



ACADEMIC SENATE

Adopted Minutes

August 8, 2012

Board Room 626

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call:

Abla Christiansen, LaNae Jaimez, Katherine Luce, Amy Obegi, Scott Parrish, Teri Pearson-Bloom, Melissa Reeve

Connie Adams, Admin Assistant

Absent/Excused: Kevin Brewer, Nick Cittadino, Dale Crandall-Bear *ex-officio*, Joe Conrad – *ex officio*, Erin Duane, Tracy Fields, Susanna Gunther, Ken Williams

Guests: Phil Smith – State AS At-large Representative, Khalid Mahmood (visitor)

3. Approval of Agenda – August 8, 2012

Motion to Approve - Senator Reeve; Seconded – Senator Parrish; Passed - Unanimous

4. Approval of Minutes – May 7, 2012

Deferred

5. Comments from the Public

No comments

6. President's Report

No report

7. Information/Discussion Items

7.1 State Academic Senate Training – Phillip Smith

Phillip Smith, State Academic Senate At-large Representative and a math instructor at American River College, served as Curriculum Chair, American River Senate Vice-president and Los Rios Senate President. From his experience he found that almost every bad decision starts with ignoring faculty. Dr. Smith forwarded electronic copies of the two power points he presented and distributed hardcopy documents: Supporting Document Packet and Example of Pros/Cons Email and Document. Dr. Smith taught at Solano College in spring of 1989.

Dr. Smith first power point addressed strategies for senators, senate presidents, and others. The points and additional highlights and comments follow:

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR SENATES AND SENATORS

**Reduce problems by preventing problems* to save time and grief. Dr. Smith brought his local senate together with informal retreats and noted that food goes a long ways. A senate meeting was held within the retreat which provided a fun way to get off campus and . He gave senators a preview about what he was going to talk about and got feedback. His predecessor was extremely formal and he knew he'd be different. It is important to follow one's own style. Usually there is no interaction across disciplines at meetings, so the retreat gave senators the opportunity to get to know each other on a different level. On the first day of fall semester he welcomed the new senators and placed leis around their necks to identify

them to other faculty. He chose to host a 2 ½ - 3 hour retreat at his house combining food, talk, a brief meeting, and interactive 10 + 1 exercises, identifying Academic Senate responsibilities from union and other issues. Dr. Smith pointed out that at the beginning of the year or when struggling with an issue such as SLO assessments it can be good to move to another environment.

**Mentor New Senators and Officers.* This is good for everyone as it takes a while to learn the operations of the Academic Senate and also is a good opportunity to connect. Dr. Smith looked for talent and tried to encourage faculty to join the Senate. He used to discourage new faculty from getting involved but now feels that gives them a good perspective. He also took time at the beginning of the year to orient new people. If that can't be done one-on-one, take time at meetings to speak about what the Academic Senate does.

**Use Effective Communication Strategies.*

**Identify Your Preferred Communication Style.* A lot of businesses are constructed with evaluations and what needs improvement, but he suggested it is better to focus on strengths and use those rather than trying to improve on weaknesses. Identify what your strengths are, i.e.: he worked best with written and visual materials and an informal style. The important thing is to communicate with your own style. Everyone needs to know what is happening. Are you better at speaking singly or in large groups? Can you handle the heat of the moment? Are you a voice of reason? Are you a good writer or visual person? What would be the best way to get your ideas across? Help others discover their style.

**Prepare, prepare, prepare for Senate Meetings.* Dr. Smith noted he is quite obsessive about preparing. As much time or more could be spent in preparation for meetings as actual meeting time. He pointed out that sometimes there are many documents to read which might be confusing to people, so he would send supporting document to clarify and describe the documents and wrote pros and cons for issues so that the Senate debate became what should be done rather than ongoing arguments. Dr. Smith would prepare these when he would see arguments initiated and would work from the bottom up as well as the top down. Senators noted that could have been helpful at times when there was good debate but the process was difficult and would also be a good tool for reporting back to people. With information written down and accounted for, it would be easier to see what is missing. Dr. Smith created most of the supporting documents and pros and cons himself, and as Academic Senate President, assured that both sides of an issue were explored. The purpose was never to engineer an argument toward a certain vote but to look at an issue from all sides. Often when looking at pros and cons the issue becomes clear. This process increases the integrity of the Academic Senate, which is not a political party, in a non-partisan approach. Dr. Smith added that documents sometimes get carried forth too long and this can help institutional memory as well. Another reason to prepare this way is for knowledge of what your faculty members think about things and to gather their opinions.

