

Academically Speaking Fall, 2015

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SUMMIT REPORT: 2015

The 2015 DAS Summit was held at Valley College in Monarch Hall on Friday, September 25th, 2015. Over 140 faculty leaders and administrators from all nine campuses and the Educational Services Center attended the event. The theme for the day was "Towards a More Effective District: LACCD in the 21st Century."

The program began shortly after 9 am with a welcome and introduction by DAS President Don Gauthier and a campus welcome from Los Angeles Valley College President Erika Endrijonas. Trustee Mike Eng of the LACCD Board of Trustees was next up and he addressed the audience with a call to the entire District to "move the needle on student success." He also talked about the upcoming March 2016 accreditation visit and the need to meet accreditation standards. Eng concluded with a few remarks praising the work of faculty and administrators in the District.

Deidre McDermott from L.A. Trade Tech College, a self-professed groupie of the day's guest speaker, introduced Dr. Kathleen Gabriel from California State University, Chico, the author of

"Teaching Unprepared Students: Strategies for Promoting Success and Retention in Higher Education." Dr. Gabriel started by posing statements about student preparedness, statistics for at-risk students, and success rates at four-year institutions. She then asked the audience members to indicate whether these statements were true or not using color-coded cards she called her "clickers." Most of those in attendance seemed surprised to find out that four-year schools have relatively high numbers of unprepared students and low completion rates. This same data later spurred legislation that required the publication of college success rates.



Dr. Gabriel makes a point about student success.

Dr. Gabriel conducted several exercises that underscored common assumptions about student learners

that are often incorrect. She then proceeded to demonstrate various strategies for generating student engagement in the classroom. Some of these strategies, such as think-pair-share, were familiar to many of the teaching faculty in the room. She also demonstrated an exercise in which students are asked to answer true or false to statements about their study habits.

Dr. Gabriel then disclosed the predicted grade for a student based on their responses and noted that the grade of the student could change at any point if they employed some of the strategies and resources that were offered, such as taking advantage of office hours, tutoring, etc.

Dr. Gabriel also talked about the importance of attendance, especially for at-risk students, and the role that faculty have in making students feel welcome and creating a positive learning environment. She also stated that it is very important from the first day of class that faculty demonstrate their own enthusiasm for the subject matter of the class. She used a simple exercise to demonstrate the importance of giving clear directions and guidance to help students identify what is important to learn in a class. Gabriel stated that faculty often assume that their expectations are clear to students in their classes, but very often this is not the case.

After Dr. Gabriel's presentation, participants could choose from five different break-out sessions:

Accreditation, Governance, and Planning, Effective Interventions, Hiring Best Practices, Quality Online Education, and "Show Me the Money," a workshop on additional funding from various sources.

The break-out on hiring best practices was of particular interest to faculty and administrators, given the high number of faculty hires in the past year and in anticipation of the nearly 242 new faculty hires slated for 2016. This break-out was conducted by DAS 1st VP of Equivalency Angela Echeverri, Equivalency Coordinator Eloise Crippens, Shawn Tramel of Human Resources, and ELAC AFT Chapter Chair Armida Ornelas. The



LACCD Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez answers a question during the lunchtime Q&A session.

session covered the entire hiring procedure, starting with the faculty hiring prioritization process through probationary faculty evaluations and tenure.

The accreditation break-out was led by Vice Chancellor Bobbi Kimble,

Associate Vice Chancellor Maury Pearl, and Allison Tom-Miura. The session focused on the District level responses to Standards III and IV and the timeline of coming accreditation related activities. The new committee charter and the work plan for the District Planning and Accreditation Committee (DPAC) was rolled-out and updates to the Governance and Functions Handbook and the District Strategic Plan were presented.

The morning breakouts were followed by boxed lunches and a Q&A session with LACCD Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez. He introduced Trustee Andra Hoffman who spoke for a few minutes about her personal background, her own life experiences, and her strong commitment to student success.

