



ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEWSLETTER

# SENATEROSTRUM

This special edition of the Senate Rostrum is dedicated to our vocational programs, faculty and students. It features articles that result from the recent Vocational Leadership Institute in Palm Springs, where we once again encouraged vocational faculty to become faculty leaders in their own right rather than as a “token” vocational spokesperson. Programs and students benefit in many ways when their faculty participate in the larger political stage as curriculum committee members, senators, volunteers for statewide committees or candidates for Senate Executive Committee. We strongly encourage you to nurture vocational leaders on your own campus and to involve them in wider senate and leadership activities.

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### THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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# We Can, We Should—It's Right, It's Our Job

by Ian Walton, President

**A** year ago at Spring Plenary Session in San Francisco, the body adopted two resolutions calling for an increase in the statewide minimum requirements in math and English required to receive an associate degree from any California Community College. With those actions, it became the responsibility of the President and Executive Committee to implement the official will of the body. For many resolutions, delegates don't examine what is required to implement them, and are satisfied when the results appear, a year or two later, recorded as completed in the Senate Status Report.

## The Process

In the case of the graduation requirements, however, passing the resolutions was merely the starting point of a long, official process that involves explaining the Senate's academic reasons, allowing other interested constituencies to discuss the recommendation, and making a convincing political case for why the Senate's academic and professional advice should prevail. This process will ultimately result in a Board of Governor's action to change Title 5. Here we share the public arguments that have been made both to outside groups and to those of our own faculty who remain unconvinced. They have been distilled from the four years of Senate debate as well as the past year of presentations to groups such as the CIO/CSSO joint conference and the Consultation Council. They have also appeared briefly in newspaper articles in the Sacramento Bee (3/21/06) and Community College Week (4/10/06).

First we have explained the Senate's process. Despite comments to the contrary by a local college president, it has been a long, slow, deliberate and thoughtful process—some would say “glacial”—in true higher education policy mode. Process is what the Senate does best. It began in 2001 and included plenary session break-outs, two statewide, public hearings, a background paper, local senate debate and intense statewide debate at several plenary sessions. As is the nature of our process, new individuals joined the debate at every stage and were sometimes surprised that the material was new to them. The final adoption votes in Spring 2005 were not unanimous but, nonetheless, were very clear expressions of the will of the body. As I commented to

a CEO group, “you would be delighted with that degree of approval for a bond measure.” Such is the nature of contentious decisions in a democracy.

## The Reasons

The quick “soundbite” conclusion that we share with most groups is that this is the right thing to do—right for our individual students and their families, right for the relationship of our system to the rest of public education in California and right for the California economy and its success in the ever-changing global economy. We make no claim that it will be easy, but rather that with the creative talents of our colleagues we can make it a success for all our students. Locally it's always possible to find a single faculty member or program with an opposing view.

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**And just as happens when you take a local senate academic and professional recommendation to your local Board of Trustees, individuals are free to testify in opposition.**

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But at the level of state educational policy this is clearly the correct vision of the future.

Two main sets of data and arguments lead independently to the Senate recommendation. Both reasons are important.

One set of reasons involves economic considerations at the personal, state, national and global levels.

At the personal level economic studies show two scenarios:

1. People with “high school level” skills face real wage decline (both historically and projected for the future), and the size of the available workforce exceeds the job demand.
2. People with “college level skills” enjoy real wage increases and an excess of available jobs over worker supply<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Congressman Gunderson presentation to FACCC conference, 2005. Available at <http://www.faccc.org/research/workshop/conf/2005/GundersonPresentation.pdf>

The preferred choice should be obvious. You can debate the meaning of “college level” in various different studies, but the current minimum math and English skills required for California community college associate degrees are indisputably high school level.

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### On an increasingly global stage, leaders repeatedly talk about the need for improved math and English skills (and occasionally communication and science as well).

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We’ve heard it from local employers including, especially, the economic and workforce development community, State Superintendent of Public Instruction O’Connell, Board of Governors chair Caplan, our brand new system strategic plan<sup>2</sup> and its data, and even from President Bush in this year’s state of the union address<sup>3</sup>. In large part this widespread concern is driven by global economic analyses that show high-skill jobs moving overseas to the large number of bachelor degree holders materializing in India and China. This could leave California with a surfeit of low-skill, low-wage jobs and the resulting decline of tax revenue and the state services that are so important to a vibrant democracy. This is not the future we want—for ourselves or our students. A recent European Economic Community survey of math preparation ranked the United States between Portugal and Latvia<sup>4</sup>. Something is seriously wrong with this picture.

The second set of reasons involves our relationship with the other parts of public education in California—K-12, CSU and UC. In the past decade the California public has expressed considerable concern about both the standards and the achievement levels of the K-12 system. Extensive new framework documents were completed with the explicit intent of raising standards in math and English. The math framework states:

Students must complete at least two courses in mathematics in grades nine through twelve (one or a combination of these courses must meet

or exceed the rigor of the content standards for Algebra I)<sup>5</sup>.

The language arts framework states:

Strong emphasis on research-based discourse (writing and delivering research-based compositions and oral presentations and reading research discourse critically)<sup>6</sup>.

