

ACADEMICALLY SPEAKING



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Carrying On

By David Beaulieu,
DAS President

Though we're disappointed with the loss of Prop 92, we knew our prospects had dimmed once the budget crisis hit in December. But it wasn't all for nought. There were gains from the campaign in greater visibility for community colleges, new political alliances, and new legislative possibilities. In any event, Mark Drummond, Mona Field, Carl Friedlander, and John McDowell, and all those others who worked so hard on this over the last few years, deserve our deepest thanks.

While the mid-year cuts were not as bad as feared, the next two years are going to be pretty rough. The CCC's priority now is to avoid a suspension or "rebenching" of Prop 98 funding. We are also going to fight to avoid cuts to categorical programs, given that our neediest students rely on them the most.

If we're not careful, budget cuts can

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FEATURE STORY

Leading the Way to Student Success

The Student Success Initiative has made considerable progress in recent months. Most importantly, the SSI Steering Committee completed *The Framework for Student Success*, outlining 17 recommendations in areas ranging from Matriculation and Instruction to Institutional Integration and K-16 Partnerships. The *Framework* was then unanimously approved by the District Academic Senate in December.

While the individual colleges will determine where they want to focus their efforts, it is expected that work will be done in each of the four areas. In addition, three new task forces have been organized to determine what should be done at the district level in order to bring *The Framework* alive.

The Instructional Task Force has already made several suggestions to the SSI Steering Committee. These include enforcing all existing prerequisites and co-requisites electronically; determining necessary skill levels in reading, writing, and computational skills (if applicable) for each course, and printing them in the schedule of classes; and creating professional development programs to help faculty include reading and writing components in their courses.

Success Workshop April 11

Kicking off *Success.Net* April 11 is an exciting event, "Teaching and Learning Innovations That Work," to be held from 9:00am to 3:00pm at West Los Angeles College and featuring Diego Navarro and the Digital Bridge Academy Program. In the morning plenary, Diego will share several of the experiential tools from his course that have generated high rates of academic success. Leaders from LACCD Title V Technology Grant programs will host interactive early afternoon workshops on easy-to-use Web 2.0 strategies for teaching and learning that increase student participation and achievement.

If you would like to attend the workshop, RSVP to SuccessNet@email.laccd.edu. But don't wait! Reservations will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis, and space is limited.

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WORKING TOGETHER: Over 120 faculty from 14 disciplines came together for Discipline Day on February 22 in Monarch Hall at Valley College. Participants reviewed our latest student success numbers, did group exercises on incorporating reading strategies into their classes, and then worked individually on various discipline issues. In December, fifty faculty from the Performing and Visual Arts disciplines met at Trade Tech. They spent a good portion of their time working on minimum qualifications issues. Pictured, top left: LAVC President Dr. Tyree Wieder, LACCD Dean of Institutional Effectiveness Deborah Harrington, and DAS VP Kathleen Bimber. Middle: Social Science faculty hard at work. Right: The Chemistry faculty take a break.

CAMPUS REPORTS



LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE

Ken Sherwood, Academic Senate President

Construction is significantly underway on four projects: The Martin Luther King Jr. Library is expected to be completed in the middle of June while the Child Development Center, the Science and Technology Building, and the Athletic Field/Parking structure are all progressing nicely. Major infrastructure improvements are scheduled to begin in the very near future, which will be a major challenge for pedestrian traffic on campus. However, our project management company is meeting regularly with campus groups to minimize the impact.

At last check, enrollment for the spring semester is up about 2% and our VP of Academic Affairs, Dr. Kathleen Burke-Kelly, is working on a plan to meet the Chancellor's request for increased FTES while the entire Senior Staff is meeting regularly to find ways to address the projected budget deficit. Major challenges face the college, but our college president, Dr. Jamillah Moore, is actively engaged with shared governance and campus leadership to address those challenges.

EAST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE

Alex Immerblum, Academic Senate President

At long last, the bids for the Performing and Fine Arts Complex were announced, with the lowest one coming in just under \$65 million, much lower than anticipated. Construction should begin shortly.

Despite the state budget crisis and the current hiring restrictions, Interim President Bob Isomoto will be requesting 13 new probationary faculty hires, 11 of them replacements.

Our Student Success Committee has given initial approval to hire an outside consulting team to assess our current basic skills efforts and prepare a report, which will include recommendations for what we hope will be an ambitious, campus-wide, and unified approach to student success. We hope to get the process started in April.

LOS ANGELES HARBOR COLLEGE

June Burlingame Smith, Academic Senate President

Harbor presented its accreditation progress report to the Board in February. One recommendation highlighted program reviews, assessment of SLOs, and integrated planning. Dean David Humphreys, who

has a strong background in assessment, has helped the faculty and administration design new paradigms to address the accreditation team's concerns. Although we are making steady improvements on policies and procedures and are working on first run-throughs of the new templates, we still have a lot of work to do to meet the standards.

