



Welcome Back from the Senate

Welcome back to another year at Southwest College! This year promises to be challenging yet exciting. We had a very successful Accreditation visit last spring and all sanctions have been removed. Starting this fall, we are preparing for our next Accreditation visit in Spring 2012. While that sounds like a long way away, the time passes quickly when there is so much work to be done. When Glenn Yoshida, our faculty chair of Accreditation calls, please lend a helping hand. Your input is invaluable.

The single topic of discussion lately has the budget and its impact on our college and our students. We are unable to serve as many as we would like to serve or all who need us. All we can do right now is to give

those who we can serve the best of ourselves. It is being forecast that California is in for a few more tough budget years. We will have to get creative as we seek to prepare our students and support them in times of diminishing resources. I know we have it in us—YES WE CAN!!

Again, welcome back and we look forward to serving your needs as you serve the needs of our students.



CalSTRS: The Longevity Bonus is Winding Down

The Longevity Bonus is an enhancement to retirement benefits for members who retire after January 1, 2001, and earn at least 30 years of service before January 1, 2011.

Members generally do not have to retire by December 31, 2010 to receive the Longevity Bonus UNLESS the member intends to count unused sick leave towards the mini-

mum 30 years of service credit that are required to be eligible for the Longevity Bonus. CalSTRS strongly encourages members to obtain a benefit estimate from a Benefits Counselor prior to making any retirement decisions.

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Special points of interest:

- Renew your Senate membership today—\$40 for full-time faculty and \$25 for adjuncts
- 1st Senate meeting of the new year will be held Tuesday, September 8th at 12:30 p.m. in room SSC 314 (the old Student Services building) Lunch at 12:30, meeting starts at 1:00 p.m.
- The District Academic Senate Summit will be held on October 2nd. See a member of the Executive Committee if you are interested in attending

Students Must Learn How to Fail

Byline: Ron Mossler Local View

I had been chair of the Los Angeles Valley College Psychology/Statistics Department for exactly 3 1/2 minutes when the assault began: "Will you sign this? I failed math, but I'll do fine in statistics." "Do I have to take math first? I promise I can pass statistics." "My friend got a waiver; can I have one, too?"

The current generation of community college students has gotten the message that the goal of education is to finish as quickly as possible, while doing as little as possible. They have been told we are an extension of high school. They don't want an education, they just want a passing grade. And many instructors and administrators have bought into the new philosophy.

Only under rare circumstances will instructors use the F word - fail. One instructor on my campus asks students to fill out a form at the end of the year asking to explain any extenuating circumstances that may have negatively affected their performance. Anything from a short illness to the proverbial grandmother's death qualifies to have a grade re-evaluated. Knowledge and ability are secondary to one's "feelings" about failure.

What is especially alarming is how easily my colleagues will compromise the integrity of the college. They look the other way when students cheat; they change grades virtually for the asking; they reduce requirements if students find the material too difficult. I witnessed an instructor who canceled an assigned paper after the class protested that 10 pages were too much to write. I was astonished, not so much at the insolence of the students, but at how quickly the instructor caved in to their

demands.

Another of my colleagues will not fail any students regardless of whether they actually attend classes or not. It is just her "policy" to pass everyone since she does not want to judge why the students did not show up. By her reasoning, as long as I have job title at the college, I needn't worry about actually being there in order to get paid.

Students who have to repeat classes get sympathy as well. After all, it delays their career goals. I know these students: They come to class late; they purchase new CDs instead of the text; they miss class because a cousin's friend's sister had a baby; they don't do homework because it is not collected; they don't use our extensive remedial services because it is not a requirement. And they don't see the consequences of their failing performance.

The newest twist in failed logic is what my office mate and I call Grade Disconnect Syndrome. It refers to the difference between grades that students earn and the grades they want. Students who suffer from GDS don't see a difference. I am amazed at the parade of students who want to know why they are getting a particular (low) grade. My standard reply is:

"Because that is the grade you earned." To which the oblivious student often replies: "But I need a C in order to transfer." To the chagrin of those with GDS, I grade strictly on performance, not on individual need. I recently had a student who attempted to change a

grade she received six years ago! She had taken Psychology 101 in 1998 and earned a generous D; she retook the class two years later with a different instructor and again earned a D. But she wanted a C so she could graduate. Astonishingly, she not only found a sympathetic instructor who was willing to negotiate a change in grade, she also convinced a dean to go along with the plan.

If students can't pass Introductory Psychology, do they really deserve a college degree? There are other students who can't read at college level but are nevertheless admitted into our nursing program. We have a terrible shortage of nurses, but professors need to understand that failing grades make better nurses, not fewer.

The F word provides a service. It allows students to understand what is needed to succeed. It gives value to diligence, experience and knowledge. When students fail math and we still allow it to count as

a prerequisite, we compromise the degree of all those students who hired tutors, took time off work, lost sleep and still struggled, but passed.

If we are to truly educate, we must adhere to consistent

standards. John F. Kennedy once said, "Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly." To my fellow professors I would say, "Only those who dare to fail can ever truly contribute to great achievement."

