

Yuba College
Academic Senate
M I N U T E S
January 29, 2009

Senators Present: Nickolson (president), May (vice-president), Boren, Buckley, Canto-Lugo, Davidson, Devries, Heaton, Kemble, Kitchen, Morgan, Ramsey, Willson

Guests: Jensen-Martin, Langston, Stemmann

Meeting called to order at 12:01. Chocolate chip cookies were (speaking objectively) irresistible.

1. Agenda: Approved with additions (3a moved up; 3e; 3f)
2. Minutes: approved
3. Committee reports
 - a. Safety committee (John Langston)
 - i. The committee meets twice per year (during summer and intersession). Chief Wilkinson is the chair; the committee has a widely distributed membership.
 - ii. The most recent meeting was Jan. 15, dealing mostly with non-academic issues. The primary focus is a safety handbook, copies of which will be put in racks around campus, with important phone numbers listed on the fronts of the racks.
 - iii. Trina Kayton, an outside consultant keeping us informed on OSCHA regulations, etc., helped develop a checklist that will be forwarded to deans, who will then delegate sections to others (it is not feasible for one person to try to do everything, and it's not proper for a faculty member to supervise it)
 - iv. The committee developed a safety parking handbook and installed safety telephones around campus.
 - v. In more academic issues, Orton has noted that that chemistry labs' new configuration has led to a crowding issue; we're probably 25-30% overenrolled in the rooms. The labs are set up to hold 18 students, not the current 24. John Neff will come out over spring break to look at issue, but they are resisting cutting enrollment because chemistry teachers are already working overloads to serve all students.
 - vi. Keenan and Associates is giving access to safety training videos which eventually can be linked to home pages.
 - vii. Heaton raised the issue of students walking in the driving areas of parking lots. Willson noted that an analysis of the Yuba campus concluded that

the biggest problem is the lack of places to walk. Langston estimated we are 5 years away from implementing a solution to this issue.

- viii. May asked if there was any discussion about the committee explaining to each division emergency plans—in person, ideally, and perhaps with a card rather than a manual.
 - ix. Davidson recommended the phone numbers be published on the cover of the manual so that the numbers could be taken to a phone. He also suggested that part of the police's routine should include checking streetlights; faculty should not be required to fill out the maintenance ticket when there is an officer walking the rounds daily.
 - x. Canto-Lugo asked if anything could be done about having no operator on campus; this could be a real problem in emergencies.
 - xi. Nickolson suggested that Senate members contact Langston with any other concerns.
- b. Ac senate standards sub-committee (closed session)
 - i. The Senate supported the decision to deny the student's grade appeal
 - c. Flex (Canto-Lugo)
 - i. This semester is Canto-Lugo's last semester as FLEX coordinator. So far no one has applied of the position. May noted that the Administration would love to put an administrator in the position; it's therefore important that we retain control of this aspect of academic responsibility. Stemmann expressed interest in applying for the position, assuming it does not require tenure (generally it was agreed that it does not.
 - ii. At the FLEX meeting at 8:00 am on Feb. 5, the committee will discuss the interpretation of the "work load day." Many other community colleges allow credit for FLEX activities all day, as long as it does not conflict with specific classroom or office hours.
 - d. Constitution and By-Laws
 - i. Several technical changes were suggested, but it was decided to postpone finalizing issues to special workshop meetings, when more time can be devoted to the document.
 - e. Administrative positions
 - i. May asked (rhetorically) if there had been any discussion on which administrative positions were to be filled, and why—and if so, when those discussions were held. May and Nickolson agreed to bring this issue up in their meeting with President Mendoza. Boren suggested that the process for evaluating deans be addressed as well; they are pretty much underway, and the Senate should know what criteria are being used and what the process is.
 - f. Cathy on elections

- i. In the waning moments, Heaton raised questions about the election process as described in the Constitution and By-Laws—specifically, it appears that, as written, the directions for Area elections of Senate representatives actually describe the at-large elections.

