers, saying outcomes over and over again. “Outcomes”—we are now expected to go along the “outcome” path to la la land without truly questioning the legitimacy of what that really means. What does that mean for counseling faculty? Just what are we doing and for what reason? Is our success solely dependent on bigger numbers? What about our students?

These are really bad budget times. We all know that. The one thing that seems clear to me is that as colleges struggle to adapt to the budget

cuts, something has to go. That something comes down to either we reduce access, or we reduce services or quality of services to our students. There are going to be consequences for either path. Since most colleges will not consider reducing access, what option does that leave?

It is unmistakable in these economic times that “we” counseling and library faculty fall on the 50% law’s dark side of the ledger. As long as we are not considered faculty on the other side of the 50% law, we are open targets. The matriculation cuts have hit deeply into of many of our counseling departments and Transfer Centers. How can we continue to give our students less than they deserve? As long as “we” are on the dark side of the 50% law, we will be treated differently than other faculty. “We” are vulnerable and the Academic Senate has adopted resolutions in support of our position on the issue. (See below.)

So one way to move beyond “us” and “them” is to stay current with the issues we are dealing with in the state. We must work together as a united counseling faculty and bring our insight and expertise to the table. Get involved on a local level. I urge you to become involved with your local academic senate and your unions. It is up to “us” to attempt to bridge the gap of understanding with “them.” Our students depend on us. We know that.

\*(If you would like to be on the counseling listserve, please e-mail Renee Tuller [reneetuller@cox.net](mailto:reneetuller@cox.net))

## French Fries, Funding, and Student Success

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cies together in the shared recognition that we need a stronger political base if we are ever to solve our most enduring problems.

# RESOLUTIONS RELATED TO

## Fall 1999

REAFFIRM its previous position that counselors, librarians, and other faculty whose assignment may not be primarily in the classroom are faculty.

## Spring, 2001

WORK to amend California Education Code 84362(b)(1) and (d) to include the salaries of “counseling and library faculty”; WORK to amend California Education Code 84362 (d) such that the minimum percentage of any district’s apportionment spent on classroom, library, and counseling faculty salaries increases from the present standard of fifty percent to a percentage that is commensurate with the inclusion of counseling and library faculty members; and REAFFIRM the importance of establishing a statutory minimum percentage of instructional expenditure by districts and the value that such a criterion has in protecting the academic standards and central importance of instruction in the California Community Colleges.



Finally, a major occasion for working together presents itself this year in the areas of equity and diversity. The Chancellor's Office Task Force on Equity and Diversity, formed in response to the *Connerly v. State Personnel Board* decision, will soon be issuing its report, in which it will propose that we achieve our long-held goals by assigning primary responsibility and timelines for each goal to different system constituencies, and by getting a public commitment from each constituency that it will meet its objectives. For virtually every goal, there is the recommendation that the responsible group coordinate its activities with one or more other constituencies. In other words, there is the recognition that we are all going to have to make progress together if we are going to make progress at all.

In the area of student equity, for example, the Academic Senate is assigned responsibility for updating the document *Student Equity: Guidelines for Developing a Plan* by October, 2002 (we've met that deadline), and the CEOs are charged with adopting updated student

equity plans by March 2004, in coordination with all other district and college constituencies. We have, for years, bemoaned the fact that the original Board mandate to create these plans did not require regular updates or serious implementation, and have called for that to change (Resolution 6.01 F00). With the Task Force Report and the focus of the Board of Governors on the implementation of the report's recommendations, we now have an opportunity to work collaboratively to make revitalized plans and effective student equity strategies a reality in every district.

As delineated in the Student Equity: Guidelines document, a key ingredient in any plan will be a campus climate study, and the document proposes the sorts of research that can go into that. While we are exercising our collaborative skills, and thus making progress toward becoming a more functional community college family, let me suggest an addition to the research proposed on campus climates: Be sure to include a field trip to the Roadhouse Café.

### Spring 2001

URGE the Chancellor to protect counseling faculty and library faculty from unwanted attacks and work with the appropriate associations in gathering data and developing a survey to assess the impact of the 50% law on student success; and WORK with the Chancellor on re-convening the 50% law task force to review and study the data and to consider whether to recommend amendments to the 50% law (such as substantially increasing the percentage to include counseling and library faculty).

