

Academic Senate Annual Report 2008-09

Fred Hochstaedter, May 14, 2009

Academic Senate President

It was another truly busy year for the MPC Academic Senate. At the end of last academic year, the Academic Senate developed some goals and objectives for this year. Whereas we didn't accomplish each of the objectives or activities that we envisioned a year ago, we did achieve significant accomplishments on each of our goals. In fact, in looking over a year's worth of agendas and minutes from which this report is culled, it struck me that we really didn't stray outside our goals very much at all. For the most part, we saw where we wanted to go, and stayed on track for the duration of the year.

Perhaps our most significant accomplishment was diligently reading drafts of the accreditation self study and listening to reports from the authors of the standard components. This hard work will pay off next fall, when the Academic Senate will be in position to offer a truly informed endorsement of the self study on behalf of the faculty.

Accreditation requires SLOs. Work on the SLO front slowed a bit this year as much of my effort was diverted to working on standard I of the accreditation self study and reviewing drafts of all of the other drafts of the self study as part of my duties as accreditation steering committee co-chair. Accomplishments in the SLO area did include making an Academic Senate endorsed presentation to the board on the controversy surrounding SLOs and initiating development of General Education Outcomes (GEOs). One important shift, for which dialog is still underway, is the integration of the SLO-assessment process with the Academic Affairs program review process.

Our work with the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) Committee continued as we encouraged the development of written bylaws for the BSI Committee. This concept prompted important dialog about the role of this committee within the shared governance process at MPC and about the role of the various constituencies represented. The Academic Senate hopes that the plans and resource allocation recommendations developed by the BSI Committee continue to integrate the learning community vision articulated by the Student Success Task Force.

In addition, the Academic Senate reviewed several board policies and returned comments to PACC. Flex days were planned, and the Fall 2009 flex day is ready to go. The Academic Senate also reviewed proposed changes to several MPC processes, including program review, the prioritization of new faculty positions, and the composition of faculty hiring committees. Details of all of these accomplishments follow.

Guiding Principles or Values for the MPC Academic Senate

- The Academic Senate uses the pursuit of academic excellence and critical thinking across the curriculum as an ultimate goal for all it does.
- The Academic Senate is the recognized voice of the faculty on Academic and Professional matters as set forth in Title 5 and the Ed Code, generally known as the 10+1.
- The Academic Senate strives to ensure a strong faculty voice in shared governance processes

Accreditation.

Goal: The Academic Senate will assure accuracy and a well rounded perspective in the accreditation self study report with respect to academic and professional matters.

- Academic Senate representatives will Review drafts of the accreditation self-study as they become available.
- The Academic Senate will receive reports on progress on the self study during regular meetings.
- Based on reviewing drafts of the report and listening to reports, the Academic Senate will offer critique and suggestions concerning pertinent topics. Examples may include types of data to consider, questions to pose concerning the data, additional constituencies or perspectives to consider, and alternative interpretations of what the data might mean.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ Component authors gave two reports each to the Academic Senate. Feedback was given both times.
- ✓ The Academic Senate will have two readings of the entire document at the beginning of the Fall 2009 semester.
- ✓ Based on our time and effort spent reading the drafts and listening to the reports during the semester, the Academic Senate is in position to endorse the final draft of the document in the fall.
- ✓ Envisioned and rehearsed a flex day presentation intended to convey and educate MPC faculty and staff about the kinds of questions being asked by the accreditation standards and how MPC is responding to them. The presentation is a mock accreditation visit open forum in which the Academic Senate representatives will portray faculty participants in the forum. Doug Garrison and John Gonzalez will portray accreditation visiting team members asking questions to MPC faculty and staff.

Board Policy Review.

Goal: Faculty interests pertaining to academic and professional matters are promoted and protected in Board Policy.

- The Academic Senate will form subcommittees to review and potentially revise board policy in those areas that are clearly within the ten plus one academic and professional matters as defined by Title V.
- The Academic Senate will review proposed revisions to board policy, paying special attention to those areas that impact academic and professional matters.
- Based on our review of proposed revisions to board policy, the Academic Senate will suggest further revision or rewording of board policy if academic interests need to be more clearly promoted or protected.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ Appointed Alan Haffa to be the Academic Senate's "point person" for reviewing board policy
- ✓ Alan prepared short synopses for each of the board policies we considered
- ✓ The Academic Senate forwarded comments to PACC on three proposed board policies: BP 5100—Equal Employment Opportunity and Commitment to Diversity, BP 5001—Institutional Code of Ethics, and BP 4105—Admission Policy.
- ✓ The Academic Senate was most concerned about the proposed Diversity and EEO policy. Concerns included the proportion of faculty members and other constituents on the EEO

advisory committee, the requirements for a quorum for the EEO committee, and the strength of the language of the board policy itself; the Academic Senate recommended that the board policy itself do a better job of distinguishing between the EEO plan and MPC's commitment to diversity. As of this writing, the review of the EEO plan is still in the shared governance process.

Basic Skills Initiative

Goal: To address the mission statement of MPC by responding to the needs of those students in need of basic skills instruction.

