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The Vision for Success and Guided Pathways: Responding to Change

by Julie Bruno, President

The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.

–Albert Einstein

The word alone is enough to cause a collective shudder in our system. Our colleges are constantly contending with change; whether it comes from the state in the form of a new program, initiative, or legislative mandate or locally from a turnover in college leadership or shifting student demographics, some sort of change is always happening for us or to us. But although we may be used to living with frequent change, a recent confluence of forces has the potential to be a catalyst that provokes unusually profound and fundamental change at our colleges and in our system.

Changing the status quo requires a disruptive force to compel an individual or an organization to re-think processes and policies and to take action. For example, when a college hires a new president, a period of change normally occurs as the college adjusts to a new leader and as the leader adjusts to the college. This type of disruption can affect not only our colleges but also our system. A new leader frequently brings a fresh perspective and vision, which is often both exciting and challenging.

VISION FOR SUCCESS

At the Board of Governors’ January meeting, Chancellor Eloy Oakley announced his intention to develop a strategic vision for the system. The Foundation for California Community Colleges was asked to lead the project, which began in earnest in April by convening a virtual town hall meeting to gather information and provide community college stakeholders an opportunity to inform and shape the strategic vision. Interviews with additional stakeholders, experts, and leaders from inside and outside the system were held during the same time period, as well as a review of research and literature on community colleges. This process yielded a report titled Vision for Success: Strengthening Community Colleges to Meet California’s Needs, which was completed in June and submitted to the Board of Governors in July.

The Vision for Success contains ambitious goals for the system to achieve by 2022, including the following:

1. Increase by at least 20% the number of CCC students annually who acquire associates degrees, credentials, certificates, or specific skill sets that prepare them for in-demand jobs.
2. Increase by 35% the number of CCC students transferring annually to a UC or CSU.
3. Decrease the average number of units accumulated by CCC students earning associate’s degrees from approximately 87 total units (the most recent system-wide average) to 79 total units—the average among the quintile of colleges showing the strongest performance on this measure.
4. Increase the percent of exiting career technical education students who report being employed in their field of study from the most recent statewide average of 60% to an improved rate of 69%—the average among the quintile of colleges showing the strongest performance on this measure.
5. Reduce equity gaps across all of the above measures through faster improvements among traditionally underrepresented student groups, with the goal of cutting achievement gaps by 40% within 5 years and fully closing those achievement gaps within 10 years.
6. Reduce regional achievement gaps across all of the above measures through faster improvements among colleges located in regions with the lowest educational attainment of adults, with the ultimate goal of fully closing regional achievement gaps within 10 years.

The report also includes seven core commitments that were designed to support the colleges and the system in achieving the six goals:

1. Focus relentlessly on students’ end goals.
2. Always design and decide with the student in mind.
3. Pair high expectations with high support.
4. Foster the use of data, inquiry, and evidence.
5. Take ownership of goals and performance.
6. Enable action and thoughtful innovation.
7. Lead the work of partnering across systems.

The Board of Governors reviewed and accepted the Vision for Success at its July meeting. Discussion of the goals continued the following day during the Board’s annual retreat. In response to the report, the Board decided to take a deeper look and formed three task forces to investigate the specific goals further. The Board will take action on the report at its September meeting, when members may choose to adopt the goals as stated in the report, make modifications before adoption, or choose not to act.

CCC GUIDED PATHWAYS AWARD PROGRAM

At the same time that the Vision for Success report was under development, the 2017-2018 California state budget was finalized. The budget included $150 million for the Guided Pathways Award Program administered by the Chancellor’s Office. As outlined in statute, this program provides grants to colleges that choose to meet specific criteria in implementing the guided pathways framework. The grant program is designed to build on the work of the American Association for Community Colleges (AACC) Pathways and the California Guided Pathways Projects with funding available for all 114 colleges.

Implementation of the guided pathways framework is recognized in the Vision for Success as a strategy to align and integrate the various initiatives and programs currently underway at our colleges such as the Student Support and Success, Equity, and Basic Skills programs. Further, throughout the discussion of the core commitments, the evidence-based practices that anchor the guided pathway framework are called upon to support progress towards achieving the Vision goals. Ultimately, the report states that the expectation is for guided pathways framework to be adopted by the entire system.

RESPONDING TO CHANGE

The Vision for Success goals and the implementation of the guided pathways framework are by no means the only forces driving change in our system. Other initiatives and programs, such as the College Promise and Strong Workforce Programs, and transfer initiatives including the Associate Degrees for Transfer and UC Transfer Pathways have required colleges to make significant changes in how they serve students. Extraordinary work is being accomplished at our colleges and in the system because of these programs and initiatives. With the addition of the Vision goals and the guided pathways framework, momentum is increasing for fundamental and transformative change at our colleges and in the system.

Change can provoke various responses. A few individuals will react by opposing the change, which may not be particularly useful in addressing the underlying issues. Others may choose to ignore change, assuming that it will pass and eventually life will return to the status quo. For many, change feels like one more thing to reckon with, and, knowing they must respond, they do so halfheartedly. Finally, some among us enthusiastically embrace change and take advantage of the momentum to create an improved experience for students and in the process better themselves, their work, and their colleges.

