

MINUTES

Mendocino College Academic Senate

Thursday, May 6, 2010

12:30pm-1:30pm, Room #1060

- Call to Order** Leslie Saxon West called the meeting to order at 12:30pm.
- Present** John Koetzner, Steve Hixenbaugh, Lynn Haggitt, Paul Kemp, Jean Stirling, Jason Edington, Les Pfitzenreuter, Jessica Morris
- Agenda Approval** M/S/C (*Stirling/Koetzner*) to approve the agenda of May 6, 2010. Vote: Unanimous
- Approval of Minutes** M/S/C (*Stirling/Koetzner*) to approve the minutes of April 22, 2010. Vote: Unanimous
- Guests:** Alan West
- Public Comment** None
- Committee Reports** 1. MPFA (Mendocino Part-time Faculty Association)
Paul Kemp made an announcement that MPFA is hosting a reception for all scholarship recipients and their families before the May 7th Scholarship Awards presentation at 4:00pm in room #1230.
- President's Report** Leslie reported the following:
- Leslie attended the May 5th Board of Trustees meeting. Public comment was made in regards to the weaving program. Retiring FT faculty were acknowledged. Tonia Widler, Terri Robertson and Mary Holcomb attended the meeting and were presented with a plaque from the Board.
 - Leslie encouraged Senate members to attend the retirement gathering being planned for May 16th at North State Café, 4-6pm and asked them to remind constituents to sign up by May 12th. She stressed the importance of attending as a way to show respect for our longtime faculty that have contributed so much to Mendocino College.
 - On behalf of the faculty, Academic Senate sends out best wishes to Jerry DeChaine. A celebration honoring Jerry is being planned for right after commencement exercises on Thursday, May 27th.
- Old Business** 1. Administrative Retreat – Senate Discussion/Report
A document titled “Statement from the Mendocino College Academic Senate” dated May 5, 2010 pertaining to the current request for administrative retreat was delivered by Leslie to the Board of Trustees for discussion during closed session at their May 5th meeting. This action was taken at the direction of the majority of Academic Senate members on behalf of FT faculty.
- After much discussion by Senate members, it was generally agreed that even though retreat rights from the Director of Distance Education to a FT faculty position is allowed by our current policy and the Education Code, it is in conflict with the developed and approved process and procedure for planning and staffing. This retreat was voluntary and not necessary. It was agreed that amendments to our policy and to the Ed Code as they relate to retreat rights should be discussed next year.

M/S/C (*Kemp/Pfutzenreuter*) to accept and approve “Statement from the Mendocino College Academic Senate” and incorporate this statement into the minutes of this meeting.

Vote: All in favor – 6; Opposed-None; Abstained-2

May 5, 2010

Statement from the Mendocino College Academic Senate

Dear Board of Trustees:

While the faculty understand that law and institutional policy allows an instructional administrator to retreat to a full-time faculty position, and the faculty appreciate any strategies that could save the district money, especially at this time, the overwhelming majority of faculty feel strongly that the institution should never compromise when it comes to the best interest of students and their education. Linked directly to students are teachers, and at Mendocino College we pride ourselves in our full-time instructors, individuals who have undergone thorough scrutiny before being hired for a job that most likely will be held by that individual for the remainder of their career.

The recent request for retreat rights from the Director of Distance Education position to a full-time faculty position does follow our current policy and education code. However, at a time when decisions for full-time faculty will have an impact on the campus for years to come, it must also be pointed out that this is a voluntary decision and not one that is necessary.

If we take into account all the college processes in place to ensure that we have a thoughtful, strategically planned campus, then we might ask if this really is an opportune time for such a retreat to occur when it is voluntary and not necessary. After all, let us not forget that our mandate, as an educational institution, is that planning should drive budgeting, not the reverse.

There are several factors that the faculty take issue with, related to this decision.