- Support the efforts of the BSI Committee by communicating achievements and challenges to the wider campus community.
- Review policies, procedures, or processes proposed by the BSI Committee to assure that they are compatible with the needs of the rest of MPC's academic community, and offer suggestions to strengthen proposals from the BSI committee if warranted.
- Lead efforts to consider combining appropriate aspects of the efforts of the SLO and BSI committees.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ Encouraged the creation of bylaws for the BSI Committee. This effort turned out to be extremely worthwhile and useful as it prompted many important conversations about the ultimate role of the committee as well as the role of the various representatives.
- ✓ Heard regular reports from the BSI Committee about updated action plans and recommended distribution of BSI funds
- ✓ The Academic Senate also heard a presentation from the Student Success Task Force about their proposal to establish a "teaching and learning community" widely referred to as LOBO-TLC.
- ✓ Through questions and dialog, encouraged the merging of the learning community idea into the realm of BSI.
- ✓ The Academic Senate honored the accomplishments of the BSI Committee at the Spring 2009 flex days.
- ✓ The BSI Committee planned and executed a number of very well received activities during the Spring 2009 flex days, including a panel of students who have benefited from basic skills services, and an activity where faculty and staff participants went on a type of treasure hunt around campus looking for services, as all students must do during their time at MPC.

Flex Day Planning

Goal: Plan invigorating, enjoyable, and beneficial flex day events that all or most MPC staff are able to attend.

- Continue doing exactly what we're doing by not messing with this well-oiled machine.
- Evaluate the degree to which flex day events are utilized by the MPC community.
- Investigate reasons why all flex day events are not fully attended.
- Investigate pros and cons of staging a flex day event during the middle of a semester, rather than the beginning of the semester when many faculty and staff are very busy.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ Continued to plan and schedule the flex day events. They have continued to be well received with no major or widely articulated complaints.
- ✓ Distributed a survey at the Fall 2008 flex day that asked about when flex day should be scheduled. This survey was in response to concerns from counseling faculty members, for whom the beginning of the semester is always the most busy.
- ✓ Survey results indicated that the current scheduling of flex days during the week before classes begin is overwhelmingly preferred. Results are available on the Academic Senate website.
- ✓ Rich Kezirian gave the keynote address during the Fall Flex days, and Vincent Tinto gave the keynote for the Spring flex days.

SLOs

Goal: Facilitate institutional efforts to comply with accrediting agency mandates to establish and assess student learning outcomes at the course program and institutional level.

Goal: Facilitate dialogue of the SLO model in looking at student achievement.

- Don't let the SLO coordinator do anything stupid.
- Provide constructive critique to reports and proposals from the SLO committee.
- Support the efforts of the SLO committee by communicating consensus values or ideas to the wider MPC community.
- Assure that SLO-driven assessment efforts are pursued in balance with time needed for course preparation and classroom instruction.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ Developed a plan for General Education Outcomes (GEOs). The essence of the plan is provide a course-level SLO for each of the GE areas. Every instructor that teaches a GE course would be responsible for assessing student attainment of that SLO in their individual course. As of this writing, this plan is has been approved in concept by the Academic Senate, but work remains to be done on establishing the wording of the GEO for all of GE areas. Work will continue on this front during the 2009-10 academic year.
- ✓ Delivered a presentation to the board about SLOs, focusing on why there is such controversy around them. The theme was that there is a range of perspectives and opinions on SLOs at MPC.
- ✓ As of this writing, the Academic Senate is considering a set of four resolutions, presented by the SLO committee, that aim to clarify the distinction between objectives and SLOs, and encourage faculty engagement in the SLO-assessment process.
- ✓ As of this writing, dialog is ongoing about integrating the SLO-assessment process with the Academic Affairs program review process.

Committees

Goal: Encourage shared governance committee participation by a wide variety of faculty.

Goal: Ensure smoothly operating shared governance committees.

- Update the Committee handbook so that the scope, function, and operating procedures of campus committees are widely available for consultation.
- Create a data base of committee participation so that we can make informed suggestions when asked to fill a committee seat.

- Develop further ideas that will promote participation on shared governance committees as an enjoyable and satisfying endeavor for a wide variety of faculty.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ The Committee Handbook was updated and is now available on the Committee on Committees website.
- ✓ Oversaw the creation of a new Professional Recognition Board (PRB), and the development of the PRB bylaws and guidelines.
- ✓ Unanimously passed a resolution stating, “The Academic Senate recommends that faculty hiring committees make every reasonable effort to include at least one faculty member from outside the division.”

Other Accomplishments

Distance Education

- ✓ Considered the recommendations of two faculty groups—a CAC group and a joint Academic Senate – MPCTA group—that made initial recommendations on Distance Education.
- ✓ Formulated a list of objectives synthesized from these two groups, recognizing that some are union responsibility and some are Academic Senate responsibility.
- ✓ Created a Distance Education Task Force to accomplish these objectives.
- ✓ The Distance Education Task Force focused on student success and identifying improvements to the MPC web sites that would improve student enrollment growth and retention for distance education students. The specifics of these improvements are currently being articulated.

Faculty Position Prioritization

- ✓ At the first meeting of the year, we heard a proposal generated by AAAG about a process to prioritize new faculty positions.
- ✓ The sticky point in this proposal is the composition of the group that makes recommendations to the College Council about faculty position prioritization. The difficulty is finding the appropriate composition that adequately represents faculty members in student services and student support services.
- ✓ As of this writing, a preliminary decision has been made to have AAAG be the group that makes the recommendation to College Council. But now, discussions are ongoing about the appropriate composition of AAAG.

Academic Affairs Program Review

- ✓ The Academic Senate heard a proposal for a revised process for program review in Academic Affairs. It includes the integration of the SLO-assessment process into the program review process. As of this writing, dialog about this new process is ongoing.