This means that the math and English skills laid out in the high school frameworks are the **same** level as the minimum currently required by our colleges for receipt of an associate degree—a degree that certifies that you have the general education skills achieved **after completion** of two years of higher education. That’s a significant mismatch. In addition, the **entry-level** skills required for students to attend CSU include a math course two levels higher than our degree requirement as the standard for exemption from the CSU entry-level mathematics test (ELM). Notice that CSU’s requirement is before the two years of higher education that we provide to our associate degree recipients.

### The Proposal

The Senate’s proposal addresses those two misalignments—job skills and general education relative to other systems—by raising the statewide minimum requirements for an associate degree. It leaves in place existing mechanisms for alternative courses and departments, a testing option and does not affect degree applicability. In addition it strongly recommends that local colleges create alternative courses and examine support services to maximize relevance and success for students. The Senate’s proposal does not affect those students obtaining a certificate, or who complete transfer requirements.

The fine print of the actual proposal has been available to you for some time both as the complete Consultation Digest and as a one page summary. I will not repeat these here but you can find them on the Senate website at <http://www.academicssenate.cc.ca.us/Archives/MathEnglish/MathEnglishMain.html>.

If you are a newcomer to this conversation, I encourage you to read them carefully. This is a case where the fine

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<sup>2</sup> System Strategic Plan, 2006. Available at [http://www.cccco.edu/strat\\_plan/strat\\_plan.htm](http://www.cccco.edu/strat_plan/strat_plan.htm)

<sup>3</sup> State of Union Address, 2006. Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/stateoftheunion/2006/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> First Results from PISA 2003, Executive Summary, p8. Available at <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/dataoecd/1/63/34002454.pdf>

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<sup>5</sup> Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools, 2006. Available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ma/cf/documents/math-front-intro.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Reading Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, 1999. Available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/lang-arts.pdf>

print is important. New material will be posted at this same website as it becomes available.

## The Concerns

Some of the concerns voiced in audience questions seem to come from people who have not actually read the Senate proposal. But the most common concerns come in two groups.

One group essentially says that the new requirement is not necessary for “something.” Some point to the traditional Intermediate Algebra or Freshman Composition courses and say that they are not suitable for every student in every degree program. The Senate absolutely agrees and makes it clear by resolutions and in the recommendation that a variety of appropriate alternative courses at the same level of rigor should be made available. Several colleges who have already increased their degree requirements locally have courses available in departments other than math and English (Title 5, section 55805.5 (e) currently authorizes this).

Examples for math include Computer Mathematics, Business Mathematics and Electronic Mathematics. Examples for English include Business Communications, Introduction to Business Writing, Writing for News Media and Reporting & Writing.

At the Senate’s recent Vocational Leadership Seminar in Palm Springs a creative, enthusiastic group of faculty shared examples of why their vocational students would ultimately benefit from increased general education skill levels, and shared possible alternative courses and strategies.

Other opponents point to a specific vocational program that does not need mathematics or English in order to get a job. Here is where it is important to acknowledge that an essential component of awarding a college degree is an expectation about general education, not just job skills. It has been pointed out that associate degree holders receive higher salaries than certificate holders and therefore suggested that we don’t want to discourage students from earning degrees. That much is true, but unless we are careful, this logic suggests that salary is the overriding priority. Then we might as well just award everybody a Ph.D. because the same data shows that Ph.D. holders receive even higher salaries.

The second group of concerns can be summarized as “students find this difficult—therefore we shouldn’t make them do it.” If we applied this concept to education as a whole, we wouldn’t have any colleges or universities. Of

course, students find much of education difficult—and our job as professionals is to help them succeed.

A variant of this theme is to point out that students may require an additional semester to complete a new requirement—and therefore we can’t do it.

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**The whole point of our open access institutions is to welcome students at any skill level—and then help them to achieve the levels appropriate for a certificate or degree.**

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If you simply say we have to give them a degree after two years, regardless of general education skill level, then you fall right into the “seat time / social promotion” behavior that has so destroyed the credibility of K-12. That would not serve our students well.

And the most emotional concern is the data that shows some subgroups of students have lower success rates in math and English. But the conclusion that therefore “those students don’t need the math or English skills” is flat wrong. You could point to similar data for differential success rates in high school. But nobody would conclude that those students don’t need high school. Our conclusion should be that the affected sub groups of students need math and English skills just as much, or more, than any other degree holders. And again, our job is to be creative and help our students to earn success. The differential success rates are indeed a problem—and one that we must address. But the solution is not differential skill levels.

You’ll also occasionally hear the argument of “local control.” This is misleading. The state has already established its expectation for a statewide minimum requirement. The Senate is recommending that the level of that existing statewide requirement be raised. So arguments for local control are simply opposition to raising the statewide minimum.

## What Happens Next?

The simplest timeline is for other groups to complete their discussions this month and for the Senate recommendation to return to Consultation Council on May 11. It was first shared with Consultation Council in January. Chancellor Drummond will then consider the advice of Consultation Council and make a recommendation to the Board of Governors. On a matter which is so clearly academic and professional we would expect the Chancellor to take the Senate proposal to the Board for

discussion and possible action. Title 5 changes such as this require two Board readings which would mean, at the earliest, the July and September Board meetings.