Ultimately, change will be what we make of it. Responding to change, no matter how exciting or disruptive, requires courage. We have the opportunity and ability to meet change with inquisitive and engaged minds, embracing the possibilities while remaining vigilant to ensure that we stay faithful to our values and principles and, most importantly, to safeguard the integrity of education for our students.

Our colleges are filled with intelligent and thoughtful colleagues who care deeply for our students. As educators, we are defined not only by the goals we adopt or the commitments we make but also by how we choose to achieve our goals and fulfill our commitments. Our choices can make all the difference. The California Community College System and our colleges are about to go through significant changes. We can never stop change, but we can always choose our response to changes and work to make them benefit our communities, our institutions, and our students.
Currently in California, three major guided pathways programs have been initiated: the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Pathways Project, the California Guided Pathways Project, and the California Community Colleges Guided Pathways Award Program. The programs all have different features, and thus the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is working to provide information on all three as well as general guidance for faculty as they address guided pathways at their local institutions.

CLARIFYING THE PATHWAYS PROGRAMS

AACC Pathway Project
The AACC Pathways Project is a national initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and supported by other national partners such as Achieving the Dream, the Aspen Institute, Jobs for the Future, the National Center for Inquiry and Improvement, and others. The AACC describes its pathways model as “an integrated, institution-wide approach to student success based on intentionally designed, clear, coherent and structured educational experiences, informed by available evidence, that guide each student effectively and efficiently from her/his point of entry through to attainment of high-quality postsecondary credentials and careers with value in the labor market.” To achieve this end, the intent of the AACC Pathways Project is to support colleges as they establish four essential practices: clarify paths to student end goals, help students choose and enter a pathway, help students stay on path, and ensure that students are learning.

A rigorous and competitive application process took place during Fall 2015, resulting in 30 colleges from 17 states being selected to participate, three of which are from California: Bakersfield, Irvine Valley, and Mt. San Antonio. Colleges participating in the 2016-2018 program are committed to sending teams to multiple institutes at a cost to each college of about $45,000. The AACC recently approved applications from additional colleges to participate in the 2017-2019 cohort, and these selected colleges will not receive grant funding from the AACC Pathways Project; rather, participation is based on a full fee-for-service model.

The California Guided Pathways Project
The California Guided Pathways Project adapted the national AACC Pathways concept in California. This project intends to support “a student-centered approach that can significantly increase the number of students earning community college credentials, while closing equity gaps. Rather than work with a subset of students, guided pathways are a college-wide undertaking that provides a framework for integrating California-based initiatives such as SSSP, Equity, Basic Skills Transformation, the Strong Workforce Program, and the California College Promise.”

As with the AACC Pathways Project, an application process took place in Spring 2017 that resulted in the selection of 20 California community colleges for participation in the California Guided Pathways Project. Tailored to meet the governance structure of the California Community College System, this process required the signature of the local academic senate president. The Foundation for California Community Colleges is the fiscal agent for this project with additional fiscal support from the College Futures Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Teagle Foundation, and required fees paid by participating colleges.
THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE GUIDED PATHWAYS AWARD PROGRAM

In order to support more participation in guided pathways, the California Community College Guided Pathways Award Program was approved by Governor Brown in the 2017-18 budget. A total of $150 million will be distributed to California community colleges in grant form by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. The Chancellor’s Office and the Board of Governors will be responsible for statewide implementation of the one-time grant program for colleges. The program includes “organizing students’ academic choices in a way that promotes better course-taking decisions” and creating a necessary “framework for colleges to better organize existing student support programs and strategically use existing funding to support student success.” Local senates of California community colleges must be prepared to address the impacts of this transformational effort, which requires engaging in deliberative conversations and creating collaborations around guided pathways at local colleges.

THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES (ASCCC)

The ASCCC has been involved in guided pathway discussions for over a year and strongly encourages the use of innovative strategies and actions that support students in achieving their educational goals. Resolution 9.12 F15 Support Local Development of Curricular Pathways urges local academic senates and curriculum committees to be genuinely involved in any decisions regarding curricular pathway programs under consideration. Although no single guided pathways model for all community colleges has been or is planned to be proposed, the ASCCC will investigate frameworks for implementation of pathways programs and disseminate effective practices as directed by Resolution 9.03 F16 Investigate Effective Practices for Pathways Programs.

In response to resolutions and recent legislation, and because pathways are an academic and professional matter, the ASCCC is forming a Guided Pathways Task Force. In addition, the ASCCC requests that each college establish a liaison that will communicate guided pathways program information, issues, questions, and concerns between the local academic senate and statewide groups.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Guided pathways are here. Faculty can either be pulled along as decisions are made by others, or faculty, through local academic senates, can take the lead. The Chancellor’s Office will soon announce a request for applications for colleges to apply for the CCC Guided Pathways Award Program funds. Faculty must be directly involved in the design and implementation of the programs at each college. The application for the grants will require that colleges demonstrate a commitment to the guided pathways framework as specified in Education Code §88922(c):

1. A letter of support to the Chancellor’s Office, with signatures of the president of the governing board, the chief executive officer, and the academic senate president required;
2. Attendance at an IEPI workshop on guided pathways;
3. Submission to the Chancellor’s Office of a work plan that outlines the college’s commitment to guided pathways, integration with other student-success initiatives such as the Basic Skills Initiative, the Zero Textbook Degree Initiative, SSSP, and the Adult Ed Block Grant, and college’s policies related to use of high school records and other assessment measures for student course placement.