Meeting adjourned at 12:53 pm

President's Report for Academic Senate meeting, 1/29/09

Hi Everyone--The most significant report I can give you is about the accreditation conference I attended. – Helen.

Accreditation Institute 2009

Mission Possible: Managing Accreditation and Accreditation Issues

San Jose//January 23-25, 2009

Report by Helen Nickolson,

Yuba College Academic Senate President

Welcome and Orientation General Session

The message here was that accreditation is a self-study process which provides an opportunity for colleges to reflect on and assess the college's strengths and weaknesses.

The big picture of accreditation is that evidence and evaluation are critical.

Questions discussed included:

1. What's the purpose of accreditation
2. Who should be responsible
3. What's the purpose of the self-study
4. What's the purpose of Student Learning Outcomes and who should be responsible for them
5. Who at the college should be responsible for ensuring that the college is accredited

Problem Areas:

1. Budget and Planning Process
2. Program Review
3. Governance

Building an Effective Accreditation Self-Study Team Session

This task requires:

1. A good leader who collaboratively sets goals, organizes, and motivates
2. Trust within the group
3. Inclusiveness, diversification, transparency, and follow-through
4. Group participation ranging from students to administration to community
5. Expertise in writing, quantitative and qualitative measures, research, programs
6. Resources to complete the work

Standard 1: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

1. The institutional mission statement is the overarching statement of the college and its key elements should define the college's purpose, should state its intended population, and should commit to student learning. Basically the statement can trace what is required by Ed Code. Various examples of mission statements were provided and these ranged from one to nine paragraphs.
2. The mission statement should be the core of institutional planning and decision making.
3. Institutional effectiveness should be part of a larger, ongoing cycle and should be evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative evidence including labor market, demographic, and socio-economic information
4. Student-level evidence should focus on programs, student goals, basic skills, student data, and anything else such as the Student Equity Plan
5. Whatever evidence is provided, it is important to also be able to explain the process that people use in seeing it, evaluating it, responding to it, and improving it. This is important in reports/plans such as EEO, ARCC Report, Basic Skills, etc.
6. The continuous cycle should be Mission Statement to Planning and Budgeting to Evaluation to Improvement to Implementation.

Accreditation and Faculty Governance: A Chemical Bond Session

The presenters first went over the four broad standards of accreditation and the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, which was passed in August. A major, positive result in the reauthorization is that it bars the Secretary of Education from issuing regulations concerning the mandatory accrediting standards in the HEOA, as well as any criteria that specifies, defines, or prescribes standards used to assess an institution's success with respect to achievement. However, the new Secretary of Education is on the side of accountability and President Obama supported the Higher Education Act, so SLOs are not expected to go away.

Nothing in the standards states where SLOs need to be put, meaning that they don't have to be put on the course outline or on the syllabus. However, it might be the easiest and most transparent way to go.

Standard 3A1.c states

Faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes

There has been concern about this recommendation and the presenters indicated that somewhere in the evaluation process there should be something indicating that the faculty member has somewhere and somehow reflected on student learning outcomes issues (I'm sure there will be much more to follow on this).

The expectation of the Accrediting Commission is that colleges will be at the proficiency level (below the highest) of the Rubric for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness by 2012.

Standard III: Resources (Human, Physical, Technology, and Financial Resources) General Session

1. Colleges need to show evidence of
 - a. Integration of planning and budgeting—that education drives the budget
 - b. Shared decision making at all levels
 - c. Planning with outcomes in mind. The question to answer is What do you intend to accomplish given these resources, these programs, these students, this physical, and these community relationships?
2. Integration of Planning and Budgeting
 - a. Should be inclusive
 - b. Should be transparent—needs to be documented and articulated
 - c. Integrated—Include all constituencies including community partners
3. Designing Outcomes. Every unit should answer
 - a. How does your unit assist students on their journey through the institution?
 - b. How can your unit measure the impact it has on student success?
 - c. What is your unit’s relationship to institutional outcomes?
 - i. The relationship can be either direct or indirect but need to focus on interdependence
 - ii. Each unit should be able to map how the activities relate to the core outcomes of the institution, how the activities impact student success, and how the unit’s activities reflect integrated budget and planning