Minimum implementation time after Board approval is a thirty day waiting period, but some CIO leaders have suggested that a later effective date, such as for students entering in Fall 2008 or Fall 2009, would give colleges the time they need to create effective alternative courses and examine support structures. However, the CIO/CSSO conference recently passed a resolution that includes “whereas” clauses supportive of the Senate’s reasons for recommending a change, but a “resolved” clause calling for maintenance of the status quo. The complete resolution is available on their website at: [http://www.ccccio.org/documents/resolutionremathandEnglish\\_000.pdf](http://www.ccccio.org/documents/resolutionremathandEnglish_000.pdf).

The Senate believes that the Board of Governors should show clear leadership on this issue by passing the Title 5 change recommended by the Academic Senate. This action will clearly tell the system and the California public that they support increased math and English skills for our degree recipients. They should then direct us to expend our considerable energies and expertise on the creation of courses and support mechanisms that help students to achieve those higher skills. The Legislature has just proposed an increased amount of “one-time” Proposition 98 funds for the next several years. A project to pilot and replicate measures to ensure student success with the new requirements would be an excellent use of such money. Perhaps it could be a joint proposal of the Senate and the CIO board. In the meantime the Senate will continue to share mechanisms from successful programs and colleges. Several 2006 Spring Session resolutions address this. Come to the breakout scheduled for Spring Plenary Session to share your ideas and your success stories and to find creative solutions to everybody’s concerns.

And here’s my personal plea to all of you—students, faculty, administrators and trustees.

Don’t expend immense energy in arguing that our students don’t need math and English skills to succeed as educated citizens in a vibrant California and a global economy.

Instead, please join me in loudly saying that this is the right future for our students, their families, their employers and our fine state.

Together we will achieve that future. ■

## The Academic Senate Discusses the 80% Proposal

by Mark Wade Lieu, Vice-President

In Fall 2005, the 80% proposal first surfaced. Essentially, the proposal would amend the Education Code, which currently limits the teaching load of a part-time faculty member to 60% of a full-time faculty member’s load in a single district. The proposal, which is now Senate Bill 847 (Ducheny), raises that limitation to 80% per college. In fall 2005, the body directed the Academic Senate Executive Committee to research the issues behind the 80% proposal and bring information and resolutions back in Spring 2006.

Three resolutions pertaining to the 80% proposal appear in the Spring 2006 pre-session packet, and these resolutions were put forward by the Executive Committee after lengthy discussion. The discussion involved not only members of the Executive Committee but also liaisons from the evolving Student Senate, CCA/CTA, CCC/CFT, FACCC, and the AAUP. Members of the California Part-Time Faculty Association, the principal group behind the proposal, were also invited to participate. In this brief article, I present the substance of the discussions to inform your understanding of the issue.

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**Many of the arguments presented by proponents of the change to the 60% law pertain to working conditions.**

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The current restriction, particularly in the case of courses of five units or more, precludes a part-time faculty member from teaching more than one class in a given district. This exacerbates the already deplorable working conditions for most part-time faculty by forcing them to drive significant distances to teach enough courses to make a living. Some have argued that the Senate should not be involved in discussions of working conditions. However, given the fact that working conditions often affect teaching and learning conditions, it can be argued that the Senate must be involved.

In order to address the 80% proposal while leaving the issues of working conditions to our union colleagues, the Senate has focused on pedagogical and governance issues. Those opposed to the proposal focus on the threat to academic freedom and the 75:25 ratio first proposed in AB1725 in 1989. Opponents claim that the 80% proposal provides further inducement for cash-strapped colleges and districts to move away from a cadre of full-time faculty to reliance on part-time faculty. While part-time faculty stand as equal to full-time faculty in the classroom, the responsibilities of a full-time faculty member extend far beyond time in the classroom to include curriculum and program development, campus committee and governance service, advisement, and community outreach. Furthermore, full-time tenured faculty are generally protected from possible reprisals when they speak out against policies or procedures that are supported by college and district administration. Vocational faculty emphasize that this is particularly true in occupational programs, which are the focus of other current legislation concerning faculty workload. Opponents emphasize that the 80% proposal undermines current efforts to move towards the 75:25 goal. Furthermore, the 80% proposal could have a significant negative effect on faculty diversity. Many full-time hires come through the part-time ranks. For many, a part-time position is a foot in the door to a community college career. Opponents point out that many colleges have seniority hiring policies for part-timers. Given that the diversity in the part-time pool is greater in recent hires, should senior part-time faculty claim more hours, this could have the effect of shutting out more recently-hired part-time faculty, reducing the diversity of current part-time ranks and by extension the pool from which future full-time faculty will be recruited.

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**Proponents respond to these arguments by pointing out that less “freeway flying” could result in part-time faculty being on single campuses for a greater amount of time, permitting them to be more involved in activities such as curriculum development and governance.**

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They also argue that the 80% proposal in no way affects the current number of full-time faculty or the number of sections being taught by part-time faculty. The current required number of full-time faculty is set by the Faculty Obligation Number (FON) issued by the System Office each year and changes when additional funding is given

to the colleges/districts. Violations of the FON result in colleges surrendering funds back to the System Office. Finally, proponents point out that the system has made no movement towards achieving 75:25 in the last 16 years and that current regulations do not foster such movement. This, they emphasize, is the problem—not the 80% proposal.

