Faculty Senate Meeting
December 5th, 2013

Members Present:

Jeff Andelora, Christine Beckman, Marie Brown, Debra Campbell, Elliot Cherner, Linda Collins, Pam Harrison, Kevin Healy, Lutfi Hussein, Loretta Kissell, Paul Nunez, Janice Pierson, Frederick Schineller, Robert Soza, Phil Waclawski, and Eddie Webb

Guests:

Student Outcomes Committee (SOC) - Diana Bullen and Marjorie Leta

Ms. Bullen and Ms. Leta presented the new Mesa Community College: Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

The outcomes were well received and discussed further under the committee reports

I. General

A) Call to Order –

Meeting called to order at 3:21 p.m.

B) Approval of the Agenda -

Motion to approve the agenda was advanced

The agenda was unanimously approved

C) Approval of Minutes –

Motion to approve the November 21st meetings was advanced

Minutes were unanimously approved with two (2) abstentions

II. Reports

A) President’s Report - Paul Nunez

President Nunez brought several stacks of the dues rebate checks to distribute. The rest will be distributed before the end of the semester
President Nunez reported that there is a tentative date for the initial training for the new Probationary Review process – PAR. Faculty will be asked to volunteer to be mentors for the probationary faculty moving through the program.

President Nunez reminded faculty senators about the importance of their role and the need to solicit more faculty involvement.

B) Vice President’s Report - Robert Soza

Nora Reyes would like Faculty Senate approval for the Chair of Chairs to represent the Department Chair Association (DCA) on the College Plan committee. Robert may be bringing a motion forward to a future meeting to formalize that request.

C) Recording Secretary’s Report - Jeff Messer

It was agreed that Recording Secretary Messer would post the November 21st meeting minutes on the website after the minutes are approved at today’s meeting.

D) Treasurer’s Report - Phil Waclawski

Treasurer Waclawski noted that he is working on closing out an account.

No additional report.

E) Past-President’s Report - Jeff Andelora

No report.

F) Department Chair Association Liaison Report - Debra Bitter

President Nunez reported for Debra Bitter that at the Monday, December 2nd, DCA meeting the members voted to approve the eLearning Guidelines.

G) Faculty Senate Committees -
1) Faculty Staffing
2) Committee’s Committee
3) Faculty Travel
4) Honors Program Advisory Committee
5) Student Outcomes
6) CTL Advisory
7) Professional Right and Responsibilities
8) Faculty Social
9) Student Outcomes Committee
Elliot Cherner reported that Student Outcomes Committee (SOC) did a fantastic job of creating our new student outcomes.

One senator asked if we still had to go through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for students participating in our student outcomes surveying.

Our senator on the IRB committee advised that if we poll our students for information for our college and for internal use only, then we do not need IRB approval.

But, if the SOC research will be used on a broader scale, e.g. at a conference or publishing the information, then it does have to go through the IRB.

One senator noted that since the SOC student information is gathered as an assessment and not for research and publication, then it does not need to go through the IRB.

Vice-President Soza reported that the Committee’s Committee will become much more active next semester.

Vice-President Soza reported that because of the budget concerns there is talk about reducing unfilled faculty lines.

So, the Faculty Staffing committee was notified today that all current One-Year-Only (OYO) lines, all requests for new faculty lines, and all replacement lines will have to go back to the college pool for budgetary consideration.

Decisions about how many new faculty lines will be available will take place after the 45th day of Spring semester based on budgetary realities.

III. Old Business

A) Academic Master Plan (AMP) (Standing Agenda Item - Robert Soza)

Vice President Soza noted that the Academic Master Plan may be slowed down considerably because of initiative fatigue.

Vice-President Soza will speak to Steve Budge about connecting the AMP to the other plans such as Student Enrollment Plan, the Strategic Plan, the Building plan, etc., in the hopes of achieving more integration of the various initiatives and plans.
B) Distinguished Faculty Award (DFA) –

Jeff Andelora indicated that recent progress has been made and something will be reported soon

C) Maricopa Priorities: Status –

President Nunez reported that he was just in a recent meeting and that some of the kinks about how this will be seen in CANVAS are still being worked out. They are finalizing all the lists and the district will be sending out more assistance on how to do the Career and Technical Education (CTE) assessment. There will be a Frequently-Asked-Questions (FAQ) sites, help documents created, etc. They are creating a query form for data requests

D) Reorganization of the Office for Scheduling and Curriculum: Linda Collins –

Senator Collins reported that a mid-progress report will be held tomorrow open to all interested stakeholders. The final analysis and report will be given in April

E) eLearning Guidelines –

President Nunez reported that he halted the on-line vote on this issue because we needed more discussion on this issue. There has been much input on this

One senator commented that since these are “guidelines,” this isn’t policy, so she thought it was fine to endorse the guidelines

Another senator commented that these are good “talking points” for Chairs

Another senator reported that his zone also had concerns that this document was making policy about a particular “modality” of teaching and questioned the appropriateness of that

Another senator reported that while he liked the document it did seem to apply only to faculty who teach on line and thus could be viewed as treating some faculty differently than others
Another Senator reported that based on a poll of her zone, there were two areas of concern with this draft of the eLearning Guidelines: 1) the phrase “faculty agree” implies it is speaking for all faculty and therefore becomes an implied policy instead of “guidelines,” and the Faculty Senate endorsing this document might give it the appearance of policy.

In fact, the Faculty Association (FA) attorney, Mike Napier, had commented on an earlier draft of this document and, in his professional opinion, this document did infringe on pedagogy.