### Spring 2002

OPPOSE the layoff of any counseling faculty as a result of matriculation budget cuts.

## COUNSELING FACULTY

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Kate Clark

# Vigilance and Self-Defense: The Local Senate's Response to Crisis<sup>1</sup>

by Kate Clark, Vice President

From time to time, every local senate finds itself in the midst of crises—internal or organizational, at the college or within the district, lasting or transitory. Based on the experiences some senates have endured, we offer these suggestions for your consideration—and for wider debate and discussion. What follows, then are thoughts about the collective responsibilities of local senate members and advice particularly suited for local senate presidents and officers—whether in crisis or not.

## ROLES OF LOCAL SENATES IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Local senates must remain aware of changes in local or state regulation or in statute that impinge upon our duties—and upon those with whom we share governance roles. As a personal observation, I recommend that local senates consider retaining separate counsel familiar with education law and that they establish separate, legal defense funds independent of college funding mechanisms. This resource, in time of happy, conciliatory relationships, affirms our contentions and keeps us abreast of pending legislative or regulatory threats; in times of crisis, such counsel assumes duties and does not compel harried faculty to become masters of legal code, writs of mandate, formal grievances or other implements of legal recourse. By distributing the responsibility for vigilance, legal resources can ensure our informed participation.

Local senates must also confront moral and legal infringements upon shared governance in their institutions. Full participation should always be assumed, but never left unquestioned by the senate. Resistance need not be confrontational, but it should never be oblique; it must be clearly articulated and visible to all in the college community. The ability of tenured faculty to oppose injustice without reprisal often obligates them to do so on behalf of oth-

ers, particularly untenured faculty, the staff and students who are or who feel most vulnerable.

Local senates must never be complacent about their roles in educating and re-educating boards, new administrators, and new faculty. Senates need to present to these groups well-organized orientations that outline senate authority and the past practices that distinguish one campus from another. This need is particularly true of the smaller siblings of multi-college districts: board members and district administrators need information to compensate for the sometimes louder voice of the larger siblings; college administrators need such data and clarity if they are to advocate confidently for their institution.

With due diligence, the local senates *must* carry out their statutory responsibilities—and seek appropriate support for these governance tasks. At the same time, we must be prudent, respecting and reinforcing the delegated authorities of other bodies: the faculty bargaining unit, the classified senates, administrators' councils, and student government. Publicly supporting their work and resisting outside efforts to pit us against one another ensures open communication. Having a clearly articulated statement about college governance structures can also prevent incursions into other entities' "territories." Continual review of these locally—and legally—defined relationships translates into a continual renewal of commitment among leaders of governance groups. Joint planning or goal-setting among these groups can further cement resolve and mutual respect for the parameters of authority and consultative power.

Should rifts between segments or factions of the faculty occur, local senate leaders must seek to bridge these schisms whenever possible. Local senates should use flex week activities or presentations before the board trustees to highlight collaborative inter- and intra-college efforts, to emphasize what is positive, encourage future cooperation, and provide the media with positive examples. It is naïve to presume that wounds will heal quickly or that grievances will be forgiven. Senate leaders, however, must

<sup>1</sup> This article is an adaptation of an address given at the 2001 and 2002 Faculty Leadership Institutes.

present a professional model of decorum and reconciliation to be emulated by others.

Local senates clearly, then, must develop ongoing strategies to promote the quality of their programs and the institution. Key faculty leaders must continuously cultivate trusting relationships with legislative aides, with local officials, with influential community leaders, with foundation members, with colleagues in the K-12 and postsecondary communities—and with the press. Such efforts are of apparent benefit in times of crisis; but they also build our local reputations, or enable us to explain to the general public our need for bond issues or proposed legislation. They provide us with forums for ongoing conversations about educational and pedagogical matters often misunderstood by those outside of the academy. Some districts face a particularly daunting task in rebuilding a shattered reputation resulting from the malfeasance of trustees or college members. Rebuilding public trust in an institution cannot be done alone by a public relations officer who issues press releases; it will be accomplished by the one-on-one assurances made by those with the most enduring concern for the institution—its faculty.

Finally, as members of the local senates, we must clearly segregate acts of vengeance from those of vigilance. We must seek to prevent, after the crisis has passed, the same sort of retaliatory actions we denounced under a previous regime or on prior occasions. In taking action, we need to make the case for the skeptics within our institution and for the public outside of it; we must explain why the battles were necessary to preserve the institution as a whole.

