

Santa Monica College
Academic Senate
Department Chairs Meeting
April, 2019– Minutes

Attendance:

Walter Meyer, Sal Veas, Howard Stahl, Deborah Perret, Jo Hao, Gary Huff, Eleni Hioureas, Judith Marasco, Sang Chi, Elaine Roque, Brenda Antrim, Mitra Moassessi, Toni Trives, Josh Sanseri, Jamey Anderson, Alex Schwartz, Christine Schultz, Perviz Sawoski, Liz Koenig, Colleen McGraw, Nate Donahue

With no objection, the discussion of proposed Academic Affairs reorganization was added to the agenda.

1. Public Comments: None
2. Announcements:

Elaine Roque announced that the KDR department has added two new sections of one unit Fitness class. Both sections start after spring break for the second eight weeks. She asked department chairs to let students know about these two sections.

3. Approval of minutes for [March meeting](#):

Motion to approve: Eleni Hioureas; Second: Elaine Roque

Passed with one abstention (Brenda Antrim).

4. Full-Time Faculty hiring:

Narrative plus program review sections D-2 and G1 are due April 15th, 2019 to Jennifer Merlic and Nate Donahue.

Based on preliminary full-time faculty requests a total of 159 requests have been submitted. Ranking committee will meet on May 10th at 10am. Department chairs are invited; comment cards will be available for department chairs in case any correction or clarification needs to be made by the chairs at the meeting.

Objective/quantitative criteria will inform 40% of the ranking, while the subjective data (committee's ranking of the positions) will inform 60% of the ranking. For the first time this

year data on equity gap will be accounted for in the objective data. Department Chairs will receive the data for review before it is finalized for the Ranking committee. Chairs will also have the opportunity to meet with their vice-president to discuss the requested positions before the vice-presidents present these positions to the committee.

Jennifer Merlic has posted two data files in Microsoft Team under Full-Time Faculty Ranking/General > Files. One file is the equity gaps in course success rate by academic discipline, and the other is the FT/PT data by each department's requests. The data is from Fall 2018.

5. Proposed Academic Affairs reorganization:

On the agenda for the April 2nd Board of Trustees meeting, recommendation No.22 under major items of business was "Reorganization of the Department of Academic Affairs". This recommendation was pulled from the agenda at the board meeting and no action was taken. Under this recommendation, several deans were to be assigned to serve as the lead academic administrator for certain departments. Concerns were raised by both the Academic Senate President and the Department Chairs that this recommendation will lead to having Division Deans in addition to the fact that neither the Academic Senate President nor the Department Chairs were consulted in creating this reorganization. The only time that the department chairs were informed about such a change was in Fall 2018 when Jenny Merlic, at one of the Academic Affairs Department Chairs meetings, shared her idea of having each dean be assigned to departments and she stated that they would not be Division Deans. At the April 2nd Board of Trustees meeting, Nate had prepared remarks about recommendation # 22 and since the item was pulled from the agenda he didn't make his remarks. On the request of trustee Rader, Nate sent the following email to the trustees after the meeting:

[Academic Senate President Comment on Major Item of Business #22
4/5/2019

Trustee Radar asked that I express some of the concerns that the Academic Senate had over "Major Item of Business #22: Reorg of Academic Affairs." While it is not my purview to discuss raises, job duties, titles, and org charts, I will express my concern that the Senate was not made aware of these changes until the release of the Board Agenda. Number six on the 10 +1 states that the Academic Senate must be made aware and included in conversations regarding "district and college governance structures, as they relate to faculty roles," and this reorganization will clearly effect the roles of department chairs.

For example, the item states the new senior administrative dean of academic affairs will serve as the "lead academic administrator" be responsible for the art, dance, music, and theater arts department. Another newly created Dean of Academic Affairs will oversee Earth, Life, Physical Science, and Mathematics. Yet another will be in charge of business, cosmetology, CSIS, and ECE. To many faculty this sounds like the creation of division deans, a practice we have never had at SMC, because department chairs have traditionally assumed many of those responsibilities. Academic Affairs has said this is not the creation of Department Deans, but

since I have not been part of any conversation, I am a bit confused because on the surface it sounds like it is moving in that direction.

Many questions have arisen from department chairs, and I have no answers because I was surreptitiously surprised by the agenda item. Such questions include: does the administration intend for department chairs to still send schedules to the Dean of Instruction, or will they send them to a new "lead academic administrator" that is "responsible" for their area? Will the faculty chair of the library report directly to the new Senior Dean, or the Director of Library Learning Services?

One of my jobs is to keep open and congenial lines of communication between faculty and administration, and I feel like I have been successful doing this for almost two years (at least two to go!). Being surprised like this makes it difficult for me to do this job well. It was hard for me to accept this as a simple oversight, because though the VP of Academic Affairs briefly mentioned a possible reorg at a Dept Chairs meeting in October, there has been no communication about the subject since, although there have been a number of meetings where this discussion might have been agendaized. Many, many administrators were also caught off guard by these changes, and had a variety of questions and feelings.

By including faculty in these decisions we insure that the process of shared governance and equitable inclusion is happening, and can make sure that feelings of surprise and frustration are channeled toward more productive ends.]

Department chairs thanked Nate for his articulate email.

6. Academic Senate Report - None

7. District Report- Jennifer Merlic

Jenny stated that she has heard the concern about Academic Affairs reorganization recommendation and that recommendation was pulled from the agenda. She stated that she doesn't intend to create division deans. One of her goals has been to facilitate succession planning in Academic Affairs and improve cross-training amongst deans in addition to improving speed and quality of service delivered by Academic Affairs. Under this recommendation, student complaints, part-time faculty hiring, and faculty evaluation will go to the dean assigned to the department. The scheduling will stay centralized but until the implementation of EMS more deans will help Jason with scheduling. Department chairs shared their concerns with Jenny on the reorganization recommendation. Jenny will put this item on the next Academic Affairs department chairs meeting for further discussion.

Jenny informed the chairs that department certificates cannot have the title "Certificate of Completion". Certificate of completion title can only be used for short term vocational programs.

Data for full-time faculty hiring ranking has been posted on Microsoft Teams; the data is based on Fall 2018. Reassigned times that are not ongoing has been added to the Weekly Teaching

Hours (WTH) for full-time faculty and has been subtracted from part-time hours. Hours for full-time faculty hired for Fall 2019 or planned to be hired have also been added to the weekly teaching hours for full-time and subtracted from part-time hours. Hannah has created the equity numbers for the objective part of the full-time faculty ranking. Jenny has not identified how these numbers will be factored in the objective ranking. Jenny will send her comments to the department chairs by email and meet with or have a phone conversation with those who would like to discuss what she sent.

Submitted by: Mitra Moassessi