Opponents point to the recent request by the System Office to “forgive” violations of the FON by seven districts to show that reliance on the FON to protect full-time positions is foolhardy. However, they agree that regulation needs to be developed that produces actual progress towards the 75:25 goal. Opponents also ask whether, if given the choice, part-time faculty will work more hours to make more money or use their savings in commute time on curriculum and governance.

Proponents make one final argument connected to the 75:25 goal. Given the lack of progress in reaching this goal in the last 16 years, something needs to change. Proponents cite the complacency of those who have already achieved full-time positions as part of the problem. Should the worst-case-scenarios raised by opponents to the 80% proposal come to pass, this may actually shake up governance groups and full-time faculty enough so that something actually changes. Opponents point out that if your goal is to shake things up it would be much more effective to completely abolish the “temporary employee” category. Some have argued that when the choice is between stasis and change, if stasis is not producing results, change is needed. Opponents find this concept puts too much at risk and that possibly irrevocable losses cannot justify change for change’s sake.

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**Much of the rhetoric on both sides of the 80% proposal points to an unknown future should the proposal be adopted.**

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The Academic Senate relies on your earnest discussions at the local level, involving both full-time and part-time faculty, to decide how the Academic Senate should stand on this issue. ■

# The Power of Connection

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by Renee Tuller, Grossmont College, Occupational Education Committee Member

It wasn't long ago that the only way to register for classes at the community college was for the student (and family) to drive to the college, talk to a counselor, fill out the application and other forms and eventually register for courses after a series of human-to-human contacts (via Orientation, Assessment, Arena registration with college faculty available) at the college.

In 2006, we have students attending the community colleges throughout the state that start their first day at college and never speak to any community college personnel. Many of these students have no idea why they are registered in your class. Your class may have been the one class that was open during the time-slot needed. Students may sign up for distance education courses without knowing how to use a computer. Some students make registration choices like that for many reasons, but a majority of their decisions are simply made by economic survival.

Many students start out college and do not see a counselor and do not go through orientation or assessment but they may need 12 units up front to get coverage from their parent's insurance, or to be eligible as a student athlete, or for financial aid, or to get full VA benefits, etc.

Times have changed. Changes in technology, pressures to increase FTES, and more limited college resources, have together produced a disconnect for our vocational students, when what they need most is the human element.

As a counseling faculty member, I have some anecdotal observations that may be relevant as colleges come under the new accountability frameworks (AB1417 and the student learning outcome movement).

Many students come to community colleges today because of our reputations in the state. Community colleges historically have gone the extra mile to be student-centered and accessible to students.

Is that happening today at your campus?

How has technology and limited resources impacted our accessibility and approachability?

Have you done a campus climate survey? Are your students satisfied with how the college is serving the community?

Matriculation cuts a few years ago caused many colleges to cut off services that provide vital assistance to our students. Many students do not know their options but many feel an incredible pressure to transfer to a four year university.

Many students need to examine all their options. Our vocational programs are an excellent option for some students, and by bypassing matriculation, they may not be aware of these options.

Beginning in Spring 2006, the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) required by state law will now be enforced so that every high school student must pass this exam to receive a diploma. Although the intent of the CAHSEE is to help the sluggish student achievement in high school and ensure that state content standards are met, the impact of this test is controversial. I don't intend to engage in the controversy but community colleges ought to be aware that many students will turn to them for options.

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**Without a strong matriculation program and resources in place, are community colleges adequately prepared to take on yet another large population and meet their specialized needs?**

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Will this be one more barrier for some of our vocational students seeking a more direct pathway to a livable and fulfilling career?

We must continue to find ways to function as a community, with faculty assisting staff and other faculty in bridging those widening chasms described above so that our students don't flounder, wasting their time and precious resources. Integration between instructional, counseling, and vocational programs should be promoted. It is a good idea for classroom instructors and counselors to go to each other's department meetings once in a while. Break down the silos so that the students that you have in common are not the only bridge between these institutional elements. ■

# First Conference

by Frank Tebeau, College of the Sequoias, Occupational Education Committee Member

**L**EADERSHIP: HINDSIGHT OR VISION—a bold title for this year’s Vocational Education Leadership Institute, and a title that set the tone for a truly inspirational and informative conference.

As a first time participant I was in awe. From the opening and welcome given by the President of the Academic Senate, Ian Walton, to the closing session by Patrick Perry, Vice Chancellor for Technology, CCCC the Institute covered a lot of ground and was entirely motivating.

Vice President Mark Wade Lieu and Treasurer Jane Patton brought into focus the mechanisms of our State Academic Senate, and how we at Vocational Institute can be involved both at our campus and on a state level.

As a teacher in your shop, lab or classroom have you ever wondered how funding works? If so, you should have attended the session “Budgets—Smoke and Mirrors,” presented by Susan Coleman and Lyla Eddington. We learned the ins and outs of claiming the funding that should come into our programs, as well as how and who to ask.



**With distance education classes becoming more and more popular you could not have attended a better workshop than the one presented by Patricia James-Hanz. What a dynamic presenter, with a wealth of expertise in this innovative method of instruction.**

As a presenter in the breakout session, the Ubiquitous Department Chair, I saw first hand the leadership roles that my fellow Vocational Education instructors are providing to their colleges while also being able to share the same experiences with my colleagues in attendance.