The Chancellor began his remarks by praising the work of faculty and underscoring the importance of the connection faculty have with their students. He used personal examples of his former students who had gone on to successful careers in the world of academia and public service. In response to an audience question about maintaining academic excellence and integrity during a period of unprecedented numbers of new faculty hires, the Chancellor suggested placing more emphasis on the teaching demonstration component of the interview process and urged those present to consider

hiring non-traditional candidates that might bring other important perspectives to the college faculty ranks. He also expressed his commitment to professional development for faculty and his support for the DAS proposal to establish a Professional Development College. He praised the work of administrators, talked about the establishment of a Dean's Academy, and advocated for hiring administrators from within the District.



Don Gauthier, DAS President, Trustee Hoffman, and Chancellor Rodriauez.

After lunch, six breakouts were held, including five that were not offered in the morning session: DAS Professional Development College, CORA - Teaching Men of Color, Culturally Responsive Training, Effective Communication, and ADA Compliance Online.

In the Effective Communication breakout, Maury Pearl, Don Gauthier, Dan Walden, and Allison Tom-Miura reviewed several years of district survey results that presented a high level of dissatisfaction with communication within the district and

on our campuses. The findings underscored the need to improve communication and transparency throughout the District. Survey data indicated that satisfaction among stakeholders had not improved over time and the focus of the conversation that followed was to gather suggestions on how to address this issue. Suggestions included raising awareness of the LACCD 411 page, making sure that committee representatives report back to their constituent groups, and having more effective meetings with clearly defined planned agendas and action items, that can be more easily and clearly communicated. It was suggested that both faculty and administrators get training in running an effective meeting, as well.

The presentation on the DAS Professional Development College (PDC) was led by Lourdes Brent, Ayesha Randall, Alex Immerblum, Leslie Milke, Alistaire Callender, and Angela Echeverri. The PDC is a DAS project that will address the professional development of faculty through a series of stacked certificates focused on classroom learning, andragogy (adult learning), and practical strategies to move the needle on student success. The proposal generated a lot of interest and support. There was an extensive discussion about budget, logistics, location, cost, curriculum, and enrollment restrictions.

At another breakout, Gaier Dietrich, Director of the High Tech Center Training Unit of the California Community Colleges, made a presentation on the importance of addressing the needs of the approximately 10,000 students with disabilities enrolled in High Tech Center programs statewide. She spent some time talking about ADA (American Disabilities Act) compliance and the numerous resources available to support faculty and students.

There were other breakouts, but time and space are limited in this report. We hope to be able bring you reports from other breakouts in a subsequent edition of *Academically Speaking* from others in attendance.



At the end of the day, the attendees seemed pleased with the event and many expressed that fact in the evaluations. A few made suggestions about including more about Title IX compliance in future district events or summits. Someone suggested a district-wide event beyond the 16 member college teams as a future possibility. One or two in the crowd expressed disappointment at the last minute cancellation of the District Decision-Making breakout.



In conclusion, the organizers of this event would like to thank all those who assisted in setting up, signing in attendees, contacting presenters, ordering and paying for the food and many boxes of coffee, for technical support, and clean-up after the event. A special thanks to Dr. Gabriel and her inspirational and valuable insights into reaching our unprepared students, and for the many presenters who gave outstanding and informative presentations on a wide range of topics. And finally, thanks to Trustees Mike Eng and Andra Hoffman, and Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez for their time and support of this annual event. The DAS will be considering a spring 2016 event, in addition to our annual Discipline Day on Friday, February 26, 2016.

-Angela Echeverri, DAS 1st VP

-Don Gauthier, DAS President



Meet 1st DAS VP Angela Echeverri

I have been a faculty member in the Life Sciences at Los Angeles Mission College since 1998. In 2004, I became a member of the DAS Executive Committee (as Academic Senate President at Mission) and served as DAS Secretary from 2005 to 2015. On July 1st 2015 I started my new assignment as 1st DAS Vice president, replacing David Beaulieu who retired after many years of service.



My duties include chairing the DAS Equivalency Committee and co-chairing the District Planning and Accreditation Committee (DPAC). I also regularly attend and write reports on LACCD Board of Trustees meetings. My main goals and interests are student success, faculty professional development, and accreditation. I look forward to working hard to support our 4,000+ faculty and keeping them informed and empowered.