Although several colleges have begun an implementation of their own guided pathways programs, local senates should familiarize themselves with each of the three pathway programs described. The ASCCC is committed to continuing to update the body with the latest information regarding guided pathways.

REFERENCES:

AACC Pathways Project: http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Resources/aaccprograms/pathways/Pages/default.aspx
California Guided Pathways Project: https://www.caguidedpathways.org
Resolution 9.03 Fall 2016: http://asccc.org/resolutions/investigate-effective-practices-pathways-programs
The last three years have been a whirlwind in the curriculum world, culminating with the 2017 Curriculum Institute, which included multiple presentations about the streamlining changes occurring in curriculum. In collaboration with the divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Services, and Workforce and Economic Development at the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO), the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges and the Chief Instructional Officers (CIO) Board began implementing changes to curriculum processes to make them more efficient and effective at the state and local levels.

In August 2016, Vice Chancellor of Educational Services Pamela Walker requested the creation of a workgroup to streamline curriculum processes. The workgroup identified three major areas that impact curriculum processes: local approval including local governing boards and regional consortia, the work done at the Chancellor’s Office, and external processes such as financial aid, accreditation, and veterans services. The workgroup recommended further study into possible changes at the Chancellor’s Office as well as a series of regional workshops targeting specific local processes that could be streamlined. At the Chancellor’s Office level, much of this work was passed to the California Community Colleges Curriculum Committee (5C), the successor to the System Advisory Committee on Curriculum (SACC). 5C’s charter was reworked to increase the faculty membership, clearly define the roles of the Chancellor’s Office, and make the group a recommending body rather than an advising one. With this charter in place, 5C and the workgroup undertook or continued a variety of projects to aid in the streamlining processes.

Both the workgroup and the ASCCC provided colleges with recommendations to improve local processes, including the adopted ASCCC paper Enuring Effective Curriculum Approval Processes: A Guide for Local Senates (Spring 2016). The workgroup also met with regional consortia to discuss the recommending role of the consortia under Title 5. The Chancellor’s Office reorganized several of its areas and gave those areas specific assignments regarding their roles in curriculum processes. In addition, 5C initiated discussions with external bodies regarding catalog rights, accrediting processes, and financial aid implications for changes to curriculum processes in order to ensure that no unintended consequences would harm students. Ultimately, the mantra of the work being done became “curriculum is curriculum is curriculum,” reinforcing the fact that all curriculum, regardless of modality, discipline, or field, should go through the same processes at both the state and local levels.
In terms of the statewide work with the Chancellor’s Office, a number of projects were completed in the past year. The 6th edition of the Program and Course Approval Handbook (PCAH) was released and is now available on the Chancellor’s Office website under the Academic Affairs Division. This updated PCAH is the work of numerous teams who spent more than two years revising and updating the document to reflect the current state of curriculum. However, as the streamlining efforts continue to move forward, a 7th edition of the PCAH will likely be needed in the next eighteen months to two years. The new PCAH, coupled with the documents for calculation of units and hours that were released in 2015, has provided colleges with the documentation necessary to implement streamlining at the local level.

The new Chancellor’s Office Curriculum Inventory was created and deployed to colleges in Summer 2017. This new software, which replaces the previous software that had been developed by Governet, streamlines the submission of curriculum to the Chancellor’s Office. In time, the system will become more intuitive and more streamlined, providing colleges with a nearly seamless submission process for all curriculum.

In Spring 2017 the Chancellor’s Office issued a memorandum returning some local authority to colleges regarding the approval of curriculum and introducing a new certification process. Colleges had previously been allowed to locally approve stand alone courses and submit those courses to the Chancellor’s Office and receive a control number without any further review. When that authority sunset in 2012, there were concerns that the processes for many of these courses would become unwieldy. After lengthy research and analysis, the Chancellor’s Office determined that stand alone course approval should be returned to the colleges, and the Board of Governors approved that change in July 2016. When the Curriculum Workgroup began meeting, discussions centered on allowing other forms of curriculum, including courses and programs, to be locally approved. Ultimately, the workgroup determined that four types of courses should be shifted to colleges’ control: stand alone credit courses, program applicable credit courses with substantial changes, program applicable credit courses with non-substantial changes, and new credit courses added to existing programs. These types of courses were chosen because the changes to Title 5 would be fairly limited and these changes would impact all colleges in the system. The new certification process, which was announced in October 2016, allowed colleges to locally approve these four types of courses provided that the curriculum chair and the chief instructional officer certified that local processes were followed and that the appropriate materials, such as the PCAH and Title 5, were used and adhered to. The Board of Governors approved Title 5 changes related to these changes in July 2017, and the second certification will be due in October 2017. As streamlining continues, this certification may come to include other types of courses, including noncredit, as well as programs, with continued education and assistance from the Academic Senate, the CIO Board, and the Chancellor’s Office.