I was honored to be a member of the Occupational Education Committee of the Academic Senate and participating in this great session. ■



► Vocational Leadership Institute breakouts covered a lot of ground in three activity-filled days

# Statewide Career Pathways: Creating School to College Articulation (SB 70)

by Jane Patton, Relations with Local Senates Committee

In September 2005 Senator Scott's Vocational Education legislation, SB 70, was chaptered into the Education Code (section 88532). The bill focuses on improving the linkages and career-technical pathways between high school and California community colleges. Most of the CCC response to the legislation will occur through programs coordinated directly from the System Office, and personnel there have already begun to inform colleges about some of their plans. However, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges will design and implement one project called [Statewide Career Pathways: Creating School to College Articulation](#), and it is this one project that this article will explain.

Statewide Career Pathways: Creating School to College Articulation will provide an opportunity for high school and college faculty to meet, collaborate and develop articulation agreements.

Resulting agreements will vary by discipline and may include alignment of course skills, concepts and sequences, advanced placement possibilities and credit by examination options. While our colleges have already participated in many efforts to align curriculum and develop articulation agreements through Tech Prep programs, faculty have indicated several unmet needs, which this project will address, including the following:

- ▶ When articulation agreements have been created, educators have not had an effective means to collect and share them regionally or across regions. This program will create and maintain a database of agreements and explore models of articulation that can be replicated in other regions. Furthermore, the program will create a mechanism for faculty to review and update articulation agreements so they remain current.
- ▶ While there have been opportunities for collaboration between faculty in colleges, schools and Regional Occupation Centers (ROC), they have not always been supported and coordinated sufficiently. There is also a need to coordinate with the efforts of various curriculum and articulation groups (consortia, Tech Prep, IMPAC). This program will support opportunities for faculty participation and seek to coordinate with other projects.
- ▶ While past articulation agreements have been developed, students, parents, and personnel in schools and colleges did not take advantage of articulation agreements due to lack of information. This program will develop an outreach component to increase student, parent and educators' understanding of the opportunities that students have and highlight the benefits of their participation.

The Statewide Career Pathways: Creating School to College Articulation will begin by forming a steering committee, including representatives from high schools, ROCs and colleges. The work of the project will begin by developing an inventory of existing articulation agreements. The program will then identify the most appropriate disciplines to target initially and will assemble and convene faculty discipline groups (with high school and college faculty). They will create standards for articulation and course acceptance and begin to develop appropriate articulation agreements. Next, a database will be developed. We will create outreach strategies along the way, ensuring we coordinate with existing groups.

The following Guiding Principles will inform our articulation project. The project will:

- ▶ Build upon best practices for articulation and lessons learned
- ▶ Focus on targeted fields by region
- ▶ Build upon existing projects (IMPAC, Tech Prep)
- ▶ Provide support to high school and community college faculty
- ▶ Provide opportunities to collaborate

The Academic Senate is currently collecting a list of individuals who might be interested in participating in this project beginning immediately and continuing through the next academic year. Individuals can notify us of their interest by contacting the Academic Senate Office at (916) 445-4753 and asking for an application to serve on the SB 70 articulation project.

The Academic Senate is delighted to have the opportunity, through SB 70, to facilitate the educational pathways for students as they move from high school to postsecondary institutions. ■

# The Vocational Faculty Leadership Institute

## “Visionary Leaders Plan for Whom They Will Lead and by Whom They Will be Led”

by Wheeler North, Occupational Education Committee Chair

Once, long, long ago in a place far, far away (mid-March 2006 in Palm Springs) during a dark and stormy Thursday afternoon a special ops team of highly skilled operators slithered quietly into the tense atmosphere of a cold, dark dungeon deep below an ever so grand castle. They traveled incessantly from room to room with the only thought in their minds being a focused ideal of completely freeing the neglected few who braved these elements only to find themselves captured deep within this mighty fortress.

Our team, known only by the tippy-top secret coded acronym of ASCCC-OEC, or OEC for short was an odd mix of simmering talents, really, of talents most suited to get the majority of us into trouble, to get us labeled—rabble rousers, faculty leaders, or trouble-makers.

Due to the highly skilled expertise of this team coupled with the equally miraculous capabilities of our very own Logistical Translocation Coordinating Squad (LTCS) up in Sacramento this year’s Institute was by all accounts a smashing success. Just to cover some of the mission’s demographic details, there were over 125 souls looking for a better way of life, with over 20 presenters trying to provide those guiding lights. We had 15 well attended “breakouts”(an excellent choice of words for this article’s metaphor), 6 top-notch general sessions, 5 incredible meals served by the very same culinary team who caters the Emmys, and a couple of wonderful evenings touring, shopping and reconnoitering in the delightful village of downtown Palm Springs during the heart of their street fair season.

Although one rarely remembers them, our theme this year was 20:20 Leadership: Hindsight or Vision—Proactive vs. Reactive Leadership. The reason the ASCCC-OEC Specialists chose this theme was to build upon President Walton’s annual theme of balancing pragmatism with principles.