**Divide up large tasks and projects.* It is true that one person can't do it all. Administration is hierarchical and once a decision is made, often it does not change even after other discussion and input. It is good to make decisions with diverse ideas and identify who can add aspects to projects, such as writers, researchers, speakers, and thinkers and offers perspectives better than just working from the top down.

**Seek out good advice or all advice because we can learn from bad advice.* Senators must solicit perspective from others and not make decisions on their own. Ask enemies' advice because often "enemies" are people who feel like they're not being listened to and this develops respect for one another. Doing a little research goes a long ways. Fast action creates suspicion and often shows someone messed up and waited too long. The internet is a great resource as well.

**Treat All Speakers with Respect.* It is important to assure all sides of an issue or expressed which can be tricky because some people try to monopolize discussions. Sometimes senators have to jump in, maybe acknowledge the person in a way that will stop it, and not leave it totally up to the president. Being strict

that people can only talk when called upon can be useful or stifling. Be sure that everyone's voice is heard. If frustration is sensed, take time to summarize his or her points and acknowledge that they've been heard. At times Roberts Rules can create a knowledge gap or power play. Ground rules are good when used as a tool rather than with strict control. Dr. Smith cautioned about people talking over others. Be respectful of cultural differences as well as schools' differences. Don't assume your way is everyone else's way.

**Try Not to Answer in Haste. Stop. Pause. Play.* If you're engaged in a battle or emergency, quick may have value. But in our line of work opinions are evolving so take time and get feedback. Dr. Smith noted that, as Academic Senate President, people would expect he could solve all problems. But the Academic Senate is a bottom up organization and senators and officers are not the bosses. Be careful you don't answer on behalf of the entire Senate in cases where you can only speak for yourself.

**Try not to Get Defensive.* Often you'll feel attacked. If you get defensive, you have lost. Hold your cool and you can prevail. Learn as much of an issue as possible. Be detached and listen. When he felt people were coming at him he took notes about what they were saying, which helps to detach and then you can repeat back to them what they said. If you don't feel you can be reasonable with that person, turn to other senators for their opinion. Speak with them in person in other locations, such as their office, to resolve issues. Be careful what you put in an email. Issues can be so emotionally important to you.

Senators noted that the College use to have college hour. People could spend time together in meetings. That was eliminated and maybe should be revisited in the spirit of community. Scheduling college hour would be difficult with three campuses, varying schedules, and heavy workloads. It might be a workload situation. Dr. Smith noted that it is certainly an Academic Senate issue and might be something to bring forward as a recommendation.

**Use humor to Defuse Tension in Meetings.*

**A Sincere Apology Goes a Long Way - ctrl+z = (undo).* Don't fake an apology. Be sincere and your good reputation increases.

**Avoid Strong Attachment to the Result that You Desire.* Be passionate about making sure both sides of an issue are heard. It is dangerous if you feel the world will end if a decision goes a certain way. Make a case as best you can and let go of outcomes. Do your job and let what happens happen. If all the facts are clear you can trust the process. The Academic Senate role is more that of facilitator and referee, rather than dictating what something should be. The Senate has a common goal to determine the will of the entire faculty.

**Befriend Administrative Staff.* Have good working relationships with all administrative assistants in the College and the Chancellor's office etc. There is an official network and the back network, which plays an important part.

**Establish Regular Meetings with Union Counterparts.* Having good relationships between the Senate and the Union is very important. Dr. Smith tells presidents that it is very important to work closely with the district union presidents. If they had been at odds during the budget crisis, that would have been a big problem. Have both executive teams meet on a regular basis - Senate Union Joint Issues Committee (SUJIC) and liaisons sit on both meetings. The groups have different responsibilities but should work together. Having a liaison in the room can eliminate some delays. Both the union and senate should operate more from the bottom up. Dr. Smith has seen it almost destroy colleges when there is not a good working relationship.