Ultimately, the goal of the streamlining efforts is to allow colleges to approve and offer curriculum more rapidly than in the past. Already, the queue at the Chancellor’s Office has dropped from over 1,500 pieces of curriculum to less than 200, with no piece of curriculum remaining in the queue longer than a few months. As streamlining continues, the Curriculum Workgroup hopes that the queue will disappear entirely, allowing the Chancellor’s Office to provide further training and assistance to the colleges as needed, with the ultimate result being a system that is more responsive and therefore more beneficial to our students.
Recognizing the Excellence of Our Colleagues through Statewide and Local Awards

by John Freitas, ASCCC Standards and Practices Committee Chair

Many of us frequently say that the best job in the world is serving as a faculty member in the California community colleges and that the work we do as faculty in service of our students is its own reward. Faculty do the work they do because it is truly a vocation in the sense of being a calling and a labor of love. Even so, human nature makes one want and appreciate recognition for the work that one does, and faculty are no exception to this tendency. Recognition of good work of our faculty colleagues can motivate them to grow further as professionals. Whether it is done locally or statewide, or both, we should take the time and make the effort to recognize the excellence of our faculty colleagues for the wonderful work they do on behalf of our students and communities.

STATEWIDE AWARDS

The California Community College System offers three prestigious statewide awards that recognize the excellence of our faculty colleagues and the service they provide to students. These awards are given to faculty who are nominated by their local senates and who exemplify the ideals of faculty service to students. Announcement letters, application forms, and award criteria and scoring rubrics are sent to local senate presidents in the advance of the application deadlines. While announcement letters are sent approximately one month before the deadlines, local senates should start early in identifying potential nominees for these awards. Information about all awards is available at http://asccc.org/awards, including applications for 2017-18 awards.

EXEMPLARY PROGRAM AWARD

Application Deadline: November 6, 2017

Theme: Guided Pathways

This honor is a Board of Governors award sponsored by the Foundation for California Community Colleges. The Exemplary Program Award recognizes outstanding community college programs. Each year the ASCCC Executive Committee sets the theme, and the theme for 2017-2018 is Guided Pathways. Up to two college programs receive $4,000 cash prizes and a plaque, and up to four colleges receive an honorable mention and a plaque. The call for nominations and application materials is sent to senate presidents in October. Members of the ASCCC Standards and Practices Committee, along with representatives of CEOs, CIOs, CSSOs, and the Student Senate, review and score the applications. Awardees are recognized by the Board each January, with the program director of each program invited to attend the Board meeting to receive the award. More information is available at http://asccc.org/events/exemplary-program-award-0.

HAYWARD AWARD

Application Deadline: December 22, 2017

This honor is a Board of Governors award sponsored by the Foundation for California Community Colleges. Named for former California Community College Chancellor Gerald C. Hayward, the award honors up to four outstanding community college faculty who have a track record of excellence both in teaching and in professional activities and have demonstrated commitment to their students, profession, and college. Recipients of the Hayward Award receive a plaque and a $1,250 cash award. The call for nominations and application materials is sent to senate presidents in November. The Hayward Award is conferred annually on faculty who have been nominated by their faculty peers through their local senates. An
important change implemented this year is that local senates may now nominate up to two candidates for this award, provided that at least one nominee is a part-time faculty member. Another change is that awards are no longer based on geographic area; applications will now be considered on a statewide basis. Applications are scored by members of the Standards and Practices Committee, the four ASCCC Area Representatives, and additional faculty readers identified from each of the four areas. Recipients are recognized by the Board each March. The award winners are invited to attend breakfast with the Academic Senate President on Monday morning before the award ceremony and to attend the Board meeting to receive the award. More information is available at http://asccc.org/events/hayward-award-0.

STANBACK-STROUD DIVERSITY AWARD
Application Deadline: February 5, 2018

This award is proudly sponsored by the ASCCC. The Stanback-Stroud Diversity Award, named for former ASCCC President and current Skyline College President Regina Stanback-Stroud, honors faculty who have made special contributions addressing issues involving diversity. After more than 15 years that the award has been given, faculty from around the state have been honored for their work teaching to diverse learning styles, working with students of color and from non-traditional backgrounds, designing inclusive curriculum academic support programs, and many more projects and programs. Winners of the Stanback-Stroud Diversity Award are tireless advocates for those who may feel marginalized or overlooked in an academic setting. Local senates may nominate a single faculty member or a group of faculty members who exemplify the ideals of the Stanback-Stroud Diversity Award. The call for nominations and application materials is sent to senate presidents in December. Members of the Standards and Practices Committee and the Equity and Diversity Action Committee review and score applications. The winners of the Stanback-Stroud Diversity Award are honored at lunch at the Spring Plenary Session. More information is available at http://asccc.org/events/stanback-stroud-diversity-award-0.

