



Part-Time Faculty Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

6-8pm, Room 5402 (PolyCom NCC Room N1015)

The meeting began at approximately 6:02pm. Those in attendance came from various divisions, such as Health, Human Development and Nutrition, Languages-Communications, Business Education, and Social Sciences. Logan passed out two handouts: the Meeting Agenda and Research on the Use of Part-Time Faculty (both posted in the PTF Committee Group in MyCuesta).

1. FLEX Activities and Professional Development Opportunities

Part-Time faculty have expressed their desire for more meaningful FLEX opportunities, such as those activities that provide professional development. The Chair of the PTF Committee expressed that in order to propose, create, or search out opportunities of this kind would seem to require a better understanding of FLEX and Professional Development and how they overlap. There does not seem to be a lot of information available on the Cuesta website, or on the Human Resources webpage, which does define professional development as "activities that support and enhance student success." Without clear guidelines set and visibly posted by the College, faculty may be passing up opportunities for real professional development that also meet FLEX obligations. Logan found that there was more information available about FLEX and Professional Development on other community college websites.¹ The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (CCC) website provided a lot of information as to what constitutes Professional Development. Logan provided this definition and qualifying activities, as well as information from the Chancellor's Office for California Community Colleges and from the CA Education Code.

The CCFT President, Allison Merzon shared with meeting attendees that there is a need for guidelines for faculty, but also a need to raise standards when it comes to meeting FLEX obligations. The Union may propose to move forward making FLEX and Professional Development synonymous.

CA Education Code, Title 5, Article 2, Section 55724

The state of CA allows community colleges with a FLEX Calendar Program to replace 15 of 175 instructional days with FLEX days that would involve activities that provide staff development.

The Chancellor's Office for California Community Colleges

This Office oversees the Flexible Calendar programs for California Community Colleges and has specified the *activities that would qualify for FLEX*:

- Training programs
- Group retreats
- Field experiences
- Workshops (course/program development and revision, staff development, developing new instructional materials, instruction-related activities)

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

According to the ASCCC, faculty *professional development activities* are those that "directly improve teaching and learning." The activities will take place during designated staff, student, and instructional improvement days and may include, but need not be limited to:

- Course instruction/evaluation
- Staff development/in-service training and instructional improvement
- Program and course curriculum or learning resource development and evaluation
- Student personnel services and learning resource services
- Related activities, such as student advising, guidance, orientation, matriculation services, and student, faculty, and staff diversity
- Departmental or division meetings, conferences and workshops, and institutional research
- Other duties as assigned by the district, as well as necessary supporting activities for the above

1. Mira Costa College and Rio Hondo Colleges used the terms interchangeably, such as "Professional Development Program/FLEX" and "FLEX/Staff Development Workshop".

2. Proposal to Negotiate for Accrual of FLEX Activity Hours for One Year (Roll Over From One Semester)

A PTF member expressed a desire to have the opportunity for FLEX hours to accrue and roll over from one semester to another for a given year. This would help PTF having to use office hours for FLEX credit. Merzon suggested that creating a FLEX bank for PTF would perhaps resolve the issue.

Another faculty member suggested that PTF, who teach only one course in a given semester, receive compensation for FLEX. Merzon noted that faculty salaries already include compensation for meeting FLEX requirements. It was suggested that perhaps a faculty member who does additional work beyond the FLEX requirement could receive compensation for that. This would be a negotiable issue that the Union would have to pursue.

Another topic that came up with respect to FLEX, is that many PTF do not think they can use activities that they have completed in a given summer to meet their Fall semester flex obligation. It was agreed by attendees that summer should be included as part of the time to earn FLEX credit.

3. SISC and District Policies on SISC Enrollment and Fringe Benefits In Relations to PTF Loads

Logan noted that District policy is that fringe benefits are based on load. When a faculty member has a load less than 50% one semester, but increases their load to over 50% the next semester, they qualify for fringe. The District does not load faculty members until mid-month, and this is problematic because SISC will not enroll a faculty member in health insurance mid-month. As a result, the District does not pay fringe to that faculty member for that first month *because* they are not enrolled in SISC, even though the faculty member qualified for fringe that semester. PTF are losing their pay as a result and are not covered by health insurance the first month of the semester. CCFT under Article 13 of the CBA is starting the process of a Level II grievance to address this issue.

4. District Interpretation of the CBA in Relation to Education Code and the Recent Firing of a PTF Member – Its Broader Implications on All Faculty

The Chair of the Committee gave an update of a recently fired temporary faculty member. The District fired this individual based on the District's interpretation of the CBA in relation to CA Education Code. This has far-reaching ramifications for all faculty. The District's position is that the Contract excludes disciplinary procedures under certain sections of the Education Code and that those sections of the Ed Code give the District the power to fire temporary faculty members at will. The 87665 Ed Code says that PTF have no protection, BUT our CBA (Article 5.12.3.4 and Article 9.1) creates protection for *all unit members*, and this includes both full-time and part-time faculty. The District has a history of using procedures in Article 5 and this past practice has changed with this recent termination. CCFT is taking action based on the *just cause* and *due process* provisions of the Contract.

