

# Mission College Academic Senate President's Report 5/15/08

Title 5 Section 53200 (b): Academic Senate means an ogranization whose primary function is to make recommendations with respect to academic and professional matters.

Section 53200 (c):
"Academic and professional
matter" means the following
policy development and
implementation matters:

- 1. Curriculum including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines.
- 2. Degree and certificate requirements.
- 3. Grading Policies
- 4. Educational program development.
- 5. Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success.
- 6. District and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles.
- 7. Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports.
- 8. Policies for faculty professional development activities.
- 9. Processes for program review.
- 10. Processes for institutional planning and budget development.
- 11. Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the academic senate.

## The State of the Senate

Two years ago, I stepped up as Academic Senate President for Mission College in the middle of a very difficult situation. The relationship between faculty and staff on one hand, and administration and the Board on the other, had reached a crisis of historic proportions which focused on matters of shared governance. Many of the issues we faced at that time had been problems for many years. In her "State of the Senate" report in May 2003, then-President Jane Patton reported,

". . . District-wide, however, there are some concerns about the role the Senate plays.

There are individuals and bodies in this District that have not demonstrated a deep understanding of the role of faculty and the role of the Academic Senate. The Senate's challenge will be to educate them, in an attempt to ensure the appropriate participation of the Academic Senate in areas that fall under its purview. We are educators; we need to step up to this teaching challenge."

In working through that crisis, I believe we met that challenge. The District and the Academic Senates spent a great deal of time and effort in self-examination – a strategic conversation with the Board, a Technical Assistance visit from the ASCCC and the Community College League, and a visit from the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT). All of these efforts and all of the discussions which resulted from this situation have, in my opinion, greatly strengthened both the Academic Senate and the state of shared (or participatory) governance in this District.

Communication between the Academic Senate and faculty throughout the college is better now than it has been in some time due to regular written reports from the President to the Senate and the college community, as well as an improved website and increased communication from the chairs of the standing subcommittees.

The faculty of Mission College have also strengthened the Academic Senate by approving a new constitution in May 2007 which, among other things, empowered part-time faculty by enfranchising them in Senate elections. Participation of faculty in committees across the college is strong, and although it could still be improved I am encouraged by the number of new faces I am seeing step up to participate in various committees or volunteering to tackle special projects.

Now, as I am about to leave office, we are moving into another crisis of historic proportions. This time the crisis does not center on shared governance, but on the fiscal situation our District faces resulting from the HBA situation as well as the ongoing budget problems faced by the State as a whole. If there is any glimmer of hope right

now, it is that this is not an entirely new situation – we have faced many budget crises over the years, and we do have processes and policies in place to address many of the challenges we will face over the next two years. The Academic Senate's role over the next few years will be, as always, to continue to maintain the academic and professional integrity of the college, and I have full confidence in our ability to do this.

One of the strengths of the Academic Senate is that we are <u>not</u>, in and of ourselves, a participatory governance body. We have legislatively-mandated responsibility for "academic and professional matters" – the "ten plus one" – and in this District our Board has agreed to rely primarily on the recommendation of the Academic Senate in those areas. However, through the participatory governance process, the Senate is also a participant in collegial decision-making in a wide range of additional governance areas as well. It will be important, as the college and the District bring in a number of new administrators over the next year, that the Academic Senate and the faculty as a whole work with them to ensure that they embrace collegial decision-making, and that they fully understand the participatory culture of Mission College.

During the current year the Mission College Academic Senate undertook an ambitious list of priorities. Some of them we have accomplished, while others have had to move to the back burner as more of our time was occupied by urgent matters relating to the current situation we are in. However, our list of accomplishments for 2007/08 is still impressive. What follows is a list of our accomplishments in each of the eleven areas of Senate responsibility, and some recommendations for things that I believe will need attention by the Senate in the coming year:

# 1) Curriculum, including pre-requisites and course placement.

**Status:** The Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) has moved a tremendous amount of curriculum through the approval process in the past two years. Faculty are, by and large, involved and committed to the development of new curriculum and the updating of existing courses. In May 2007, a review of the GE requirements was undertaken and completed. CRC has worked closely with the Office of Instruction this year to develop and implement guidelines for the proper implementation of supplementary instruction for courses when appropriate. The implementation of CurricuNet has greatly assisted CRC in their work, but there are still issues that need to be smoothed out in some areas.