LOCAL RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

While the awards given at the state level offer excellent opportunities for statewide recognition of the excellence of our colleagues, providing opportunities for local recognition of faculty is equally, if not more, important as statewide recognition. Local recognition of faculty excellence provides the opportunity for colleges to celebrate accomplishments while strengthening morale and providing inspiration for the faculty. Furthermore, programs for local recognition of faculty excellence can provide local senates a means to identify nominees for statewide awards.

Given that faculty professional development is one of the 10+1 areas of academic senate purview, local senates are uniquely positioned to provide leadership in establishing the means for providing such opportunities. Some practices local senates can consider include the following:

Establishing local awards that feed into the statewide awards and align with their criteria and deadlines. This practice can provide the means for local senates to seamlessly identify their nominees for the statewide awards.

Establishing a college or district awards fund by working with parties such as your college president, board of trustees, college foundation, emeriti association, and local student senate. Such an awards fund could be used to provide cash awards and plaques, as well as pay for awards ceremonies. Recognition of faculty excellence should be seen as a college responsibility, for without faculty the college could not serve the students.

Ensuring opportunities for recognition of excellent part-time faculty. Our part-time faculty colleagues have a profound impact on the success of our students and are a core part of the fabric of our colleges, and their efforts should be recognized.

Creating a lecture series for local award winners. Just as important as recognizing our colleagues for excellence is learning from them what they do to serve our students. Learning effective practices for serving students from award winning colleagues is an excellent professional development opportunity for faculty.

Recognition of faculty excellence, whether through local or statewide awards, is an important means for providing motivation for professional growth while boosting faculty morale. Local senates not only can identify nominees for statewide awards but also can provide the leadership needed to recognize faculty excellence at the local level. To that end, the ASCCC strongly encourages local senates to identify and nominate faculty for statewide awards and to identify local opportunities for recognition at their colleges.
Over the years, and especially recently, much debate has taken place over whether or not intermediate algebra should be required as the prerequisite to statistics. The debate has included discussion of whether or not competency in intermediate algebra should be required for an associate or a baccalaureate degree. The California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) have made some exceptions to the requirements for statistics preparation, but, in general, intermediate algebra is a prerequisite to transfer level math and science courses as well as some transfer level computer science, business, and social science courses in the CSU and UC systems. By default, it has been a requirement for transfer degrees since it has been a prerequisite to all courses that satisfy the quantitative reasoning requirements in both the CSU General Education Breadth and Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) patterns.

In California higher education, and even nationwide, debate is widespread regarding the requirements of math and quantitative reasoning for the associate and baccalaureate degrees. More recently, educational leaders, legislators, and the public at large have entered these discussions. In order to better comprehend and more effectively engage in the debate and discussions, one must understand the current requirements regarding math for high school graduation, the associate degree, and the baccalaureate degree.

THE ALGEBRA COURSES
Algebra I, also known as elementary algebra or beginning algebra, is the first course students take in algebra. Historically, this class has been a high school level course that is often offered as early as the seventh grade but more traditionally in eighth or ninth grades. The course is also offered in community colleges as a basic skills or remedial course.

Algebra II, or intermediate algebra, has a prerequisite of Algebra I. Historically, intermediate algebra has been a high school level course, the minimum math requirement to enter the California State University. CSU Executive Order 1065 states, “Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 40402.1, provides that each student admitted to the California State University is expected to possess basic competence in the English language and mathematical computation to a degree that may reasonably be expected of entering college students.” This position has long been interpreted to indicate intermediate algebra for the mathematical computation competency, and it aligns with the California Department of Education Common Core requirements. Intermediate algebra also meets the math competency requirement for an associate degree from a California community college. Many community colleges have other courses that meet the community college math competency requirement for those students seeking an associate degree yet not intending to transfer. Intermediate algebra is not a transfer level course, since it does not transfer for college credit at the CSU or UC. It is considered college level at the community college since it meets associate degree minimum requirements.

College algebra is a transfer level algebra course offered at many California community colleges and CSU campuses and generally has a prerequisite of intermediate algebra. College algebra, statistics, and mathematical ideas are typical courses that meet baccalaureate requirements for quantitative reasoning at a CSU campus. However, statistics and
mathematical ideas are not considered courses that lead to science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) degrees.

THE REQUIREMENTS

The California Department of Education states that the minimum math requirement to earn a high school diploma is two years of math, including Algebra I (EC 51224.5). Even with the California Common Core State Standards, Algebra I, which is fulfilled by completing Mathematics I, is still a minimum requirement for high school graduation.

Prior to Fall 2009, the minimum requirement for competence in mathematics to earn an associate degree from a California community college was elementary algebra. Individual colleges districts were permitted to raise the requirement but were not permitted to lower the requirement.

The current requirement for competence in mathematics was recommended by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges in Spring 2005 through resolution 9.02, approved by the Board of Governors in September 2006, and became effective for all students beginning with Fall 2009 admissions:

Effective for all students admitted to a community college for the Fall 2009 term or any term thereafter, competence in mathematics shall be demonstrated by obtaining a satisfactory grade in a mathematics course at the level of the course typically known as Intermediate Algebra (either Intermediate Algebra or another mathematics course at the same level, with the same rigor and with Elementary Algebra as a prerequisite, approved locally), or by examination. (Title 5 § 55063)

In addition, the Title 5 language includes the following statement:

The competency requirements for written expression and mathematics may also be met by obtaining a satisfactory grade in courses in English and mathematics taught in or on behalf of other departments and which, as determined by the local governing board, require entrance skills at a level equivalent to those necessary for Freshman Composition and Intermediate Algebra respectively. (emphasis added)

Thus, alternative courses to intermediate algebra are permitted and encouraged by Title 5.