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**One functional role of a good leader is to attempt and sustain a proactive vision of upcoming needs and issues while also being able to appropriately react to the unforeseen without too much loss of their forward momentum.**

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A good leader must also be able to use hindsight to improve upon the vision and the implementation of that vision.

In this latter vein there is room for improvement in some areas. For instance, we need to schedule more pass time between breakouts. Although that may be difficult to do if we wish to continue offering as many sessions and breakouts and fit it all into two days.

Two aspects of the conference worked really well:

1. The @One team, who not only supplied the tactical equipment for a full day of computer lab workshops, but also delivered the equipment, set it up, and provided tech support for the entire effort. They most certainly deserve a resounding round of applause. Special thanks go to John Whitmer for letting us use the equipment and staff and to Lisa Strand for bringing it all the way there, setting it up, breaking it down, and for being an ace trooper in making this happen.

In these four breakouts we were able to first demonstrate one of the Senate’s newest web additions, a legislation tracking search feature. We then conducted two sequential breakouts on grants where the attendees were able to begin writing NSF grants. The final section was about how to take a leader’s role in utilizing today’s distance education technology effectively and appropriately in vocational courses.

2. Repeating the breakout on Advisory Groups. This is the second year in a row we have offered this breakout while also repeating it at each Institute. On both occasions, these dual breakouts have been filled and the presenters were mobbed for more by a crowd hungry for ways to embrace their industry and government partners. Of the five or so things that seem to top the list of common issues for vocational programs, advisory groups seems to be right there on top between funding and program continuance.

We were also greatly pleased with the diversity of topics available to our audience.

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**Truly effective leaders possess diverse and well rounded baseline knowledge from which to launch their vision and efforts.**

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As well, a transformational leader's prime modus operandi is to facilitate broad spectrum self-driven solution-making amongst their followers. In other words, when a leader implements a good idea, it often satisfies many goals at the same time.

As the highly calibrated leadership conditioning process wound to a close, with an excellent interactive session about who we serve and how we might better serve them, our ASCCC-OEC rallied for a mission debrief while bidding farewell to the many newly revived spirits all looking forward to implementing the many ideas they had just learned. In the debrief we congratulated ourselves, while reflecting on how much we had changed in the previous six months.

While there are many benefits to joining any ASCCC committee, to me, the friendships resulting from shared effort are what I will retain long beyond the passage of my tenure with this team. Although there are only a couple of ASCCC committees that are responsible for putting on institutes, the others are equally mated to epoch processes that will professionally develop any participant while bonding them to other statewide leaders of like mind. If you haven't joined one in a while, think about filling out the "Nomination to Serve" form at our next plenary session, or download it from our website and fax it in.

And finally, I would like to thank all the attendees, without you, leadership wouldn't happen. Go forth and multiply. ■



► Vocational Leadership Institute participants at the registration table

# Distance Education: If Done Right, Is It Right for You?

by Patricia James-Hanz, Technology Committee Chair

I guess you could say that I am an eternal optimist who believes strongly that nothing is impossible. In 1992, I wrote a tech prep grant proposal as a high school computer applications teacher. My principal at the time said, “You can go to those Tech Prep meetings if you want, but there’s no money in it”. A year later, he stood at the door with me as a whole new lab of shiny MAC computers were unloaded into my classroom, courtesy of a \$30k Tech Prep award, that no one but me thought I would receive. The district administrators were so convinced it wouldn’t happen they completely ignored that there was a \$30k district obligation for matching funds! So, as the district finance officer robbed from one account after another to find the match (endearing my success to no one), I planned a career pathway for my students that would take them from the high school into the community college multimedia degree program. The rest is history. I’m now in my tenth year at that college, still working on the bleeding edge of things, a full distance education evangelist. (I definitely have learned that innovation isn’t always going to make me popular.)

## Vocational Instructors, Purveyors of Change...

So, what do you teach? Does what you teach rely on access to the digital world? Do you use technology tools to teach small engine repair, or to monitor sine waves, or for forensic investigation or in teaching about wireless networking? Whatever your vocational niche, you have likely been responding to change driven by advisory committees. Because we do what we do, we are generally the ones most used to, and ready to accept change. So here is wave one: Just because we are particularly good at using technology, mainly computers, and because we are good at

accepting progress, doesn’t mean we are automatically good online instructors.

To teach online, you may have to **learn** how to teach all over again. You will need to study proven successful techniques and expect to continue having to learn, paying attention to learning theory using this unique paradigm.

## It’s Not About the Technology...

Learning how to teach well online has very little to do with learning to use technical tools. While it’s nice to know how to make a web page or create a screen capture video, that’s not what makes a good online teacher. Learning how to teach at a distance means shifting your focus to being heard rather than seen. Courses-in-a-box provided by publishers are tempting, but injecting your own personal style is more likely to make you a successful teacher.

Wrong motivation can doom you to failure. If you think distance education means more time off-campus and therefore less work, you are in for a rude awakening. Teaching online for the wrong motivation is bound to lead to problems and will disadvantage your students because “regular effective contact” online takes more, not less, work.