The Vice President of the Senate, Pamela Watkins, spearheaded a very successful series of events to celebrate Black History Month, and we began celebrating Women's History during March by a listening to a spirited lecture and question and answer session led by History Professor Dr. Ellen Joiner, who recently published her book *Sin in the City*.

Harbor faculty member Dr. Deborah Tull has been appointed to the L.A. County Department of Mental Health's Ad-Hoc Planning Committee on Workforce Development, which works on innovative mental health prevention and intervention programs. She is the only community college leader involved in this, so it is quite an honor.

LOS ANGELES MISSION COLLEGE

Angela Echeverri, Academic Senate President

After an extensive search for a permanent president at Mission, the Board of Trustees has announced the selection of Dr. Judith Valles, whose experience includes serving as president at Golden West and Oxnard Colleges, as well as mayor of San Bernardino. Ernie Moreno will be returning to his former position as president of East after nearly two years at Mission. One of his most important achievements here was to boost outreach and recruitment efforts, which have helped propel our enrollment towards its highest level ever.

Faculty are working hard to prepare for an accreditation follow-up visit in April. Much progress has been made in the area of student learning outcomes and assessment. Most academic units completed their program reviews in January. The recently formed Educational Planning Committee has been working effectively. It approved the online unit assessment form and the framework developed by the Basic Skills Task Force and is reviewing our existing academic reorganization policies.

Mission has lost a large number of faculty members during the last two years and those remaining are feeling the strain caused by this void. In spite of the financial challenges we face, we hope to be able to hire for some of the areas in which full time faculty are desperately needed.

PIERCE COLLEGE

Tom Rosdahl, Academic Senate President

Parking this semester has become a major issue. To help with the situation, 250 additional parking spaces have been added in an area just below the Performing Arts Building. By digging earth out from the foundations of the new buildings and grading it into usable flat space, the contractor saved the cost of hauling it away and the college benefited. Construction of the new gateways project has been approved. This includes a marquee and a pathway to the Orange Line stop. The Child

Development Center will be going to bid soon with construction to follow.

Winter semester enrollment was up 20% over last year, with much of this increase due to the Math and English guaranteed enrollment program. Spring 2008 semester enrollment is up over 7.5 % from Spring 2007, with total enrollment at slightly more than 21,000 students.

LOS ANGELES TRADE TECH COLLEGE

Chini Johnson-Taylor, Academic Senate President

It's never boring at Trade! We were visited by presidential candidate Barack Obama and California First Lady Maria Shriver with her WEConnect program. Our Senate and Staff Development hosted the New Faculty Academy, four half-day orientation sessions, for 12 recently hired faculty members. Mark Wade Lieu, President of the State Academic Senate, and Scott Lay of the California Community College League visited Trade to help us with shared governance, budget development processes, and equivalence. With administrative reports of projected deficits of up to \$2 million, we are concerned about the possible impact on academic programs.

Rounding out the semester, we are completing plans for a First Year Experience Program in May that will include a Day of Dialog focusing on student retention and persistence.

LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE

Don Gauthier, Academic Senate President

Enrollments for spring are up at Valley (up 5% from last year) with 17,473 students enrolled. This is a very positive development in light of the budget challenges many campuses (Valley included) are facing. The Allocation Grant Task Force met with the campus last month and we are awaiting final word of their decision. A search committee is being formed to begin the process of replacing Dr. Tyree Wieder, who has been our college president for 14 years.

The Academic Senate will begin work this spring on many issues – from an academic freedom statement to distance education, among others. A newly ratified constitution will get its first workout in the coming months as we prepare for the election of officers.

WEST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE

Eloise Crippens, Academic Senate President

Our Basic Skills Committee sent its Basic Skills plan for the college to the Senate for its approval in February. The proposed plan of action is an effort to address the needs of our students who are lacking the foundational skills to succeed in college.

The Executive Board of the Senate selected a theme for this semester – “Removing Barriers to Student Success.” Our first attempt at removing barriers will consist of working with the Division chairs to create a four-semester schedule so that students can transfer in a reasonable amount of time.

Threat to Peer Review Described at Senate Institute

At the State Academic Senate's second annual Accreditation Institute, *Driving the Accreditation & SLO Highway: Navigating the Roads of Change*, 120 participants from 54 colleges around the state gathered in Pasadena at the end of January to explore issues related to accreditation and SLO's. Breakout sessions specifically targeted successful accreditation best practices and provided strategies for using SLO assessments to improve instruction.

Warning that independent accreditation based on peer review is in jeopardy, Dr. Barbara Beno, President of the ACCJC/WASC, described recent hearings convened by the Department of Education's Spellings Commission, motivated by those who are intent on imposing accountability on our colleges and creating national assessment standards. “We fiercely rejected these efforts, citing the diversity of our missions, programs, and students,” she explained. She urged attendees to publicize college outcomes and the fine qualities of our institutions. “We need to make sure accreditation is an honest, successful process so that the public has confidence in our current system of accrediting colleges.”