#### Recommendations:

- Pre-requisites need serious consideration by the college as a whole, and this is a matter that
  needs to be addressed jointly by the Academic Senate and CRC possibly with input and
  assistance from other Senate subcommittees such as Basic Skills. Appointing a task force
  with membership from each group to develop a policy on pre-requisites for Senate approval
  would give guidance to those developing or updating curriculum.
- It is important for members of CRC to be proactive in communicating with the faculty and the Senate about preparation and review of curriculum, and not assume that faculty are regularly monitoring the curriculum process via CurricuNet.

#### 2) Degree and certificate requirements.

**Status:** In May 2007, the Academic Senate accepted the recommendations of a task force which had been charged with a review of the General Education pattern. No additional discussion has been held recently on changes to degree and certificate requirements. The status of this area appears to be satisfactory.

# 3) Grading policies.

**Status:** There were no changes discussed this year; status appears to be satisfactory.

## 4) Educational program development.

**Status:** This topic is closely tied to curriculum. The Senate has a long-established process for approving new programs as well as a policy and process for discussions of program discontinuance. Several new programs have moved through the Senate approval process this year, including two which are likely to have a major long-term impact on the college's direction – the LVN-RN program and the Industrial Technology program.

During the discussion of these programs, it became apparent that there was widespread misunderstanding of what constituted a "program" under Title 5 needing separate approval by the Senate. It has also become apparent that there is some confusion among faculty about the role of CurricuNet in the approval process for programs. It is important for the college to encourage the growth of new programs to meet student needs, and to be able to respond. Discussions have been held with CRC on changes to the New Program Approval Process that would allow the Senate, upon its initial review of a proposed new program, to determine whether that program could receive full Senate approval at that point. CRC does not want (nor should it have) the responsibility for making this determination; it needs to be the responsibility of the full Senate. quickly and strategically to changes in those needs.

#### Recommendations:

- Changes will need to be discussed and adopted as a modification of the existing program
  approval process in the Fall. Consideration should be given to objective criteria for
  determining when a program could reasonably be expedited and when a program must
  undergo the full approval process (including discussion by the Division Chairs, EMT, and a
  second approval by the Senate).
- A subcommittee has been tasked with developing recommendations for updates to the Program Discontinuance Policy and Process, and the Academic Senate will need to discuss and consider proposed changes next year.
- The Senate should continue to discuss the academic direction of the college, and may wish to consider re-establishing the Balance of Curriculum committee.
- The Senate needs to continue monitoring those programs and areas identified in the 2007 Education Plan as goals and encourage faculty efforts to meet those goals.

#### 5) Standards regarding student preparation and success.

**Status:** The Academic Senate has re-established the Student Success Committee. The Basic Skills Committee is also addressing issues related to student preparation and success. This is an ongoing issue, and the success of these subcommittees in addressing the issue will depend partly on the resources available to them.

## Recommendations:

 The Senate should discuss and consider the topic of prerequisites and make recommendations in this area.

# 6) <u>District and College governance structures as related to faculty roles.</u>

**Status:** GAP began a review of its role based on the 1998 "Shared Governance and Decision-Making Plan". This document was developed by the Academic Senate and was intended to be regularly reviewed and updated, but such updates have not occurred on a regular basis. The recently proposed college reorganization plan was widely discussed and criticized, and is currently on hold pending a proposed review of the District organizational structure in response to the current budget crisis. It is important that the Academic Senate monitor these governance structures to ensure that permanent changes which impact faculty roles are not made without Academic Senate input and endorsement.