Vice-President Soza commented that the latest draft had not been seen by the attorney, but felt that the concerns had been addressed because this version had been looked at by the Faculty Executive Council (FEC) president, FEC President-elect, and a former FEC President who is also an attorney and has practiced in the area of labor law, and they found no problems with this document.

Another senator commented that a suggestion had been made that instead of endorsing the guidelines, we pass a Non-Binding Resolution (NBR) in support of the guidelines.

A motion was made to approve a “Non-Binding Resolution” in support of the eLearning Guidelines, and the motion was seconded.

In conjunction with introducing the motion, the Senator provided a definition of a “non-binding resolution,” (admittedly taken from Wikipedia) as follows:

A non-binding resolution is a written motion adopted by a deliberative body that cannot progress into a law. The substance of the resolution can be anything that can normally be proposed as a motion.

This type of resolution is often used to express the body's approval or disapproval of something that they cannot otherwise vote on, due to the matter being handled by another jurisdiction, or being protected by a constitution.

An example would be a resolution of support for a nation's troops in battle, which carries no legal weight, but is adopted for moral support.
The Senator then read the proposed non-binding resolution:

In recognition that the Residential Faculty Policies is the principle contract for the Mesa Community College (MCC) faculty, and in the interests of both applauding the diligent efforts of the MCC eLearning Committee and supporting excellence in all modes of academic instruction, and in further recognition that there are possible policy issues raised by this document that are beyond the scope of the MCC Faculty Senate's authority, the MCC Faculty Senate hereby adopts this Non-Binding Resolution in support of the spirit of the “eLearning Guidelines” document and forwards this document to the Maricopa Community Colleges Faculty Association (MCCFA) Council of Presidents for discussion and possible future action concerning any policy issues raised by this document.

Discussion ensued

One senator raised concerns that these guidelines would infringe on academic freedom

Another senator commented that these guidelines could be abused by Chairs and that it might be compromising the faculty senate’s ability to support faculty, if the faculty senate supports this document

A senator wanted to know if this draft could go back to the attorney, but Vice-President Soza reminded him that there was a motion on the table

Another senator worried that this document is making different rules for different modalities of teaching

Another senator supported the non-binding resolution

Another senator asked the questions, “why just eLearning Guidelines? and Why not guidelines for all instruction?”

President Nunez responded that this NBR raises this to another level to FEC - the appropriate place to take the concerns about policy and the concerns about possible implications for all faculty

Another senator commented that on-line instruction is different from face-to-face instruction, and we do not have articulated expectations for on-line instruction, so the guidelines could be helpful

Another senator commented that since we are already accredited for on-line programs by the HLC, what is the need for these guidelines?
Shouldn’t we focus on outcomes and assessments? Chairs already have the ability to tell faculty that they are not ready to teach on-line because they don’t meet the current (Gold Star program) recommendations of the eLearning committee.

Another Senator supported the NBR as a good compromise.

Another Senator commented that Faculty Senate endorsing it outright effectively makes it policy, which has implications for all faculty.

Vice-President Soza supported the NBR because the eLearning Guidelines can be viewed as an example of shared governance.

Another senator reported that with the shared governance there is a concern about how the administration might use this.

Another senator shared the concerns about autonomy and academic freedom.

Another senator reported that we may need more college resources to support this document. We may not be able to comply.

Another Senator asked the question, has the senate been asked to endorse the work of a committee like this before? Wouldn’t we be setting a precedent? If so, what might the implications of that be?

Another Senator raised a concern about autonomy. We are hired as professionals, and this is not a primarily online institution. We have residential faculty and Chairs to impose the highest quality standards for our courses. As we use different modalities for teaching, it is on us to be thoroughly trained, and for the chairs to make sure that is the case. The concern is that this document may too strongly constrain faculty in their own professional responsibilities in developing their pedagogy.

Loretta Kissell called for the question and discussion ended. The motion passed almost unanimously, with only one vote against it.

IV. New Business

A) New SOC Outcomes –

President Nunez noted that there was much support for the new SOC outcomes. A motion was made to support the new SOC outcomes. Unanimously approved.
V.  Information / Discussion

A)  New Residential Faculty Policies (RFP) Probationary Review Process

The Peer Assistance Review (PAR) and Peer Assistance Review Committee (PARC) training; President Nunez reported that the new Probationary Review training will begin in the Spring 2014

Forthcoming: President Nunez will be asking for faculty mentors for the PAR process. Also, we will need members to volunteer for the PARC - at least four faculty members who will make up the PARC for the Probationary faculty

VI.  Zone and At-Large Reports and Significant Happenings / Issues

A senator noted that the enrollment cancellation process is so negative toward students that this issue should be bumped up to the FEC to raise the level of this concern

Another senator raised the concern about the security of our Information Technology (IT) system given the recent scare over the breach of security. The concern is that we need people better than the current IT people to be hired for our district. The concern needs to be raised about us throwing money away and not increasing the security

A senator reported that tomorrow night is Astronomy Night

A senator reported that the District IT cite has been hacked for years without it being reported. A senator wants the IT department to give us the answer as to what was actually hacked - the databases or the direct feeds

A senator reported concern that a faculty member wondered whether spouse’s information has been hacked as well. If so, they will receive a letter

A senator reported that if faculty were in their 5th year of probation, then they did not have to participate in the new Peer Assistance Review

VII.  Zone Issues for Reporting Out from Today’s Meeting

A)  Send out the Template
B) DL Lists

VIII. Announcements / Good Of The Order / Adjournment

Motion to adjourn. Passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.