ACCREDITATION DOs and DON'Ts

Do's	DON'Ts
Start early enough to guarantee a well-researched, evidence-based document	Don't wait until the accreditation visit is 12 – 18 months out. This is systematic stuff and the team can identify last minute efforts
Begin with the last focused mid-term report	Don't waste time by not planning
Review prior institutional goals	Don't create plans you can not implement or sustain
Set a reasonable timeline	Don't create all new committees
Read other institutional studies	Don't rely on one or two self-study creators
Converse widely	Don't forget themes and dialogue
Gather statements from a variety of sources	Don't belabor the obvious
BE INCLUSIVE - Include all departments & divisions in the process	Don't include negative or positive information to the exclusion of the other
Work hard to have representatives from all constituencies – classified, students, faculty, administration, community – on each sub-standard	Don't “give in” to pressure to make changes that do not represent the truth s

Use existing governance committee to write reports – they are invested and can implement the planning agenda	Don't have a single standard dominated by one constituent group
Pay attention to interpersonal relationships and try to avoid personality-based problems	Don't blather, bag, rant, whine or dig up controversial slime
Include a broad group of individuals on the steering committee and assure they all attend	Don't write what someone else tell you for the sake of conformity
Keep copious notes that are sensitive to "what if" scenarios and creative digressions	Don't exclude vital information because you believe it will embarrass someone
Seek evidence	Don't seek to address personalized wrongs
Use the chancellors website for data	Don't obscurely obfuscate
Be constructive	Don't be the ONE who does everything
Delegate and distribute profusely	Don't try to address EVERYTHING
Construct steps to solutions, search other's solutions, and make doable solutions for your campus	Don't let administrators substantively change the work of the standards committees
Prioritize solutions with the widest impact	Don't conjecture
Ask questions about data	Don't include too much or too little
Be honest	Don't ignore physical facilities
Make assessments based on credible evidence	Don't forget about balance
Get support for incentives	Don't wait till the last minute to organize evidence
Have fun along the way	Don't bluff about things you have no evidence for
Evaluate ALL student services	Don't assume someone else will do the work
Keep copies of reports in the library i.e. involve the library in campus history	Don't abdicate this opportunity for self evaluation and change
Create a format and logic for the report	
Create a Succinctly Written Self Study	
Create clear intent	



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for COMMUNITY and
JUNIOR COLLEGES**

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December 2, 2008

Mr. Marty Hittelman, President
California Federation of Teachers
2550 N. Hollywood Way, Suite 400
Burbank, California 91505

Dear Mr. Hittelman:

This letter responds to your letter of October 13, 2008. The Commission appreciates your comments with respect to the issues you raise, and we will attempt to address each of them in this letter. For the convenience of the reader, we've restated portions of your letter in italics and then commented on each of your points.

1. After quoting from a section of the California Code of Regulations which requires that each community college be accredited by ACCJC, you state in your letter,

"In conferring this important responsibility on the ACCJC, the State of California and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges expect that the ACCJC will fulfill an important state objective, providing education."

The ACCJC does not provide education. Its purpose is to assure that its accredited institutions adhere to its standards which are designed to assure that certain levels of quality are maintained. The ACCJC was not developed to help achieve any State objective. The ACCJC was not developed by the State, and it is not an agent of the State, and it has not been delegated any State function. The ACCJC is a private organization, and its standards are developed without any involvement or directions from the State of California. Its accreditation activities are not limited to the State of California. It also

accredits institutions in Hawaii and in the Pacific regions accredited by WASC.

2. *“ACCJC may or may not be a quasi- governmental entity, but either way it must respect State laws when fulfilling its functions.”*

The ACCJC is not a governmental or quasi-governmental entity. It is a private organization. Its functions are of course carried out in a manner that are consistent with all applicable laws, state and federal.

