

Academic Senate Conference Report: Fall 2004

By Brian Jukes

First General Session (Roger Bowen, General Secretary of the AAUP):

"To know but not to act is not to know." We must, according to Bowen, act on our knowledge to make a difference.

There are four causes of assaults on academic freedom:

1. One party control of the White House and Congress
2. Post 9/11 Reactions
3. Gradual Corporatization of the Academy
4. America's Anti-Intellectual Bias
5. Cultural Gap Between Politicians and Academicians

Politicians believe that the Academy is just another institution in civil society to be "captured" for partisan interest. Making students feel "intellectually comfortable" is the death of education. We (the faculty) have to work collaboratively to get the government out of the classroom. Colleges ought to be sanctuaries, not just another institution of civil society. Student Learning Outcomes may become, in the hands of politicians, indoctrination outcomes.

Associate Degree Levels in Math and English:

This was a discussion session only, no presentation.

Con	Pro
"We're assuming that we have standardization of English 1A across the state when, in fact, we don't even have that for lower level English classes. Let's raise the bottom before raising the top"	"An Associate Degree is a College Degree and ought to represent acquiring a college-level education in math and English."
"We will end up watering down English 1A and higher level math courses"	"A great number of vocational faculty support this and are concerned <u>only</u> over timing."
"What about the ones we don't see? We don't want to leave anyone behind."	"Open Access does not mean Open Exit."
Title 5 language is now flexible, allowing individual colleges to set higher standards if they wish. What we are proposing is to make the language LESS flexible."	"70% of incoming California community college freshmen express an interest in transferring"
"English standards in high school do not lead into what we do for English 1A because their focus is on literature, not expository prose."	The world is not the same. Everywhere colleges, universities, and high schools are raising standards in recognition of this.

Student Fees:

The speakers reiterated Scott Lay's comment during the **Second General Session** that "the purpose of the fee increase is to decrease student enrollment and has nothing to do with college revenue." This is what Lay, Vice President of CCLC, calls the "dirty little secret of student fees." Workshop addressed a few concerns:

1. Don't higher student fees mean better student retention in our classes?
 - a. No. Many factors, including maturity, affect why a student takes a class "seriously."
2. Where are we supposed to find the \$330 million that we get through student fees?
 - a. What is the net gain of those fees after the state bureaucracy needed to manage them?
 - b. Net gain is not to colleges or even the state's general fund. Those fees went directly to subsidize the K-12 system.
 - c. What is the net loss to California's economy by turning away students? Remember: 1.8 million students are being turned away from higher education because of the increase in fees. Businesses are leaving because California does not have enough of an educated workforce.
3. Don't other states have higher student fees?
 - a. California should be the leader.
 - b. Cost of living is also different in other states.
 - c. This is not about revenue, but "cost containment." Fees used to turn students away, not increase revenue. That's the myth.
 - d. You are seeing fees as a sort of tax, one that taxes the students. If we are to introduce a tax to support education, let's tax those who can afford it.

The ASCCC does not support any student fees for community colleges. The state Academic Senate calls for a rolling back of student fees.

Textbooks in the Spotlight:

A student will spend on average \$898 per year on textbooks. See handout: "Alternatives for the Reduction of Textbook Prices," which includes the following options:

1. Special Cover Edition Program
2. Low Frills Texts
3. Online Textbooks
4. Rental of Textbooks
5. Overseas Orders
6. Competitive Bids

Third General Session (Patrick M. Callan, President of National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, and Chancellor Drummond):

Jobs will go where the educated workforce is. Place doesn't matter anymore. Today, it is impossible to have a middle-class income without a higher education. However, nation-wide, the likelihood that a 9th grader will be in college four years later has declined by 3% over a 10-year period. In California, the likelihood that a 9th grader will be in college four years later has declined by 9%. In California, 70 out of 100 students will graduate high school. Of those 70, only 37 will go to college. From those students, only 29 will remain in college in the second year. And in the end, only 19 will graduate with an associate or bachelor degree.

California has gone from the national leader in education to, at best, the middle of the pack. Drummond added that the net cost of going to college is 40% of the median annual income in California. North Carolina and Georgia are now the leaders among the 50 states in education. Why? What are they doing that California isn't? Another matter to consider, according to Chancellor Drummond is the fact that only 7 community college districts in our state have seen more than a 10% increase in faculty diversity. Faculty diversity is not keeping up with student diversity.

Improving Student Access:

We are mandated by the state to offer students alternative media if the student cannot use a text. We must offer, for example, an e-text or other voice alternative. Faculty can search for e-text versions of their textbooks at <http://exchange.htctu.ftnda.edu> and www.ATPCNET.net.

Three ways a student gets DSPP consideration:

1. Instructor referred for evaluation
2. Student self-referred for evaluation
3. Student comes with disability card from high school.

Students can access free downloads, such as from <http://www.readplease.com>, that transfers text into audible playback. DSPP offers both reading assistance and writing assistance through various programs.

The Associate Degree: What Does it Mean?

Several CSU representatives have repeatedly said that the associate degree is worthless. According to Title 5, the associate degree is supposed to symbolize the culmination of in-depth knowledge, specifically "the ability to think and communicate clearly and effectively-- orally and in writing."

We need to establish collaborative relationships with high schools and universities. We are part of a pipeline.

The associate degree does represent better "employability" according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.