1. Through shared governance, employees in all areas of Mendocino College have together developed a process for planning and staffing. The campus uses Program Review as a way for programs to request more staffing as programs grow. These requests are then sent to the Staffing Committee which meets and prioritizes positions not only for faculty, but for classified and management positions as well.

A second way that positions come forward for ranking is through requests to the Staffing Committee for replacement of positions when someone has retired or resigned. In the case of Sociology, there was no mention of a Sociology position in last year’s Program Review and there was not a request to the Staffing Committee over the past year. The administrators could have made such a request, but it was not done. Why wasn’t it done? One could surmise that it was not a priority because we have so many other positions that have become vacant over the past year that Sociology would probably not become a high enough priority for a replacement position. This may be due to the fact that the number of students enrolled in Sociology classes is not as high as other areas such as the Sciences, Computer Science, Fine and Performing Arts

and Business Office Technology that have been given top priority rankings by the Staffing Committee. Staffing positions in these areas came through our Program Review and staffing process and were prioritized accordingly. It should also be noted that all of the above programs offer AA or AS degrees and within those degrees, there are REQUIRED transferable courses in those disciplines that students must take. This is not the case with Sociology. All Sociology courses are essentially elective courses. None are **required** courses for any degree.

2. Another consideration should be the fact that the normal way for faculty to be hired is through a competitive hiring process that brings a number of talented candidates before a hiring committee. This hiring process is an attempt to ensure that the field of applicants has been given every consideration for their expertise, teaching ability, and other performance indicators as determined by the hiring committee.
3. While the retreat process is part of our policy, we must also ask whether it is necessary to allow such a retreat in tough economic times, and at a time when the college is being mandated by the state to support Basic Skills, Career & Technical Education, and Degree/Transfer programs. We have other processes in place to make certain that the college grows strategically in the future. Allowing a voluntary retreat at this time is not necessary to the future growth of the college.
4. Although our administration feels that the job of the Director of Distance Education is not a full time job, many faculty disagree. Faculty who teach online classes see much potential in this area and feel that indeed much more could be done. Online instructors are also concerned that their need for support in this area will be diminished if this individual is performing duties in another area.

Faculty morale has depleted dramatically this year. Salaries have been cut and full-time faculty may potentially face layoffs in the future. Full-time faculty have been asked to cut back; cut course offerings, cut part-time instructors (many of whom are long time, valued faculty members), cut program expenditures and relinquish benefits pertaining to professional development. Furthermore, faculty who represent disciplines that currently have vacancies that are not being filled, whose positions have gone through the Program Review process, Staffing Committee and the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) and been prioritized, continue to see these vital positions remain vacant. With this in mind, and considering the points that we have listed above, we urge you to take action, slowly and thoughtfully.

Thank you for considering our comments as you consider the request before you. The Academic Senate would be happy to sit down and discuss this issue with you if you so desire.

Members thanked Leslie for her excellent work on this.

2. Updates on Senate Objectives 2010

- Retention & Growth (*Jean & Jason*)

Talked to constituents (only 13 faculty members replied to survey despite several reminders) and Meridith Randall about what techniques are helping and what policies are hurting retention. Retention Rate

information was gathered from Charles Duffy. A plan to implement strategies to increase retention was recommended by the sub-committee as follows:

- Create a “Retention Tool Kit” for instructors that is accessible on-line; this toolkit would include flyers about upcoming writing and study skills workshops, College/Career Success courses, tutoring, Early Alert faculty forms and other support that would increase the success of students.
 - Bring policies that may be hurting retention (see list above) to the attention of the Matriculation Committee, PPAC, Academic Senate, Registrar, Curriculum Committee, for further discussion.
 - Offer JRN 201 (Writing for the Mass Media) on a regular basis, as an opportunity to include topics related to student success. Have a column written by classroom and counseling faculty. This newspaper or newsletter would also be available online.
 - Consider adding “recommended preparation” to courses that require essays and research papers and use of computers (that currently have no English or computer literacy prerequisites or recommended preparation).
 - Continue to offer “Teachers on Teaching” and other useful basic skills-related workshops to faculty, but rotate them so that people who teach on Fridays may also attend.
 - Offer a teaching practices workshop during in-service that focuses on retention.
 - Consider rolling this objective over into the next year’s Academic Senate list of objectives, if the Senate thinks that more discussion and follow-up of the recommendations is needed.
- Professional Development for Faculty (*John*)