## Human Contact at a Distance...

Excellent teaching online is a very personal and human activity. Marty Hittelman, in his infamous memo “Questions on the Distance Education Report” sent to the Distance Education Technical Advisory Committee (DETAC) in 2005, after a lengthy request for proof that distance education and online degrees have value, remarked as follows,

Have any such degrees or certificates been issued and if so, how many and at what institutions? Is there any evidence, other than anecdotal, of the percentage of students who prefer technologically mediated instruction to instruction **presented by a human being** (emphasis added)?

As I read Marty's memo, I appreciated the questions and his desire for hard data to answer them. However, that last line made me furious. It also made me wonder if he had ever had access to a really good online course. My classes, and I say this emphatically, are taught online using technology presented by a human being! I am what causes my students to be successful in my courses. This point has to be the heart of any message of advice I could give about teaching online: Put yourself whole-heartedly into your online courses. (Stay tuned, there will be a list of suggestions at the end of this tirade!)

As vocational educators, we realize more than most people that our students depend on what we give them, sometimes, with their very lives. If a student tells you that s/he has quit a clerking job to become a full-time student in order to become a professional in your discipline, you realize that what and how you teach is a serious responsibility. When people give up money, time, and jobs, they expect us to provide an education that will better their lives. We can't let them down when we move to a methodology that gives them increased access to our programs. We must make a commitment to be there, in that online class, every day, one-on-one, with our stories, advice and knowledge, in addition to our technical acumen.

### **Everything and Everyone Online?...**

Many of us share best practices and we study learning theory and new techniques, but ultimately, our success rests on our own abilities to reach students. No one can, nor should, be pushed into online teaching, nor made to feel badly because they don't embrace it as a possibility.

In 1998, I started with the idea that many things could be taught online but not everything. Certainly one couldn't teach interpersonal communication online and physical education was definitely out of the question! Then I watched my colleagues become amaz-

ingly successful online with these courses and I started to believe that everything could be taught online. I still think that, but I am much more reserved now. I've seen a lot of "junk" online and cringe when I occasionally produce it myself. Now I believe that there are some things that absolutely shouldn't be taught completely online, child development, for example.

### **Exposing Ourselves to the Light....**

The distance education classroom is most successful when it is an extension of yourself. Just as the 300-person lecture hall is abnormal on our campuses, so must we also insist that online courses should be similar in size as their face-to-face counterparts.

Through all the years of Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (VTEA) accountability, we have become masters of the competency list and tying outcomes to objectives. We understand evaluation of our courses and our teaching, better than anyone. When we expose our programs to the critique of the business community, through our advisory committees, we do so confident that we can meet any challenge they put before us.

As promised, here are resources that may be of help:

Enroll in training workshops or courses about how to teach online. Check out sessions at Academic Senate Plenary, Leadership Institutes, and Curriculum Institutes, and the @ONE offerings at <http://www.ccone.org> )

Share best practices and actual content materials with others in your discipline Check out <http://www.merlot.org> and the [June 2006 Online Teaching Conference at http://www.ccone.org](http://www.ccone.org). ■

# How Important is an Advisory Committee to your Vocational Program Success?

by John Frala, Rio Hondo College, Occupational Education Committee Member

## Why do you Need to have Advisory Meetings?

First, it is the law. Title 5 §55601 says,

*“The governing board of each community college district participating in a vocational education program shall appoint a vocational education advisory committee to develop recommendations on the program and to provide liaison between the district and potential employers.”*

*Authority cited Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Section 70901, Education Code.*

As noted, vocational programs are required to have an advisory committee. Many sources of funding are simply lost because Title 5 requires an advisory committee to meet grant qualifications. Furthermore, most college campuses that provide a fund through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Public Law 105-332, VTEA) require that minutes of an advisory committee meeting shall be provided before federal funding can be released.

**Additionally, advisory committee meetings can be used to validate funding requests and specific needs of the advisory committee or college.**

For example, the advisory committee can be used to note technology job changes in the community, which might result in the addition of new courses to accommodate new technologies. Such recommendations from the advisory committee can provide documentation and justification for federal funding.

## What Makes this Group so Special?

Who makes up the advisory group? What should the group expect to accomplish? Depending on what the program director is trying to accomplish there is a

general rule of thumb as to getting an advisory panel together.

1. Get people involved who will understand your vocational program. Such as:
  - a. A former graduate student who is working in the local area.
  - b. The department Dean or chairperson.
  - c. A dean or department chair from a neighboring college, with a program similar to yours.
  - d. Local high school program instructor.
  - e. Business trade companies representatives.
2. Keep the meeting professional, (Brown Act rules apply).
3. Invite the community businesses to participate (via phone calls or letters).
4. Hold face-to-face contact with the community (i.e. high school programs, clubs, job fairs, community functions).
5. Involve local government offices (Consumer Affairs, Air Quality Management District, (AQMD), Economic Development Department, Workforce Development Office, and Department of Labor).
6. Invite local politicians who share a voice in the community.
7. Involve your school counseling department who can establish transfer information and help with job placement.

8. Depending on what type of vocational program you are conducting, invite factory programs who could enhance the program with participation.
6. Compile a mailing list for distribution of new brochures.