Leading up to the 2006 vote, some members of the Board of Governors were reluctant to approve the intermediate algebra graduation requirement because they feared it would become a barrier to students, especially those in career technical education. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges made a commitment to the Board of Governors that it would actively encourage, support, and promote alternative courses with content different from the traditional intermediate algebra curriculum that might also meet associate degree math competency graduation requirements. To that end, the Academic Senate has held numerous workshops encouraging local innovation in the area of degree requirements for quantitative reasoning.

REFERENCES:


1 Algebra I
   Elementary Algebra
   Beginning Algebra

   Typically 8th or 9th grade OR community college basic skills

2 Algebra II
   Intermediate Algebra

   Typically 10th or 11th grade OR community college, but not a baccalaureate level course

3 College Algebra
   Statistics
   Mathematical Ideas

   Many other transfer level courses in areas including math, physical science, computer science, social science, philosophy and business or economics meet quantitative reasoning requirements
Civic Engagement and Civil Discourse: If Not Now, Then When?

by Dolores Davison, ASCCC Secretary

Cynthia Reiss, West Valley College

Since the November 2016 presidential election, significant discussion has taken place regarding the need for civic discourse and civil engagement across the United States, and while some faculty have been quick to pick up on the issue, others have been more reticent, in part because they may not believe that their disciplines lend themselves to this issue. One might easily see how political science courses lend themselves to concerns about civic engagement, but connections to math curriculum, for example, may be less obvious. Faculty members in many disciplines may struggle to bring in issues such as civic engagement while ensuring that their course content is fully covered.

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has been involved in these discussions for a number of years and in recent months has increased its efforts to ensure that these elements make their way into any classroom in which the instructor wants to impart such information.

Presentations at the 2016 ASCCC Instructional Design and Innovation Institute (IDII), the 2016 Community College League of California conference, the Spring 2017 ASCCC Plenary Session, and the 2017 ASCCC Curriculum Institute demonstrate that interest in discussions of civic education and civil discourse does exist within our community colleges. However, less clarity has been established regarding who should be leading the conversations and where and how these efforts are to be implemented. In order to ensure that such efforts continue, the ASCCC has been working with a committee comprised of faculty, administrators, and members of the California Community Colleges Foundation to promote civic engagement and civic discourse throughout the 114 colleges in the California Community College system.

A report by the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement titled “The Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future” has underpinned much of the collective and individual work on this topic. The report lays out three principal strategies that have been invaluable to the committee: First, it expands the traditional definition of civic learning to include a more “contemporary, comprehensive framework for civic learning—embracing US and global interdependence—that includes historic and modern understandings of democratic values, capacities to engage diverse perspectives and people, and commitment to collective civic problem solving”¹, becoming more appropriate to a 21st century, interconnected world while also allowing other disciplines to more organically infuse civic learning into their curricula. Secondly,

it lays out what characterizes a civic-minded institution: creating institutional practices and policies designed to produce a civic-minded ethos, environment, and expectation for all students, faculty, and administrators. Thirdly, the report posits that students need to have multiple and developmentally designed opportunities to cultivate the capabilities and skills necessary to participate in and contribute to a diverse democracy within a global network of interdependencies. The report concludes that this kind of action goes beyond the traditional venues of service learning and far beyond the traditional disciplines in which one would expect to find civic engagement; rather, all faculty have a responsibility to engage in these elements within their learning environments, whether the classroom, laboratory, counseling session, library research, the athletic field, or any of the myriad of other places that learning takes place on a college campus.

This principle is particularly essential for the community colleges in California. For many of our students, community college may be the only higher learning institution they will attend. As a result, civic learning must play a critical role in their educational arc—not as a discipline, necessarily, but as a framework for understanding, learning, and acting in the world. Such a framework will equip students with the skills and knowledge base to engage with, shape, and revitalize the tenets of a democratic society.

The most recent presidential election made clear that if we do not help students learn how to dialog through difficult discussions at fault lines of difference, they may receive no help at all. If our classrooms do not share other histories, perspectives, and opinions, our students may have nowhere to hear worldviews different from their own. If civic engagement and civil discourse do not happen now, they may not happen at all.