**Honor Senate Commitments.* All senators need to adhere to this; otherwise, they are not considered a player

**Don't GO IT ALONE.*

**Form a Senate Executive Team or Council.* This helps preparation and can be a think tank of issues in the senate. Also meet as a group with the college executive team.

**I Am Just the Messenger.* Don't shoot the person bringing the news.

**Operate with Integrity and Transparency.* Make decisions with the best set of facts.

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL MATTERS: The 10 + 1.

- California may be only state to put a defined role of the academic senate into law. Other places evaluations are done by administrators. (It was noted that is the case here. Evaluations are not done by peers.)
- Authority for CCC AS comes from State legislature – the Education Code.
- Laws are created and then interpreted by the CCC Board of Governors, a group appointed by the Governor to represent interests of the CCC system. Names are forwarded to the governor, who decides who serves.
- Title 5 regulations are interpreted by the Board. (Note: State laws use Arabic numbers, not Roman numerals.)
- The Ed Code supersedes Title 5. Example: Online class materials – Title 5 was restrictive
- Ed Code requires legislation. Ed Code and transfer degrees. Legislatures want bills involving education in their portfolio and it is expected there will be more changes. Lobbyists have found this is a way to make changes quickly so it is something to watch.
- Title 5 changes are made through Board vote and are easier to modify. Title 5 has the force of law and you can use it when speaking of Academic Senate issues.
- Academic Senate defined:
 - The Governing Board shall . . . ensure . . . the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendation in the areas of curriculum and academic standards. *Ed Code 70902 (B)(7)*
 - (B) Academic senate means an organization whose primary function is to make recommendations with respect to academic and professional matters. *Title 5 53200 (B)*
- Senates are recommending bodies that don't have to be listened to but do have to consult with. To make our recommendations more impactful - present position paper or something speaking passionately to the issue at the board meeting. The Academic Senate President report is very important at Board meetings. The Board can tell the administrative team "you must do this". (Dr. Smith could come back to speak to this topic at another time) Work collegially and behind the scenes, use caution on how to word things, multiple reports with a common theme gets attention.
- Authority – The Governing Board adopts policies through collegial consultation with the Academic Senate and guarantees the right to meet with or appear before the board.

Title 5 – The 10 + 1 Academic and Professional Matters

Dr. Smith distributed Academic Senate membership brochures and cards and made the following points regarding 10 + 1:

- Curriculum is the big one, very powerful and important.
- Degree & certificate requirements (The Ed Code trumps Title 5 – so SB1440 came out) The local college can add to the global guidelines. Some Certificates can be done locally. Program and Course Approval Handbook – PICAH
- Policies for Faculty Professional Development – review state defined acceptable professional activities to see what applies and tie in to the college mission, vision and how an activity helps

meet the college goal. Rather than individual deans, a committee could make the call regarding signing off on instructor activities.

- Processes for Program Review are definitely under the purview of the senate.
- Processes for institutional planning and budget development – not the budget itself, but the planning process.
- The +1 would include anything else you can get them to agree to on academic and professional matters. Some colleges have 12-13 items, i.e.: faculty hiring is not mentioned in 10+1.
- Some of the 11 have been approved by the Governing Board to rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the senate, such as curriculum, which is basically a consent item. Trust is accepted by the Board and objections would only be for exceptional circumstances with compelling reasons. The senate has the option to request reasons they rejected it because the Board doesn't automatically give the reasons.
- 10 + 1 either relies primarily upon the senate or by mutual agreement – negotiation. If no agreement is reached, existing policy remains in effect except in cases of legal liability or fiscal hardship.
- Remind administration what are legally mandated areas of senate purview.
- The law says the Board should consult and receive input from everybody to provide input for all other issues, i.e.: parking. As Academic Senate President, Dr. Smith was responsible to share that input also.

Dr. Smith distributed scenarios for senators to work in groups to discuss and decide the role of the Senate. Discussion results were shared. He pointed out the importance to involve the Senate to maximize results in divisions and schools.

8. Action Reminders

9. Announcements

10. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn – Senator Reeve; Seconded – Senator Jaimez; Passed – Unanimous
Meeting adjourned at 12:02 pm.

AS minutes 08.08.12/ca