

ACADEMIC SENATE
STATEMENT
on
FACULTY GOVERNANCE PARTICIPATION

I. MISSION

The contractual requirements of professional service for COC full-time faculty are largely found in Article 12 of the College of the Canyons Faculty Association (COCFA) Collective Bargaining Agreement. In addition to the teaching load requirements, Section A(2) of Article 12 requires full-time members to provide a full professional service week, that may include any number of professional responsibilities listed therein. In particular, Article 12(A)(2)(I) indicates full-time faculty may choose as part of their weekly service to participate in shared governance.

The historic 1988 State of California legislation, known as AB 1725, established many new responsibilities for community college faculty throughout the State. These new responsibilities permeate throughout local Academic Senates. The Academic Senate at COC has primacy in representing all collective faculty in academic and professional matters, as outlined in AB 1725 and realized through COC Board Policies and Procedures, as well as where delegated by the COCFA collective bargaining contract.

In order to fulfill the mission of this Academic Senate, and thus, the legally required academic matters of this District, it is imperative that all COCFA bargaining unit members define as part of their professional service week a commitment to active shared governance participation.

II. PHILOSOPHY

The appointment power of the Academic Senate is not absolute. It requires willing nominees ready to serve on Senate or college wide committees. The promise and benefit of AB 1725 is that it enshrines in law, more so than many professions, the opportunity to transcend traditional faculty roles as instructors in order to make a larger, professional impact on the community we serve and the educational system at large. Doing so comes at a price of professional, and sometimes personal, time and labor. But, the alternative is to diminish academic and professional quality and would arguably be an abdication of faculty's professional, statutory rights and obligations.

III. ROLE OF SENATORS

Faculty members that serve on the Academic Senate are in a unique position to become more learned in the broad spectrum of campus matters. As such, individual Senators are well placed to serve on other shared governance committees and sub-committees and to liaise with other constituent groups. Doing so is listed as an expectation within Article II(F) of the Academic Senate Bylaws. To ensure the adequate and proper long-term succession of academic leadership, members of the Senate, and faculty in general, need to regularly participate in the shared governance process to ensure seamless transitions of leadership and institutional effectiveness.

IV. PROFESSIONAL EQUITY – FACULTY AT-LARGE

Since the passage of AB 1725, the demands and responsibilities placed on the Academic Senate have increased exponentially. By extension, the need for all full-time faculty members to participate in the shared governance, collegial consultation process is more important than ever. And, as such, it is a matter of professional equity, efficiency and mere practicality, that they do so.

This is not to say the Academic Senate does not recognize the vast array of duties and workload performed and undertaken by full-time faculty in the service of this College. To the contrary, there is no way to fully determine the extent and effort each individual faculty member dedicates themselves to their profession. Enormous amounts of unseen work and effort manifest throughout the day-to-day duties and functions of academia. Thus, the Academic Senate respects the entirety of faculty work at College of the Canyons. However, like any campus constituency, it is necessary to reflect upon and take stock of its overall functions and need. Given the primacy and critical institutional role previously outlined, the Academic Senate is compelled to assert this philosophical statement into the consciousness of each and every full-time faculty member.

V. ADJUNCT FACULTY MEMBERS

College of the Canyons would not be able to succeed in its institutional mission if not for the work and support of its adjunct faculty members. They are a critical component of this campus and the entire community college system. The input and role of adjunct instructors toward achieving the Academic Senate's mission is important. However, given their own collective bargaining agreement, along with the practical restraints on participation, adjunct instructors are not the focus of this formal statement and its philosophical urgings. Nevertheless, the Academic Senate welcomes, encourages and needs adjunct instructors to participate in the governance process to ensure that, at a minimum, they are heard.

VI. ASSESSING SHARED GOVERNANCE PARTICIPATION

Each year, as a matter of duty, the President of the Academic Senate keeps an organizational record of Senate and District wide committee membership. The President regularly coordinates with the CEO, as well as with the COCFA President to determine and discuss matters contractually delegated to the Senate, along with an assessment of strategic and appropriate planning as it relates to campus policies, procedures and other academic and professional matters. It is in that capacity that the Academic Senate President has the resources and institutional knowledge to make equitable judgments about whom to approach as potential appointees to shared governance assignments. As previously noted, the vast unheralded work and effort of faculty is a given within the academic profession. And so it is also a common denominator, reflective of the predominant mindset of educators. From that baseline grows the known and publicized work of campus constituents, to include the Academic Senate and its sub-committees, COCFA and its sub-committees, collegial consultation and campus committees, Department Chairs, Club and programmatic advisors, as well as curricular and SLO coordinators, to name a few.

It is with great humility that the Academic Senate adopts this Statement on Faculty Governance Participation and calls upon all faculty members to seriously consider the call to action, inherent in this statement, or in practical terms when solicited by the Senate President and her or his designees, for greater service in the name of shared governance.