#### FOR LOCAL SENATE PRESIDENTS OR OFFICERS

For a senate president—or any faculty leader—in time of crisis, we suggest these rather general truisms; however self-evident, they seem to bear repeating:

1. Take immediate stock of your own personal and professional resources. Admit your weaknesses publicly to your own small group of trusted comrades and solicit the aid of others who can do what you are not comfortable doing; now is not the time to acquire and practice new skills—you will be too busy just managing what lies before you.

If others are more adept at massaging the press contacts or interpreting the budgets, let them do so. Share the burden and communicate your gratitude to them in ways they hear and feel.

2. Do not delay gratification. Give yourself permission to ignore the phone calls, to declare your household off limits, to take a trip during which you are *incommunicado*. Listen to the experts: eat right and exercise regularly. It **does** matter and it **will** enable you to endure the steady accretion of worries and details, slights, wrongs, and other generally bad news to which you will (regrettably) fall heir.
3. Understand the truism that being privy to certain kinds of information and having the counsel of those in “high places” necessarily isolates you—from friends, from your fellow officers, from the faculty at large. Regardless of the assurances of others they stand behind you, remember that they are, indeed, *behind* you, and thus it is that leaders suffer the slings and arrows. Such isolation can be the most demanding of all your burdens.
4. Cultivate and nurture interdisciplinary friendships. Retain social connections beyond the politics and continue to share books, movies, jokes, parental woes, and lunches with those who may disagree with the new political shift or who are inherently apolitical. While their retreat from the fray may easily be misconstrued as a personal affront, not all of your colleagues have the courage to participate. Be grateful for and proud of those who muster the spirit; be patient with those who do not and hold on to your previous acquaintanceships with them. Ultimately, their friendships can help you—and your institution—repair the rends.
5. Continue to think long-range, beyond today’s immediate crisis, beyond your term of office, beyond this president or that chancellor or board of trustees, or those policies. You will endure, your classroom teaching will inspire, your students will matriculate, your friends will remain with you. Do the very best you can do, intellectually and morally, for the greatest number who may benefit, and then, pass the torch.



Shaaron Vogel

# Vocational Faculty—What’s Happening?

by Shaaron Vogel , Occupational Education Committee Chair

The purpose of this article is to highlight for occupational education faculty what is happening at the state level around vocational education.

As you all know, this budget year has not been very good for California or community colleges. While we have not suffered as much as some, we have still seen cuts in very important programs. For example, CalWORKs and matriculation funds have been cut. Many students rely on federal and state funds to attend college, particularly vocational education students. Without this funding, some students will not be able to complete or continue their education. The Academic Senate is monitoring current legislation and continues to fight to save funding for all community college programs. The Senate is also very sensitive to the funding for vocational students.

Nursing is a particularly hot subject this upcoming year. AB 2314 was signed by the Governor and is now law. This law would encourage community colleges to standardize all nursing program prerequisites statewide, encourage articulation agreements between the community college and CSU systems, and require implementation of the recommendations of the IMPAC project by September 1, 2004. This has some serious implications for community college nursing programs. The inability of small colleges to offer a full complement of prerequisites, for example, must be taken into account when addressing the issue of their standardization. Community college nursing faculty and their chairs need to attend the IMPAC meetings in large numbers and raise their voices. Community college nursing programs are very different from those at CSU and community colleges must ensure that their students’ needs are addressed in IMPAC. You can find out more information about the IMPAC Project and the upcoming meeting dates by visiting the IMPAC Website at [www.cal-impac.org](http://www.cal-impac.org). Please ensure that your college is represented at the regional and statewide meetings.