Dr. Beno advised attendees that because of the two-year rule – a requirement of the U.S. Department of Education that an institution should be given no more than half the time to a BA degree to fix deficiencies -- the ACCJC has had to change its previous practices and set shorter deadlines for colleges to make progress on commission recommendations. She also suggested that colleges strive to exceed the accreditation standards. “They're the floor, not the ceiling.”

Tying the two strands of the institute together, presenters discussed using SLO assessments to “close the loop” between accreditation expectations and actual practice, using them as evidence that improvements have been made. Faculty also heard presentations on computer systems that colleges are using to manage their assessment data. Those starting on the path to preparing their self studies were advised not to write responses to the standards in isolation, as the themes flow in natural progression through the standards.

Three LACCD colleges -- Mission, Pierce, and Southwest – sent reps to the weekend conference. “The L.A. people always seemed to find each other and take advantage of the opportunity to brainstorm and work as a team,” said Barbara Anderson, SLO Coordinator from Pierce. “Each of the breakout sessions was related, like a threaded discussion, and allowed for frank dialogue.” Also attending from the LACCD was Deborah Kaye, the new District Liaison for Accreditation.

“The most valuable benefit from this conference was the networking with other SLO Coordinators across the state and the sharing of best practices from our peers,” says Glenn Yoshida, SLO Coordinator from Southwest. “The breakout sessions on a variety of assessment strategies for institutional SLOs were extremely informative. I plan to incorporate some of the ideas from the conference into our college's SLO assessment cycle and program review processes.”

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Student Success Initiative Moving Forward

The Matriculation Task Force has recommended that students be required to take a College Success course in their first two semesters in order to graduate. The proposal would allow for lots of local latitude, and Pierce and City have recently developed new courses along these lines.

The Professional Development Task Force is developing a framework for faculty development that will coalesce with the Basic Skills Self-Study recommendations adopted by each of the colleges. The task force will publish a draft of this framework later in the spring.

Spring 2008 also has seen the debut of the SSI's *Success.Net*, a collaborative network of faculty offering colleagues resources and events designed to increase retention, enhance student engagement and classroom participation, and promote effective learning strategies. *Success.Net* will send faculty simple, straightforward ideas and activities they can use in their classes to promote student success. These resources will soon be available on an interactive *Success.Net* website. Additionally, *Success.Net* will be setting up special workshops for faculty to share teaching and learning practices, and learn more about

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approaches that promote the success of our students.

Future SSI endeavors include a major event April 11 with Diego Navarro from the Digital Bridge Academy (see box on Page 1). On May 9 there will be a district-wide workshop event on contextualized learning (location TBD), and to kick off the fall semester, SSI will be sponsoring an interactive assessment workshop.

The Student Success Initiative has made some big strides in the promotion of student learning and education outcomes across the LACCD in the short time since its inception a little over two years ago, but we have a long ways still to go! Please join the campaign, if you haven't already done so.

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President's Column

have a negative psychological effect. We need to guard against any flagging energy, particularly when it comes to our campaign to boost student success. Many of us have argued for a long time that there is an enormous amount we can do without additional funding, and if you look at our recently approved *Framework for Student Success*, you'll see that the majority of the recommendations can be accomplished by reorganizing and rethinking how we do business.

Student success can only be substantial and deep if every college makes its own commitment, and some of our colleges are really making great strides now. But there are also a number of steps that we need to take district-wide, as our lead article describes. One of the most dramatic would be the College Success course that we are proposing. It would not be a panacea—we need to teach academic skills in all our classes—but it would be a big step forward.

It is wonderful, too, to see so many groups coming together at last. The Professional Development Coordinators are now meeting for the first time in ten years, while the Transfer Center Directors are meeting together for the first time ever, as are the SLO Coordinators. Additionally, we're working at having more discipline committees meet on a regular basis. There is, after all, an enormous amount to talk about besides equivalency applications:



David Beaulieu, DAS President, with Warren Furutani at his last Board of Trustees meeting January 30 at Harbor College. Furutani won his race for California State Assembly and will be continuing his advocacy for community colleges at the state level.

curricular reform, pedagogical innovations, and SLO's, for example. Our goal is for each committee to meet at least three times a year, and we'll be happy to help facilitate this. See the accompanying photos of our Feb. 22 gathering at Valley College (on Page 1).

Finally, a word about financial aid. Do you realize how many of our students are missing out by not applying? In fact, some 80% of our students are eligible for assistance, and yet only 26% are getting it. Just imagine how much more successful they would be if they could substantially

reduce their work hours. Faculty can play a crucial role by encouraging them and informing them of opportunities, and so we've set up a Financial Aid Project to try to accomplish this. If you are interested, please contact me. We meet on a monthly basis.

Your ideas and comments are most welcome, as always. Have a great rest of the semester!

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