Higher education is an oxymoron when we lower standards and fail to fail.

"Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly"
—John F. Kennedy

News from the District Academic Senate

SURVEYS, SURVEYS, AND MORE SURVEYS

IT SURVEY

Across the district, faculty have identified the implementation of classroom technologies as inconsistent at best. In an effort to better accommodate faculty members that teach in various classrooms, buildings, and colleges, the LACCD Technology Team for Measure J is seeking your guidance in developing district-wide standards for instructional audio visual technology. The goal is to meet your technology needs and improve the support process for technology in the classroom.

To this end, Lou Albert from Valley College has spoken with faculty

members at each campus over the last two weeks and is creating a survey to cast a wider net and obtain your expectations. You will be receiving a short web survey via email during September. I urge you to participate and share your perspectives so that we might help identify types of technologies that better support your teaching and student learning.

STUDENT SURVEY

The Office of Institutional Research will be conducting the Fall 2009 LACCD Student Survey. At least 200 sections will be selected to participate. The survey will be conducted in mid October and should

take 30 to 40 minutes to complete. You will know by the end of September if any of your classes have been selected. It is designed to gather very important information including data needed for our college's student success efforts and for planning and policy decisions that may help the college better achieve its goals and justify increased funding. A letter (and a packet of surveys, if you are selected) will be placed in your mailbox in the coming weeks. Please look for them. The coordinator of the survey will be Ms. LaVonne Hamilton. Please contact her at x5462 or hamiltl@lasc.edu if you have any questions or concerns.

Preparing for Accreditation 2012

The theme for Flex Day 2009 was "Encore" and reminds us of the magnificent performance our college demonstrated to the visiting accreditation team last spring. As a result, our sanction was removed and we are again fully accredited, thanks to the hard work from many of you. We need to repeat the performance in spring of 2012 when we will be visited again by another accreditation team who will validate our institutional self-study to see if we meet the four accreditation standards:

- **Standard I**
Institutional Mission and Effectiveness
- **Standard II**
Student Learning Programs and Services
- **Standard III**
Resources
- **Standard IV**
Leadership and Governance

Our college will be forming committees to describe how we are meeting the four standards and will be collecting evidence to support our claims. Faculty will soon be asked to participate in these committees as the college self-study is created. Details of the standards and the accreditation process can be read at ACCJC

website (www.accjc.org).

In addition, we need to focus on student learning outcomes (SLO) and assessment. By 2012, every college should be at the "proficiency" level of SLO implementation. This means that SLOs and authentic assessment should be in place for courses, programs, and degrees, that there is widespread institutional dialogue about the results, and the results of assessment are being used for improvement of student learning and institution-wide practices. It is imperative that course outlines be updated to include SLOs and their assessment strategy. SLOs, once identified, should be included in course syllabi so students have an awareness of expected student learning outcomes. In order to meet this level, a SLO Timeline has been established (http://www.lasc.edu/faculty_staff/slo/SLO_Committee_Membership.html) in which one SLO in 25% of courses within each academic department will be assessed this Fall semester. Next semester, another 25% will be assessed, etc. Glenn Yoshida, SLO Coordinator, and the SLO Committee will be

working with designated faculty to ensure completion of SLO assessment and development of an improvement plan.

At the program level, SLOs were identified during "mini-program review" last academic year. Many of the program SLOs will be reexamined and assessed concurrently with the course SLO assessment. At the institutional level, all five institutional SLOs should be assessed by 2012. Methods of assessment are currently being investigated (e.g., formation of Faculty Teaching Communities, utilization of a common rubric across disciplines, etc.). A team of LASC faculty and administrators will attend a retreat on student learning and assessment at the end of this month in Long Beach. They will return with strategies for implementation of assessment.

If you have any questions regarding accreditation or SLOs, please don't hesitate to contact Glenn Yoshida at X5263. We have a daunting task ahead of us but with everyone's collective effort, we can again have an **ENCORE** performance in 2012.



**LOS ANGELES SOUTHWEST COLLEGE
ACADEMIC SENATE**

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Next Meeting:
October 9, 2009 at 12:30 in SSB 310

Check Us Out Online at www.lasc.edu
from the "For Faculty and Staff" page,
click on "Academic Senate"

**Join The
Community:**

Senate membership dues now due
See Joan Ann Mrava: x5332

The Academic Senate of Los Angeles Southwest College is the representative body for LASC faculty consisting primarily of elected representatives. As the official voice of the faculty in matters of campus-wide concern, LASC's Academic Senate provides the means for faculty to participate in the shared governance of the college. It strives to further the academic mission and integrity of the college as a community of scholars and professionals dedicated to providing an environment for quality learning. The Senate acts as a whole, or in committees and task forces, to address a wide range of academic, professional and administrative issues. These include the primary concerns of representing the faculty of LASC in all academic and professional matters. and seeking to support the mission, vision, and values of Los Angeles Southwest College.

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