In June 2002 a validation study on Associate Degree Nursing Prerequisites was completed. This was done by the Center for Student Success: A

Health Care Initiative Sponsored Project. The Chancellor’s Office and the Academic Senate have some concerns regarding the implications of this study. This study examined the student selection measures that could be applied to improve the successful completion of ADN students in California community colleges. The goals are to increase successful program completion by reducing attrition and dropout from ADN programs and yet maintain access. The study involved 20 community college nursing programs and 5,000 students over a five year time period. The findings revealed that four factors were best predictors of student success in completing the nursing program: overall GPA, English GPA, core Biology GPA, and core Biology repetitions (the fewer the repetitions the better). The issues that develop from this study center around access and student equity and opportunity. When the selection criteria involving higher GPA requirements and fewer repetitions of core Biology courses were evaluated, it was found that the diversity of the student pool was reduced. It was found, not surprisingly, that students admitted under these selection criteria had higher success rates. However, in today’s nursing world we need more diversity, NOT less, so it would seem that tightening selection criteria is not an appropriate approach for community colleges. The study was very frank in stating that it was successful in evaluating institutional factors affecting success but had great difficulty with situational factors and dispositional characteristics that affect success. The study acknowledges that further study needs to be done. The authors of the study and the Chancellor’s Office agree that a multi-faceted approach needs to take place with the following goals: 1) increase numbers of nursing slots available in our programs; 2) increase outreach to recruit students into nursing; and 3) have counseling, advising, and other intervention strategies in place to help students succeed. Contact the Academic Senate for a copy of the study.

The Academic Senate has an Occupational Education Committee comprised of six to seven vocational faculty members. The committee plans breakouts for the Academic Senate plenary sessions each fall and spring as well as for the two Occupational Education Leadership conferences

offered each year. We urge you to watch your mailboxes for more information regarding these sessions and conferences. Additionally, as we begin to plan these events, please let us know what you would like to see incorporated in our planning. We want to know the hot occupational issues. Please plan to participate. We know that the faculty development funds have been cut from most budgets; however, the Occupational Education Leadership conferences cover your travel expenses, food and lodging. Your attendance is paid for, and the resources and breakouts are informative and offer an opportunity to network and connect with other occupational faculty.

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is seeking occupational education faculty to participate on a number of statewide committees. We want to hear your voices. As you may know, this last spring a vocational faculty member was elected to the At Large position on the Executive Committee for the Academic Senate. However, one member cannot serve on the many committees at the state level where the voice of occupational education is needed. Please turn in a nomination to serve form (available on our website) if you are interested in serving.



*Ian Walton*

## Local Senates

*by Ian Walton, Relations with Local Senates Chair*

The Relations with Local Senates Committee serves as a resource to local senates by assisting with local concerns related to strengthening the role of academic senates. This article provides background on some of the work of the Committee.

The Committee continues the tradition of two members from each Senate area. This year's members are:

**Area A:** Mike Butler (Redwoods) and Teresa Aldredge (Cosumnes River)

**Area B:** Kate Motoyama (San Mateo) and Cristine Ducoing (Solano)

**Area C:** Dorothy Williams (Antelope Valley) and Gary Morgan (Oxnard)

**Area D:** Terri Ann Linn Watson (Chaffey) and Mary Lee Meiners (San Diego Miramar)

Last year the Academic Senate initiated a program of visits to local academic senates. These visits were carried out by either a member of the Relations with Local Senates Committee or the Executive Committee. The purpose of the visits was to enhance the ability of the Academic Senate to provide support and advice to local senates by observing and gathering information about recent concerns and successes. The visits provided an ideal opportunity to share current information—and in some cases war stories. This year the Local Senates Committee plans to continue visits to colleges beginning with those that

were not visited last year. If you are interested in having a member attend your local senates meeting soon, please contact committee chair Ian Walton at [ian\\_walton@wvmccd.cc.ca.us](mailto:ian_walton@wvmccd.cc.ca.us) to schedule a convenient time.

Over the summer the new Local Senates Handbook was published—the result of much hard work by last year's committee. The revised Handbook is a great resource for your local senate. Your local senate office should have received a paper copy but you can download your very own copy from the Senate website at: <http://www.academicssenate.cc.ca.us/LocalSenates/Hb.htm>. You can also contact the Senate Office for additional copies.

One of the goals of this year's Committee is to work on a Voter Registration drive to realize the promise of mobilizing students raised at the Fall 2001 Plenary Session by Brian Murphy. Each local senate president was asked to designate coordinators for the drive. If no coordinator was identified, the local senate president and vice president were designated as the drive coordinators. Recently, materials have been mailed to your local senate president and vice president as well as posted on our website. The Committee will also hold a breakout on Voter Registration at this year's Fall Session. Please join us and share your successes around registering our over 2.6 million students. We are looking forward to seeing you all there.