In order to continue this dialogue, the ASCCC has partnered with the Foundation for California Community Colleges and several other groups to present the first annual Civic Engagement Summit, to be held 5-6 October 2017 at College of the Canyons. The Civic Engagement Summit is the work of a small but rapidly expanding group of faculty and administrators committed to the idea of civic engagement in classrooms and campuses across the state. The committee at the core of this effort reached out to a number of pioneers and advocates around the issues of civic engagement and civil discourse, including Dr. Brian Murphy, president of DeAnza College and one of the leaders of the Democracy Project, to be involved in the summit. The response has been extremely positive, and while the final program has not been finalized as of this writing, the summit promises to be a powerful meeting of faculty, administrators, staff, and students who believe that civic engagement must be a part of every curricula, regardless of discipline. The committee hopes that this event will be the first of many activities designed to promote civic engagement across the curriculum at the California Community Colleges.
The History of the AS CCC Project: A Partial History of the Passage of AB 1725

By David Morse, History of the AS CCC Project Chair

(In 2013, the Academic Senate Executive Committee approved a project to record and preserve the history of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. The April 2017 Rostrum contains an article that explains the intent and structure of this project and the reasons for the delay in moving its work forward. However, the project is now making progress: the History of the AS CCC Task Force has developed a questionnaire to gather information on the organization’s history and sent that questionnaire to approximately 60 individuals who have worked with or had close connections to the Academic Senate in the past, including former AS CCC presidents and executive committee members, former system chancellors, past and current leaders of partner organizations, past and current members of the Chancellor’s Office staff, and others. This effort to collect information is still very much a work in progress, and the requested deadline for responding to the surveys is not until later in Fall 2017. However, some of the individuals who received the surveys have already returned them with thoughtful and fascinating responses. The following article is based primarily on the survey responses received to date.)

Anyone who has been involved with academic senates in the California Community College System has likely heard of the landmark 1988 legislation Assembly Bill 1725, authored by the late John Vasconcellos. AB 1725 is still cited regularly in discussions of governance and other issues involving California community colleges. However, many current faculty members and others in the system are not familiar with the history behind the bill, including the factors and events that led to its creation, the difficulties involved in both its passage and its implementation, and the many important individuals who contributed to establishing the strength of the faculty voice in community college governance at the state and local levels.

The final votes on AB 1725 in the legislature were nearly unanimous: the senate passed the bill 38-0 and the assembly 74-1, showing a rare level of bi-partisan agreement. Yet the creation and passage of AB 1725 and its implementation through Title 5 regulations did not take place without opposition. Dona Boatright was the Vice-Chancellor for Educational Services at the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office from 2002 to 2005, a leader of the statewide chief instructional officers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and a local academic senate president at Allan Hancock College in the 1970s and early 80s. Boatright notes, “During the period both before and immediately after passage of AB1725, there was a great deal of contention between the Senate leadership and those in administrative positions at the state level and at a significant number of colleges. The ‘we/they’ syndrome was in full force. But as the transitions settled in, cooperative relationships began to form.”

Likewise, Arnold Bray, Director of Legislative and Public Affairs for the Chancellor’s Office during the 1980s, observes that management and faculty had some “very thoughtful, but sometimes contentious discussions.” The concept of strengthening the faculty voice in governance ultimately won broad support and was institutionalized within the system, but this change did not happen without resistance.

Administrative representatives were not alone in their opposition to the concepts regarding governance included in AB 1725; some faculty union leaders also voiced serious reservations. Marty Hittelman was a member of the AS CCC Executive Committee from 1989 to 1991 and a long-time leader of the Los Angeles Community College District Faculty Guild, the LACCD District Academic Senate, and the California Federation of Teachers as well as a local senate president at Harbor College in 1972-73. Hittelman notes, “At the beginning of the achievement of collective bargaining
rights [in the 1970s], the senate became the area for anti-union faculty. It took many years for those that had opposed collective bargaining on their campus to fade from the scene, and gradually they were replaced by those that saw the unions as allies, not enemies.” This tension between senates and unions existed for some time and helped set the stage for some difficult discussions regarding the appropriate roles for both organizations.

Patrick McCallum, Executive Director of the Faculty Association for California Community Colleges (FACCC) from 1981 to 1988 and the administrative assistant and higher education consultant for AB 1725 author John Vasconcellos from 1979-1981, recalls that discussions and negotiations regarding governance took place for many years and comments on a specific meeting with faculty representatives that included Karen Sue Grosz and Mark Edelstein, both of whom served as ASCCC presidents, as well as Robert Gabriner, Cy Gulassa, and Larry Toy:

There was this ongoing argument between what role the union and senate would have when it came to faculty. The negotiations were tough, and tough language was going on between the participants. I remember just off the fly saying what if the senate deals with the faculty quality issues before a faculty is hired and union with faculty issues after the hire. The room went quiet and there was this nod of agreement and from then on we were able to negotiate the details.

While ultimately the senate’s role encompassed far more than just pre-hire quality issues, McCallum’s description shows the difficult discussions that were necessary among faculty in order to clarify senate and union roles.

Of course, once AB 1725 passed the legislature, it had to have the governor’s signature. McCallum also recalls some of the difficulties regarding that step of the process:

The start of AB 1725 was to follow a successful K-12 strategy with a republican governor. K-12 had agreed to a set of reforms in exchange for more money. . . We did have to get some agreement around reforms and had to push hard to get the faculty unions to agree to a longer tenure period and peer review along with the accountability reporting. Without those reforms, there was no way Governor Deukmejian was going to sign the bill.