3. After referring to the right of teachers at community colleges to collectively bargain, you state, *“One of the most important rights faculty have is to negotiate with their employer over evaluation procedures, criteria and standards. In fact, this right is so important that the Legislature deemed it worthy of explicit enumeration within the Act. In addition, pursuant to the EERA, academic freedom policies are negotiated at community colleges.”*

This paragraph contains a number of inaccurate and misleading statements. You are correct when you state that the faculties of community colleges have a legally protected right to bargain collectively; however, the scope of that right is set forth explicitly in the California Labor Code, Section 3543.2. It is limited to “matters relating to wages, hours of employment, and other terms and conditions of employment.” “Terms and conditions” includes “. . . procedures to be used for the evaluation of employees,” not the “criteria and standards” to be used for evaluation, as you assert. The bargaining unit is given the right to “consult” (not collectively bargain) over issues related to “the definition of educational objectives, the determination of the content of courses and curriculum, and the selection of textbooks to the extent such matters are within the discretion of the public school employer under the law.” Further, California law protects the prerogative of the Academic Senate, not a collective-bargaining unit, “. . . to represent the faculty in making recommendations to the administration governing board of the school district with respect to district policies on academic and professional matters.” (California Labor Code, §3540). Your assertion that the collective bargaining unit has a legal right to negotiate “over the evaluation of . . . criteria and standards” is not accurate.

ACCJC’s standards recognize and respect the critical importance of the faculty and the Academic Senate in protecting academic freedom within the institution. ACCJC’s standards provide in part, “The institution relies on faculty, its academic senate or other appropriate faculty structures, the curriculum committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services.” (*Accreditation Reference Handbook, Standard IV, A.2.b.*).

4. After introducing the subject of student learning outcomes, you state,

“ . . . many within the college community, faculty and administrators alike, feel that ACCJC has gone too far in its demands regarding SLOs (student learning outcomes, especially when they intrude on negotiable evaluation criteria and violate principles of academic freedom.”

Your comments reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of ACCJC’s purposes and activities as they relate to student learning outcomes. ACCJC does not dictate to an institution or to its faculty what the intended student learning outcomes should be. Under ACCJC's standards, each institution defines the student learning outcomes for that particular institution at the course, program, and degree level. When these student learning outcomes are defined by the institution, the institution is then expected to measure whether the intended learning outcomes are occurring and to what degree, and, finally, to apply the results of assessment to improve educational and institutional practices. (*Accreditation Reference Handbook, Standard II.A.*). Assessing the extent to which our institutions are fulfilling this Standard is a basic function of the accreditation process and has become an essential measure of quality in education. ACCJC’s Standards on student learning outcomes are in line with mainstream thinking on educational quality. The requirement that institutions assess whether the intended student learning is occurring has become an integral part of the accreditation process of all regional accrediting associations.

The protection of academic freedom has always been an integral part of ACCJC’s assessment of an institution. Standard II, A, 7, provides in part, “In order to assure the academic integrity of the teaching-learning process, the institution uses and makes public governing board adopted policies on academic freedom and responsibility, student academic honesty, and specific institutional beliefs or world views. These policies make clear the institution's commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.”

Academic freedom has never meant freedom from the responsibility of adhering to institutionally based standards of quality and institutional mission.

4. Your letter next takes issue with ACCJC’s standard (Standard II.A.1.c). This Standard requires that the “faculty and others directly responsible for student learning. . .“ have, as a *component* (emphasis added) of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those student learning outcomes.” As we have explained above, a critical part of assessing student learning outcomes is measuring the extent to which assessments of those learning outcomes are applied to improve educational quality and future student learning. Without that final component, there would be no way to assess whether the process was effective. We stress that this assessment is only one possible component of evaluations of academic staff. It is not intended to be the only component or one that is given any particular priority in relation to other components. The ACCJC’s goal is to insure that the institution, and its academic employees, have the mechanisms necessary to help the make improvements to the educational learning environment.