Leon F. Marzillier

# The Accountability Game

*Stanford 9 in K-12, HMO's in Health Care, ...MSLOs in CC's*

*by Leon F. Marzillier, Area C Representative*

The increasing demand for accountability, particularly in tax-supported institutions appears to be aimed primarily at the community colleges. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with expecting accountability, but, when an activity is held up to scrutiny, we should ask ourselves: What kind of accountability is being called for? Who is demanding the accountability? Why are they demanding it? And, are the methods used to scrutinize the activity valid?

In June 2002, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) passed radical new standards by which to accredit community colleges, incorporating the idea of “continuous improvement” of “measurable student learning outcomes” (MSLOs) throughout. The ACCJC passed these new standards over the vociferous objections of respected faculty organizations. Nationally, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has come out against modifying accreditation standards this way, and in California, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges along with the Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers (CCC/CFT) have condemned this radical change by ACCJC. Why?

The whole concept of MSLOs as the latest fad in education is somewhat akin to the now discredited fad of the '90's, Total Quality Management, or TQM. Essentially, the ACCJC adopted MSLOs as the overarching basis for accrediting community colleges based on their faith in the theoretical treatises of a movement, just as advocates for the use of TQM in education (often called continuous quality improvement or CQI in educational circles) were part of an ideological movement. After repeated requests for research showing that such use of MSLOs is effective, none has been forthcoming from the ACCJC. Prior to large scale imposition of such a requirement at all institutions,

research should be provided to establish that continuous monitoring of MSLOs has resulted in measurable improvements in student success at a given institution. No such research is forthcoming because there is none. If the “learning paradigm” is so superior as to justify its widespread adoption, then the research should clearly be compelling.

The new standards would require documentation and continuous improvement of learning outcome measures at the course, program, and certificate levels. This would require faculty and administration to measure outcomes that can be immediately documented, not long-term outcomes such as successful application of coursework in students' careers.

Also, as student learning outcomes are measures of knowledge or skills a student has attained as a result of a given college course or program, they do not include institutional measures such as course retention, completion or graduation. Community colleges in California already gather data on institutional outcomes, but this would require generation and tracking of a whole range of new measures.

Often, objections to MSLOs are met with, “But, you faculty will define what the outcomes to be measured are.” This assumes that what faculty currently measure, via exams and grades are not adequate, and that faculty should spend their time generating new and much more specific skill based measures. However, no evidence has been presented establishing that the outcomes of our pedagogical efforts are not adequately measured by our current approaches, or that new measures would lead to greater student success.

In addition, much that is most beneficial in higher education is often difficult or impossible to measure—but certainly is not measurable at the course level. A business department might feel the most important outcome is that their students use what they learn in the classroom

successfully in a career in the business world. But this is not a learning outcome that can be documented at the course or program level.

In the book, “A Beautiful Mind” about the genius, John Nash, (upon which the movie of the same name is based), the early chapters, 3,4,5,...describe how undergraduates learned at Princeton. It is illuminating in how casually many of these students acquired knowledge, and certainly not in a measurable way, but learning was effective, nevertheless. Tiger Woods has said that, even though he dropped out of Stanford in his sophomore year, he learned skills important to him in his professional golfing career, specifically in the area of time management skills. How would one measure that outcome?

It is interesting that there is suddenly this push to get “accountability” from the community colleges, the institutions that serve the most diverse and working class students, and not the same push to get it from the elite institutions, even though many universities are, like most community colleges, dependent upon taxes for their continued existence. The truth of the matter is that institutions like the Ivy League schools and top universities are not being threatened with MSLOs.

Furthermore, the MSLO movement utilizes a scorecard approach, in which you assess in percentage terms where your students are now in terms of a defined learning outcome, and how you would like to increase the percentage in 5 years, say. Then, you set as your goal the percentage improvement you want to make each semester! This requirement, that there be continuous improvement of learning outcomes, assumes that student achievement can be increasingly rationalized like a production process.

This push to document and improve student learning outcomes essentially creates pressure to focus one’s course objectives on discrete, skill-based and hence most easily measured variables. Quantitative variables are more easily tracked than qualitative ones. This over time will yield to a “dumbing down” of the curriculum, as broad capacities and more long-term,

qualitative changes in student behavior and perception will be relatively de-emphasized in the push to measure.

