

Santa Monica College  
Academic Senate  
Department Chairs Meeting  
April 7, 2017– Minutes

Attendance:

Ronn Davis, Fariba Bolandhemat, Deborah Perret, Laurie Guglielmo, Chris Fria, Eric Minzenberg, Laura Manson, Sharon Jaffe (for Janet Harclerode), Brenda Antrim, Mary Colavito, Mitra Moassessi, Toni Trives, Ford Lowcock, Jamey Anderson, Alex Schwartz, Christine Schultz, Adrienne Harrop, Colleen McGraw, Tom Peters, Nathalie Laille

1. Public Comments: None
2. Announcements: None
3. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act – Tom Peters, Nathalie Laille  
[Power point presentation](#) [Links](#)

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was updated in January of 2017 and will go into effect January 2018. Under the updated guidelines all materials (documents, videos,..) posted online need to be captioned and be accessible. These guidelines apply to captioning of all videos shown in the classroom or accessed by students online as well as all public facing forms of digital communications including instructional materials on Canvas and webpages on the SMC website. The staff of the Center for Students with Disabilities is available to assist faculty with this task. There are resources available online to help faculty with accessibility. Faculty can create a free account on <http://www.3cmediasolutions.org/> and submit a video for captioning. 3C Media Solutions' services are available free to faculty and staff of the CCC system. The Center for Students with Disabilities will provide workshops to faculty on accessibility.

Several department chairs raised concern about the amount of work that will be required from faculty to be in compliance with the guidelines and the fact that individual faculty do not have the expertise to make all instructional materials accessible and in compliance with these guidelines. Furthermore making every department's website accessible is beyond the expertise of the department chairs. Nathalie mentioned that at Portland College two faculty members in each department have been designated and compensated for making all materials posted online accessible. This model may not be suitable for certain departments such as Modern Languages that offers courses in 14 different languages.

#### 4. Class Cancellation Policy

Jenny Merlic and Teresita Rodriguez presented data on class cancellations at the Academic Senate March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. Jenny reported that for Spring 2017, 108 sections were canceled and 102 sections were added. Teresita presented [data on Fall 2016](#) class cancellations.

Given that the information provided by the office of Academic Affairs and the office of Enrollment Management at the Academic Senate meeting on Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> didn't adequately address the concerns of department chairs on the consequences of class cancellations, the following motion was made by Toni Trives and seconded by Eric Minzenberg.

The department chairs strongly request that the following specific questions be answered by the office of Academic Affairs and the office of Enrollment Management:

- a. What happened to the 284 students who were enrolled in the Fall 2016 cancelled classes and who didn't enroll in another section of the same course? Did these students enroll in other classes to make up for the cancelled classes?
- b. What is the impact of class cancellations on students' transferability, completion of AA/AS degree or other certificate and degree requirements, and eligibility for financial aid and/or veteran's benefits?
- c. What is the demographic profile of impacted students?
- d. What is the break-even point that covers the costs for a faculty member (using a weighted average) for a 3-unit class and a 5-unit class?

The motion was passed unanimously.

Fran and Mitra will take this motion to the faculty leaders meeting.

#### 5. Drop Confirmation Notice

A new option will be available to faculty when dropping a student from the class after the class census date. Under this new option, the faculty member may type a brief message to the student stating the reason(s) why s/he was dropped from the course. This message will go to the student and a copy will be sent to the instructor.

The chair of Academic Senate's Student Affairs Committee has asked whether instructors want to get a notification when a student drops the course. All the department chairs present at the meeting were in support of getting such a notification. It was also suggested that it would be good to see a comment from the student stating the reason for the drop. Another idea was to create a dropdown menu for students to check the reason for dropping a class. By using a dropdown menu, Institutional Research can collect data that can possibly improve scheduling.

#### 6. Academic Senate President's Report – Mitra Moassessi

**Graduation**, June 13: Encourage your faculty to attend. It's a student issue.

**Tenure Celebration:** Same time as retirement/longevity event, June 14.

Fran and Dr. Jeffery are working together to plan the first annual celebration of tenure to be held this year on June 14. Honorees will include nine faculty members receiving tenure in 2015-16 and 2016-17. FA and Senate leadership will be invited as will Board members, who will be distributing signed certificates of tenure. Holding such an event yearly and publicizing it widely will help focus attention on the need for full-time faculty, especially for years like this when the small numbers of tenure recipients will make it painfully obvious how few full-time faculty were hired and how few made it through a strenuous tenure review process.

**Class Cancellations:** DPAC constituencies have repeatedly asked for SMC's enrollment management plan and have received only partial lists of hit or miss past and possible future efforts.

Dissatisfaction was expressed concerning the inadequacies of the class cancellation data presented last week at the Senate meeting. There was not even a plan for determining how we can get the answer to the questions: what happens to students when their classes are cancelled.

Fran announced to the Board of Trustees and the Senate that the enrollment crisis is being sold as a budget issue rather than the enrollment issue that it is. This deflection away from the real problem is problematic because SMC is a district that has traditionally reacted to budget crises by cutting classes. Cutting classes exacerbates the enrollment crisis because it drives students away under the guise of cutting costs and increasing efficiency.

It was suggested that administrators be held accountable for the enrollment crisis, not the students in classes taught by part-timers who will undoubtedly be the first to go when classes are cut for what is mistakenly billed as a budget crisis.

Fran noted that there is an enrollment barriers task force made up of counselors and administrators and that they have done some good work identifying with students how to remove barriers to enrollment that do not make sense. Instructional faculty have not been included on that task force, which is probably why all their issues being considered have been related to student services.

A recent survey of students revealed that there is a general perception that it is difficult to get classes and even more difficult to get the classes they need. The impact of such a perception on enrollment is obvious.

7. Approval of the Minutes of [March Meeting](#):

Motion to approve: Brenda Antrim; second: Laurie Guglielmo

Passed unanimously

## 8. District Report – Erica Leblanc

Please respond to: Fall galleys, seven years inactive course(s), and prerequisite list.

Erica thanked faculty for participating in the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF) and the three workgroups. The SPTF will meet on April 18 to create the first draft of the strategic initiatives.

The budget projections show a \$14 million budget deficit for 2017-18. For 2016-17 all discretionary budgets in the 4000, 5000 and 6000 line items were zeroed out in order to address the immediate budget shortfall. The discretionary budgets for student help and temporary employees were not reduced. For mission critical purchasing needs (“mission critical” meaning, for example, that not expending funds will negatively and in a severe way hamper student success and learning), departments need to document them using the Critical Contract, Supply and Equipment Request (CCSER) form. Erica asked department chairs to not use any money left in the Office Max, just to use it. For 17-18, the department discretionary budget will stay the same as 16-17.

The district has been awarded \$2 M for innovation in higher education.

The Department of Finance has identified four additional community college building projects for state funding, including SMC’s Math/Science Building.

Submitted by: Mitra Moassessi