




To: Community and Communication Council

Cc: Advisory Council
Equity and Education Council
Revenue and Resources Council
Administrative Council

Fr: Thuy Thi Nguyen, President 

Date: April 7, 2021

Re: Governance Assessment

Thank you for proceeding in the assessment of governance. I look forward to the assessment report and your feedback.

This is a follow-up to my Governance Memo dated July 28, 2020.

Areas for Improvement and Possible Inclusion in the Governance Handbook

Over the past few years, I have heard the following comments on how our governance process could be improved. Some are directly related to the new design, while others are historical. I will ask it in the form of questions to enable your deliberation and voting process:

- A. Should the Advisory Council serve as the “meta” council whereby the other three councils report to it?

Although this was not the original design of the governance structure, some people think that I should serve as tri-chair of the Advisory Council, with all councils reporting to the Advisory Council; Academic Senate, Classified Senate, ASFC presidents are appointed to Advisory Council – making it similar to PaRC, a previous governance committee.

- B. Should students be able to serve in the chairship – making for a quad-chair situation for all four councils?

When the Leadership Council that proposed the new governance redesign answered this question, there was a belief that students were not as engaged in shared governance historically as they were in the more recent years. This led to concerns by the Leadership Council that, until students are more committed and be present for meetings, the Council would vote down the proposal of students serving as chairs with the tri-chairs.



There has been a request by students to revisit this, especially in light of the active student representation since 2018. It may be worth an analysis to determine the student attendance, though anecdotally, I have noticed a marked increase in student attendance in the past 3 years.

- C. Should Classified Senate representatives be paid for time spent serving in Governance meetings?

There is no doubt that classified professionals have been more present at governance meetings. It may also be worth conducting an analysis of the last three years on classified attendance.

Most California community colleges (if any) do not pay overtime for classified professionals to participate in governance, as service to the college through governance is similar to when staff attend professional development and are part of the classified professional time.

Nevertheless, I am very interested in exploring with Classified Senate on a pilot process that could promote more diverse staff (racially, gender, areas of the college, etc.) to participate in governance. The goal is to present a proposal in April or May for inclusion in the Governance Handbook, and implemented next academic year.

- D. Should we continue to pay a stipend for Adjunct Faculty's time at governance meetings?

As you know, most colleges do not pay part-time faculty for time spent at governance – let alone a designated part-time faculty position for each of the councils. We conducted a three-year pilot program utilizing one-time dollars from the IEPI / PRT state visit to support this pilot.

How have part-time faculty voices been impactful at governance, and how has the stipend promoted such voices? If we extend this, for how long and from what sources of funds? If we do not extend this, should we still have the designated position or integrate it with the current Academic Senate appointment for 3 faculty. As you know, the adjunct position was created by me by giving up an administrative slot in order to promote part-time faculty voices.

- E. Should we have a new procedure for Zoom meetings, especially with return to campus? Should we explore making Zoom meetings more effective and efficient through agreed upon norms and procedures?
- F. Should there be a charter for every study group, and within that charter, should there be an identification of the exact (or recommended) number of people to serve on the study group?

If so, would you develop a charter template for the handbook?



Proposal of a New Design:

Since we formally engaged an outside consultant with the assessment last summer, there have been conversations at Academic Senate about 10+1 rights and concerns expressed by some faculty and other constituency groups around the recognition of expertise among students, classified, and administrators. Additionally, there have been conversations at Academic Senate meetings about the possibility of not exercising its voting rights at our governance meetings. This sentiment may be based on the belief that governance is not honoring 10+1 legal rights.

I write to invite you to consider the concerns raised at the Academic Senate and engage with them along with other constituents to design a completely new shared governance process. One way is to gather a design group similar to the one created four years ago called the Leadership Council (2 faculty, 2 students, 2 classified, and 2 administrators) to propose a new governance design. This new design could both honor the Academic Senate's concerns around 10+1 while providing an ability for students, faculty, and administrators to amplify their voices within a more democratizing structure.

The issues that came up during the February 5, 2021 Collegiality in Action workshop has had me thinking about whether equity is enhanced or blocked by our laws and regulations related to governance and Academic Senate. When time permits, I may explore this at a state-wide level. More to come on this.

Please let me know if you are interested in this new design, so that we could report it in our accreditation Mid-Year report as it relates to our Quality Focused Essay on governance.

In the meantime, we will continue to make improvements on our existing governance structure, as previously mentioned, and will also identify those areas of improvements in the governance handbook.