5. You quote from Standard II.A.6 which states in part, “The institution assures that students and prospective students receive clear and accurate information . . . In every class section students receive a course syllabus that identifies learning objectives consistent with those in the institutions officially approved course outline.” You contend that this standard infringes on academic freedom.

Your assertion is without merit. Again, academic freedom does not mean freedom from the responsibility of adhering to institutionally adopted curricula or course outlines.

There is nothing in the Standards that mandates that course outlines include any particular content, nor do the Standards prohibit instructors from adding educational objectives other than those appearing in the institution’s officially approved course outline. As pointed out above,

California law leaves the final decisions on all such matters squarely with the governing body of the institution. It does not leave the content of these matters to collective bargaining although it does permit consultation from the collective bargaining unit.

6. You assert that amendments to the federal Higher Education Act in 2008 removed the federal mandate that all Department of Education approved accrediting associations assure that their accredited institutions adopt and enforce student learning outcomes. Again, your assertion is misplaced. The 2008 amendments to the Higher Education Act reaffirmed that all Department of Education approved accrediting associations, of which ACCJC is one, are required to, “. . . assess the institution’s, (A) success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission, *which may include different standards for different institutions or programs*, including as appropriate, consideration of course completion, State licensing examinations, and job placement rates” (The portion in italics reflects the change in the 2008 amendment.). In other words, the 2008 amendment only emphasizes that each institution is to develop its own student learning outcomes, a feature which has been an integral part of ACCJC’s accreditation practices since the adoption of these Standards.

7. At the conclusion of your letter you return to your opening assertion and contend, again incorrectly, that California law provides that the adoption of instructor evaluation criteria is an integral part of the collective bargaining process and therefore the criteria bargained for should be insulated from any interference from ACCJC or its Standards, including student outcome requirements. Again, you are misreading and misstating the scope of what is legally the proper subject to collective bargaining under the Labor Code. As pointed out above, the Labor Code provides only that “faculty evaluation procedures,” not the substantive content of that evaluation, are properly the subject of collective bargaining (Education Code §§ 3543.2, 87663).

In conclusion, the ACCJC does not believe it has violated the law by developing and promulgating the Standards of Accreditation to which you have voiced objection.

Sincerely,

Lurelean Gaines, Chair

Barbara Beno, President

Vice President's Report

January 28, 2009

I started individual meetings with new faculty members this week, checking with them concerning their teaching, their fall evaluation process, and just things in general. I really like the class of new faculty we have. Despite the District's war against the faculty this fall, they have a positive attitude toward Yuba College, our students, and our colleagues. I am sending all Senators a copy of the message I sent out to the new faculty and the mentors. Please feel free to attend the February, March, April, or May mentor meetings. The email will give the topics and the times and places.

I attended the late afternoon Presidential Search forum last week that was facilitated by the District's new \$25,000 consultant. Only a handful of faculty members attended due to the scheduling. The consultant took notes that presumably will be forwarded on the topic of what the faculty are looking for in a college president. Either the Senate or YCFA could have facilitated a noon forum at no cost to the District that would have had full attendance and would have been facilitated by seasoned veterans who know the college and know the community. The faculty was not asked to do so.

Tomorrow Helen and I meet with Paul and Kevin. Please let us know if there are any topics you would like to see raised. I want to discuss the proposed Administrative Hirings, Budget Planning, the Presidential Search Process, the EEO Plan, Diversity Plan, SLO Committee, and the tenure hearings.

The fall semester was difficult. The faculty bargaining team, the Senate, and especially our faculty leaders—Helen and Lisa—worked tirelessly on behalf of the institution. I hope the spring semester goes better for them and for all of us, yet we must all work tirelessly to protect and defend the institutional traditions of collegiality and shared governance against the actions of the Chancellor and at least one other District administrator. The early indicators of how our semester will go will be the process followed in making budgetary decisions for the next fiscal year, and whether our District leaders will display renewed respect toward our faculty and the collegial traditions we have preserved over the years.