The strategies employed by the ASCCC, FACCC, and other interested parties proved successful in the end, as the governor signed the bill into law on September 19, 1988.

Once the bill had passed, the next challenge was implementation through Title 5 regulation. One important individual in this effort was Tom Nussbaum, who worked with and in the community college system for nearly 30 years as legal counsel for the system office, Vice-Chancellor for Governmental Affairs, Vice-Chancellor for Legal Affairs, and finally as Chancellor of the California Community Colleges from 1996 to 2004. As Vice-Chancellor for Legal Affairs, Nussbaum worked with the ASCCC and other constituencies to help craft AB 1725 and later to develop the pertinent Title 5 regulations. He recalls that discussions regarding the Title 5 language were “gridlocked as to major aspects of these regulations” and that the ASCCC representatives pushed for an even stronger voice for academic senates:

Phil (Hartley) and Mark (Edelstein) insisted that . . . the regulations should simply require that the governing board “rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate,” or the policy “shall be developed and agreed upon jointly by representatives of the governing board and the academic senate.” Representatives of the CEOs and local trustees took the position that the regulations must be drafted in such a way that local boards could have the final say. They were supportive of greater involvement of the academic senates as to policies relating to academic and professional matters, but they insisted that, after extensive consultation, the governing boards should retain legal authority to have the final say.

Hartley, a member of the ASCCC Executive Committee from 1982 to 1991 and ASCCC President from 1989 to 1990, has a similar recollection of the central issue in the task force’s sometimes difficult discussions: “The biggest issue was the fact that local governing boards are given approval authority over most every college function by state law. So how do you provide a meaningful governance role for academic senates without usurping the statutory authority of local boards? Per our proposal, Title 5, Section 53200 was the agreed upon answer.” As both Nussbaum and Hartley note, compromises were ultimately reached: local boards retained the final decision-making authority, but the regulations developed by the task force gave academic senates a clear and strong advisory function.
Another point of contention was the scope of academic senate purview and the definition of academic and professional matters. The ASCCC argued for a very broad definition that would include issues such as budget development and management structure. The CEOs and trustees agreed that senates should be involved in such discussions but resisted the idea that boards should be required to rely primarily on or reach agreement with senates on these issues. Nussbaum notes that both sides of the debate were willing to go to extreme lengths to advance their positions:

Behind the scenes, the Senate reps noted that if they didn’t get their way, faculty would go to John Vasconcellos and secure legislation to put their interpretations into statute. On the other side, CEO and trustee representatives threatened to sue the Board of Governors for going beyond the scope of its regulatory authority if the final regulations defined academic and professional matters too broadly or if the final regulations didn’t preserve the legal authority of governing boards to make the final decision.

After considerable effort and contentious debate, the task force agreed on language that finally moved forward through the consultation process and became the text that remains today in Title 5 regarding the roles of academic senates.

Nussbaum also recalls that “the agreement almost came undone at the eleventh hour.” A group of CEOs in Southern California planned to oppose the new regulations and were prepared to sue the Board of Governors to stop their implementation. Nussbaum and Chancellor David Mertes addressed these plans at a statewide meeting of CEOs and called in ASCCC President Hartley to help explain the meaning and intent of the new regulations. “Phil and I argued that the regulations did indeed give governing boards a legal way to make the final decision,” Nussbaum states. “It was very important for CEOs to hear the representative of the Academic Senate clarify the meaning and interpretation of the regulations.” After this meeting, the CEOs “grudgingly” agreed not to oppose the regulations.

However, CEOs were again not the only group that needed to be convinced to accept the new regulations; as with the crafting of AB 1725, competing faculty voices had to be reconciled as well. As Hartley recalls,

Because the unions (CTA, AFT) and FACCC were not on the committee, they understandably had concerns. This was at a time when local senates were not generally strong or well understood and local unions were used to having the larger voice on campus. Therefore, Mike Anker and I met with the presidents of CTA, AFT, and FACCC in a long marathon meeting to seek common ground.

After intense discussions, all of the major faculty organizations agreed to support the proposed regulations or to remain neutral before the Board of Governors, and the proposed language became the basis for the academic senate’s role in governance in the California Community Colleges.

As important as AB 1725 was at the time and remains today, it was no silver bullet that could solve all of the problems of the system. Implementation was a difficult and lengthy process, first in the writing of Title 5 Regulations and then at the level of creating local board policies. McCallum notes that “there were some difficult years after AB 1725 was signed of the senate figuring out their roll given their new power.” In addition, several aspects of AB 1725 were dependent on funding that either was never provided or did not last; Arnold Bray notes that one of his greatest disappointments in working with the community college system was “the lack of necessary financial resources for the system to function as envisioned by the landmark legislation AB 1725.”

Still, the significance of AB 1725 is indisputable. As Hartley reflects, “AB 1725 was the capstone for a paradigm shift in the role and status of the California Community Colleges.” Despite the many difficulties involved with its passage and implementation, the bill helped to create perhaps the most inclusive system of governance enjoyed by any system of higher education in the world. Faculty and all others in the system should always remember and appreciate the dedication of the many individuals who fought for AB 1725 and the principles and vision it included.