CA Ed Code 87665 – "The governing board may terminate the employment of a temporary employee at its discretion at the end of a day or week, whichever is appropriate."

CBA Article 9.1 – "Disciplinary action shall be imposed upon unit members only for just cause and pursuant to the terms of this Article. The provisions and procedures of this Article shall not apply to a suspension or dismissal action instituted pursuant to Education Code section 87660, et seq., or to a dismissal pursuant to Education Code section 87730, et seq."

5. The Cuesta Budget

By this time of the meeting, a discussion of the budget seemed almost too depressing, but Merzon shared some good news with the attendees. Despite the likelihood of Tier II budget cuts this next semester, the Enrollment Management Committee (EMC) recently made a proposal that the Planning and Budget Committee approved - that Cuesta move to achieve medium-sized college status for the FY 2011-2012. This change would earn Cuesta stabilization funds of \$1.1 million per year for three years. In addition, the threshold for a medium size college status has dropped from 10,000 to 9,379 FTES. This is good news, as the medium-size status would create additional funding and the lowered FTES requirement would encourage a robust summer school.

6. Important Legislation Update: Assembly Bill [AB] 501 – More Protection for All Public Employees That Work for School or Community College Districts

The Educational Employment Relations Act has been amended to assure the right of all public employees of school or community college districts to be included in bargaining units represented by labor unions and to enjoy protections provided by EERA. Previously, non-classified staff and faculty and staff working for Joint Powers Authority and others were excluded from bargaining units and EERA protections. A public school employer now includes an auxiliary

organization or a JPA, and a public school employee is now “a person employed by a public school employer.” This will have a positive impact on noncredit faculty at Cuesta.

7. SISC and Other Health Insurance Providers: Should We Create A Research Taskforce?

Logan shared that PTF concerns about rising health insurance premiums have been communicated at both the Executive Board and Council of Reps meetings. Increased fringe would certainly help offset the rise in health insurance costs, but the District is unlikely to increase fringe in the near future. There is some support among faculty for finding another insurance provider, but also some reluctance to go down that road, as it might be in vain; it was expressed at the COR meeting that most providers are just as expensive. There was concern at the COR about this issue, but not much enthusiasm for creating a taskforce to research options. Many faculty are working additional hours without compensation and have many work obligations that require much of their time.

At this meeting, PTF seemed to understand this lack of enthusiasm, but it also brought up an important issue that is at the root of what we experience as professional educators – that a lack of providing adequate salary and benefits, and protections and basic rights for educators is *immoral* and represents a deep cultural rift between those who value human beings and human dignity and those who value money, wealth, and power. Where is the dignity of our profession? We are educators, helping students to think for themselves, empowering them to achieve success in their lives. Why are we educators not valued for what we contribute to the community and society as a whole?

8. Update on the 18-Week Paid Office Hour Compensation

The Chair shared with the attendees that this issue was brought up at both the EB and COR meetings, and that the District is apparently “stuck” on the form, meaning *reluctant to change*. PTF can receive up to 18 hours of paid office time in a given semester, but for those who teach 6-week, 9-week, and 13-week courses, they do not have this same opportunity, even though they meet with students just as often – all because of the way the form is designed. You can only earn compensation of one paid office hour per week. Merzon stated that this is an issue that will be pursued. It is unfair to faculty who teach these condensed courses to not have the same opportunity as those who teach the 18-week duration. A new form has to be negotiated for this change to take place.

9. 15-Week Calendar Survey Update

According to Logan, last month a survey went out to all divisions soliciting feedback on a proposed 15-week academic calendar. There was stronger support to move to a shortened calendar in six of seven divisions that responded. Logan noted that some individuals within her division wanted to know how this would affect instructional minutes and classes that meet once per week. The decision is up to the Calendar Committee and is in its initial stages. Faculty can share their concerns with or direct questions to Stacy Pointer of the Calendar Committee.

Some attendees at the meeting expressed support for a shorter calendar, especially since students seem to lose their enthusiasm and concentration after Thanksgiving break and spring break, which come late in the semester. Some faculty said that in condensed courses, they have found students to have better retention and a better focus. There were some strong proponents of the 9-week course due to their good student retention and success rates.

Allison Merzon shared information about a new requirement established by the state of CA, which stipulates that there has to be at least three days of instruction in any given week of instruction during the semester. This means that starting next fall, we will have to make November 21st an instructional day and create a FLEX day somewhere else in the semester. A recent survey went out by the Calendar Committee that asked for feedback. A suggestion was made at the recent COR meeting to take the entire Thanksgiving week off and start a couple of days earlier in August.

10. Other Issues/Concerns

A faculty member suggested that we include in our future meetings, the topic of *dignity within our profession*. It seems that we tend to discuss more often the effects of a greater problem, rather than the problem itself, which is the lack of value towards educators and what they do for not only students, but for society as a whole.

Reminder - Logan is planning to hold a shorter, less formal meeting at a local coffee house in SLO the week after Thanksgiving break. An announcement for the exact date and location will be sent via email and posted in the PTF Committee Group in MyCuesta. Please let Logan know if you are interested in attending a meeting of this sort.

Meeting Minutes by Kathryn Logan, *Part-Time Faculty Committee Chairperson*