How about faculty members in art deciding that an outcome is that students have at least a rudimentary appreciation of great art and how to recognize it? How does one measure that? How does one measure a sociology department’s desired outcome that their students have a more tolerant attitude towards other cultures and ethnic groups? You can probably think of more examples of the impossibility of measuring outcomes of what we do. Even if it were possible, is it realistic to expect a 2% (say) improvement per semester in any given outcome?

In the teaching and learning process, there is a two-way interaction, and there has to be cooperation and interest on both ends. Whether a student succeeds in a class is a function of not one but many factors. Some of these are: the intellectual level of the student’s household, the quality of the preparation the student received in educational institutions attended before reaching ours, the priority that the student places on the class, the amount of effort a student is willing to apply outside of class, resistance to distractions from friends, family, and jobs. Many of these are beyond the instructor’s or college’s control. Yes, we can find new and better ways to present the material, and we can use tutors and workshops to help motivate students and to help them succeed, but those efforts alone might go for naught for some students.

Perhaps what irritates us most about the ACCJC’s action, besides the fact that they chose to ignore the best advice of the practitioners in the field (the faculty), is that tying accreditation to MSLOs means that the faculty as a whole would have to spend precious time and effort to engage in measuring everything that moves on the campus, diverting our energy and efforts from interacting with students. Will our colleges receive additional funding for these efforts? We seriously doubt it! So, we are being asked to engage in what virtually amounts to a huge unfunded mandate.

ACCREDITATION

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*The Rostrum is a publication  
of the Academic Senate  
for California Community  
Colleges, 428 J Street,  
Suite 430, Sacramento, CA,  
95814.*

*The Rostrum is distributed to  
all faculty through college  
academic senate presidents  
and by individual mailing.*

*Letters and unsolicited  
articles by faculty members  
are invited. For deadline  
information call (916)  
445-4753 or email us at  
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## The Accountability Game

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

What is the evidence that the institutionalization of testing like the Stanford 9 in K-12 education has really improved children's education? Too often, teachers find themselves "teaching to the test," rather than providing a well-rounded education. In health care, HMOs look over the shoulders of health practitioners to decide what procedures should or should not be pursued. Conscientious faculty members are constantly studying ways to improve their teaching and to get better results in the classroom. We do not need the MSLOs movement to second-guess the way we do our jobs.

Another argument that is advanced is that the ACCJC approved these new standards unanimously; the three faculty members sitting on the commission also voted for these new standards, allowing the commission staff to claim that there are faculty supporting the MSLOs movement. Of course it is possible to find individual faculty members to support almost any position that one can think of, but these faculty members were not appointed by any faculty organization, and their votes represented nobody but themselves. The Academic Senate plenary sessions passed resolution after resolution condemning the use of MSLOs as the basis of accrediting decisions, many being passed unanimously. These were votes of faculty members representing faculty at all 108 California community colleges, and represent the collective wisdom of California community college faculty. The faculty members sitting on the ACCJC are or have been active in local or state senates. It is unfortunate that they did not heed that collective wisdom and vote against the implementation of these new standards. Every fad that comes along will find a few adherents among the faculty, but when the opposition among our faculty is as strong as it is, it's clear that the faculty is not split on this issue.

Accountability is fine, but don't give us an untested, obviously bogus scheme with which to hold us accountable when there is not one institution in the country where it has been shown to be effective. Faculty leaders were not brought into the discussion to construct these new standards. Don't tell us, "Oh, but you establish the outcomes to measure," when you haven't asked us whether or not we want to even establish such outcomes in the first place. Let us have an open, frank discussion with representatives of all constituencies, about how to judge the effectiveness of a community college for the purposes of accreditation. In California, accreditation processes are an academic and professional matter: number 7 of the 10+1 items that require input from the academic senate is "Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports." It is a violation of California law that the Academic Senate was not brought into the discussion in the formation of these new standards.

Based on the resolutions passed overwhelmingly at its plenary sessions, the Academic Senate is studying ways to combat the institutionalization of MSLOs. The Academic Senate is working with both the AAUP and the CCC/CFT to consider our next steps, whether it is possible to delay implementation of these radical changes in the accreditation standards, as well as to explore alternatives to the ACCJC.

Please, community college faculty members, give us your ideas on how to resist this reactionary movement so akin to what is going on in health care. Do you really want community colleges to become the HMOs of higher education? If not, spread the word that we do not have to put up with this, and together we can nip this impending disaster in the bud.