### **When is the Best Time to Conduct an Advisory Committee Meeting?**

Ask the group. If this is your first time, you should send out a survey to gauge the best time and location to meet. Some meetings are better in the afternoon, using this as an opportunity to have a sandwich together, while others prefer evening discussions over a small dinner. This is all based on the needs of your group. However, I have found that weekends do not work well due to family commitments. Surveys by my campus show the majority prefer Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and attendance is usually good at either lunch or early dinner. Regardless of when you meet, ensure that you make everyone feel welcome.

What are the Responsibilities of this Group?

1. New business: what are the changing needs of the vocational field in your discipline?
2. What laws have changed that could impact your program next year?
3. Review of course outlines. Committee members may be asked to respond to the following questions:
  - ▶ Are there revisions, additions, or deletions to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for this course (program)?
  - ▶ Are the course standards realistic?
4. Review of program description from catalog or new brochure. Ask the advisory committee members to comment on accuracy of explanations listed in the college catalog, they might make perfect sense to you, but do they to your students?
5. Review the completeness of program.
  - ▶ Are there new courses or content that need to be added to the program?
  - ▶ Are there courses or content no longer required?
  - ▶ Is the program description clear and easily understood?
7. Suggest new equipment for expansion.
8. Provide advice on professional organizations and or advisory boards that the program should be involved with.
9. Help in suggesting part-time staffing.

### **Making the Meeting Count**

Start the meeting on time and prepare a formal agenda using some of the points above. No one likes to attend a meeting that is disorganized. If you would like a sample agenda, please contact me at: JFrala@rioehondo.edu. In addition, I would suggest that you showcase the work you have completed by providing your advisory committee with a tour of your facility.

### **After the Meeting**

Prepare your minutes and send out to advisory committee members within 48 hours for reviewing and correction as necessary. Minutes are easier to compile right after the meeting, when memories are fresh. In addition, your advisory group will appreciate receiving meeting minutes soon after the meeting. Certificates of appreciation should be sent to the attendees. You might even consider laminating them for framing and viewing in the customers' lounge. This will be important to your industry members because it lets the community see that the business is participating in the college program. It is also a great way to advertise the program.

Most importantly, you should stay in contact with your advisory committee. Make calendar reminders to contact your committee throughout the year, which will help in advancing the program with donations. Seek support and advice on items decided by the committee and act on items suggested during the meetings. ■

# The College Catalog: An Academic and Professional Matter

by Angela Caballero de Cordero, Curriculum Committee Member

**O**f all college publications available to students, there is not one that is more important than the college catalog. This publication informs students about their rights and responsibilities, about college policies critical to students' success, and about the courses they need to reach their educational goals, be it to get a certificate, a degree, transfer to a university, or any combination of these. In fact, this publication supersedes any other document when it comes to the colleges' obligation in serving students. Even when students discontinue their studies for a short time they continue having catalog rights.

For the community and for potential students, this is also a marketing tool and it may become the deciding factor between one college over another. It is one of the vehicles through which the college conveys its offerings, services, and the things that make a college unique and different to others.

The importance of the college catalog is also evident in the role it plays for the community and other educational institutions. Community college students are very mobile and when they leave one college and enroll in another, it is through the college's catalog that students, counselors, and other college staff determine where students need to pick up in terms of continuing their preparation for a certificate, degree, or a transfer goal.

The college catalog is more than a document for students in a utilitarian way, however. It is a legal document whereby the college informs students about policies both at the college and state level. In a legal advisory about compliance with minimum conditions, for example, Steven Bruckman, (2005) General Council for the System Office, was very specific in his recommendations to College Chief Executive Officers to include in their catalogs Title 5 regulations that included standards of scholarship, remedial coursework limitations, student GPA, grade changes, award of degrees and certificates, minimum requirements for the Associate Degree, open courses, and student fees. These conditions and several other catalog content areas are academic matters that fall under the purview of academic senates as indicated in AB 1725, and now in Title 5.

Most colleges have guidelines or practices that assure senate participation via the curriculum committee and through direct consultation with the local academic senate. However, in many instances, these practices have not been officially adopted by boards of trustees. It is recommended that when practices work, these be documented and adopted as part of institutional policy. The absence of written policy and procedures, make these practices vulnerable to changes in a political climate, changes in administration, or loss of institutional memory, to name a few. The old adage: "if it's not broken, don't fix it" seems fitting, but it is important to *document it*.

In the face of nonexistent practices that allowed effective senate participation in the development of college catalogs the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges passed the following resolution in 1996:

*Whereas catalogs are the most important self-advising tool students have, and*

*Whereas catalogs are the primary way students, other colleges, and the general public understand courses, programs, and requirements, and*

*Whereas existing colleges treat information vital to students and information required by law, in different formats, sometimes omitting crucial areas, and*

*Whereas students and others must use catalogs from different colleges,*

*Resolved that the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges urge the Chief Instructional Officers' Council to include the Academic Senate in its efforts to develop guidelines for catalogs.*

Nine years later this Senate resolution continues to resonate. The need to address this recommendation again surfaces as an important agenda item for the ASCCC in support of local senates. Effective senate participation is at its best when all parties involved know the expectations and the role of each stakeholder within participatory governance in community colleges. The significance of the catalog as an academic and professional matter is clearly established by the contents of this document. Guidelines for catalog development must ensure effective local academic senate participation. ■