Faculty had been surveyed in the spring 2009 for topics connected to professional development for the 2009-10 academic year. Some of the areas that came up were connected to technology, web pages, basic skills, SLOs, and department meetings/work. John Koetzner and David Bushway offered workshops on SharePoint technology for faculty/staff web pages in the fall semester, Jaime Cechin ran a workshop on SLOs during our in-service day, and Debra Polak ran mini-institutes and a conference on Basic Skills that had participants from several Northern California college campuses (including Santa Rosa Junior College) and local high school teachers in addition to full-time and part-time faculty from Mendocino College as presenters and participants. Lynn Haggitt covered flex activities at a faculty meeting and has reminded faculty at key junctures about the need to prepare flex reports regarding the activities through email. A new survey for faculty staff development was not completed in March, but it will be done in May to help guide activities for the 2010-11 academic year.

- Departmental Restructuring (*Les P. & Leslie*)
Some exploration of departmental restructuring took place this year, although because of more pressing issues, the Senate did not accomplish as much as it had hoped in this area. At a faculty meeting early in the semester, excellent dialogue took place focusing on program needs and how department or division chairs could help or hinder the administration and representation of academic programs. Following this meeting, faculty in Fine and Performing Arts, English and Math and Science met to discuss in more detail how restructuring might work within these different areas. Our intention was to present these finds at a faculty meeting, but because other issues of immediate importance had to be discussed, this follow up discussion never occurred.

It is clear that faculty have different ideas about how a restructuring in faculty leadership of programs might help or hurt their programs. This makes sense as each program is unique and therefore, one model may not work for all programs. Since many faculty have articulated that our current set-up is not working for them, we recommend that this objective be carried over into next year. It is suggested that next year's Senate, at its beginning-of-the-year "retreat" discuss how best to follow up in the next academic year.

- Senate Constitution and Bylaws (*Jason*)
Time did not allow for the Senate Constitution to be revised this year. It is suggested that this objective be added to the list of Senate objectives next year.
- Student Learning Outcomes (*John*)
Jaime Cechin has had a difficult task this year, in continuing progress with SLOs, but he has managed to keep faculty aware and involved with the process that is getting closer to the 2012 deadline for assessing SLOs in all of our courses that are offered by that time. He has had less faculty participation on SLO (Student Learning Outcomes Team), and he is greatly in need of more faculty participation. He did run an in-service activity to show us how some of the younger faculty (Rebecca Montes, Phil Warf, etc.) have approached assessment of SLOs in their courses as a model for how it can be done. He also surveyed faculty to see where they were with their progress on assessment and reminded them that 2012 is much closer than we think. While no new documents came to Academic Senate for approval, Jaime has continued to coax faculty to participate in getting Mendocino College closer to 100% in getting all SLOs done and getting the assessment cycle completed by that 2012 deadline. This is a very important goal that needs to continue, and the faculty needs to be encouraged to be on this very important committee for the health of the college and for reinforcing student success.
- Supervision/Mentorship of Part Time Faculty (*Jessica*)
Jessica will report at the next meeting.

Leslie asked Senate members to encourage constituents to volunteer for important committee work. Especially needing our support is the Student Learning Outcomes committee. Committee appointments will be on the next agenda.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 1:30pm.

Academic Senate Membership 2009-10

Leslie Saxon West – President
John Koetzner – Vice-President
Jason Edington
Lynn Haggitt
Steve Hixenbaugh

Les Pfutzenreuter
Jean Stirling
Paul Kemp - MPFA
Jessica Morris – MPFA