#### Recommendation:

- The ASCCC has a number of papers relating to faculty roles in governance. Senators should be encouraged to read them carefully and familiarize themselves with past discussions on this topic.
- To deal more effectively with District-wide matters, the District Academic Senate needs to resume meeting and move forward in unity. This is even more critical in light of recent proposals – however hypothetical – mentioning the possibility of merging the administration of the two colleges to reduce costs. Such proposals could have a major impact on the academic direction of both colleges, and faculty at both colleges must work together to ensure all changes are appropriate and academically sound.

## 7) Faculty's role in accreditation.

**Status:** Mission College has just completed its self-study and been visited by the accreditation team. Faculty participated widely in all phases of development of the self-study, as well as discussions with the visiting team.

#### Recommendations:

None at this time.

## 8) Policies for faculty development activities.

**Status:** Faculty at Mission College are actively involved in numerous development activities. The Staff Development Coordinator has worked closely with the Academic Senate President and the college President to determine needs for faculty development opportunities. Funding is not sufficient to offer as many activities as we would like, but what funds exist are being well-used.

#### Recommendations:

The Academic Senate President sits on District Council, and will need to closely monitor
proposals for district staff development activities and use of staff development funds to
ensure that it is faculty who take ownership of faculty development activities.

#### 9) Processes for program review.

**Status:** The Program Review subcommittee has been re-constituted, and is currently working to make final recommendations for updates to the 2003 Program Master Planning Process. An ongoing cycle of program review for all programs and areas of the college is expected to begin in Fall 2008.

#### Recommendations:

- The Academic Senate will need to adopt proposed changes to the process and monitor the progress of program review throughout the college.
- Consideration will also have to be given to ways of encouraging participation by all departments in the program review process.

# 10) Processes for instructional planning and budget development.

**Status:** This is a key area for the Senate to focus on now, as it is likely to be a major recommendation in our accreditation report. Budget development and instructional planning need to be tied closely to data from program review. With the current budget crisis, the Senate's involvement in developing the processes for budgeting and planning is of critical importance. The CBAC budget development process is due for review and revision in 2008/09, and will probably be revised in Fall and brought to the Senate for approval. I have already given several recommendations to CBAC in this regard, including the development of objective criteria to be used in ranking and prioritizing budget requests.

#### Recommendations:

- The Senate needs to keep its responsibility for this area in mind when reviewing proposed revisions to the CBAC model. It is within the authority of the Senate to make recommendations for additional changes to the budget development process if necessary.
- The results of program review must be closely tied into the budget and planning process.
- Senators should read the ASCCC paper on <u>The Role of Faculty in the Planning and Budget</u> Process
- Particular attention should be given in the process to ways of responding to the funding of repeated requests for one-time money for the same needs, as these may indicate a need for the college to consider long-term academic goals.
- The District Budget Allocation Model Subcommittee is still continuing to work towards
  developing a new model. That model will need to be reviewed and adopted by both Mission
  and West Valley's Academic Senates before it goes forward to the Board. The Senate
  President sits on both District Council and DBAC and will need to monitor this process
  closely.

## 11) Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon.

**Recommendations:** None at this time.

#### Miscellaneous recommendations:

- I strongly encourage the Academic Senate to take advantage of all the resources available
  to it at the State level, and to use the position papers and website as a major resource.
  Particularly in the current budget crisis, Senators should make full use of opportunities to
  attend Senate institutes and sessions, to communicate with colleagues in other colleges
  about shared governance issues, and to work collaboratively with their colleagues at West
  Valley to move the District forward.
- The Senate and ACE need to coordinate our separate and joint areas of authority more clearly. The relationship between the two groups is good, but it would be even stronger with an updated MOU defining and clarifying those areas of overlap. A liaison agreement exists currently but has not been updated since 1991.

#### Conclusion:

I want to thank and commend every one of the Senators who have served during the past two years. The current health of the Senate is due entirely to their commitment and hard work, and the college and the District have a great deal to be proud of as a result of their efforts. The challenges that we face are great but I still believe that we can deal with them and emerge with a strong, academically sound institution that serves the needs of the students who come here. I am proud to be continuing the work of the Senate on the Executive Committee of the ASCCC, but I'm even prouder to be able to say that I come from Mission College.