Faculty Association Zoom Meeting: April 28, 2020

Rather than college representative reports given, multiple conversations were held on the following topics:

1. **Approval of the last meeting’s minutes** – Jeff made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 21st, 2020 Zoom meeting, Diana second, unanimous approval with no abstentions.

2. **Academic Senate** – All three Academic Senate Presidents, Mark Sellick for RCC, Jennifer Floerke for Moreno Valley, Quinton Bemiller for Norco, joined the Faculty Association to discuss the accessibility issues that faculty across the district are frustrated and struggling with. The faculty workload is not sustainable and the key people helping with this transition are already overwhelmed and we still have much time left in the semester.

3. Mark – District Academic Senate meet on Monday April 27th. One discussion was regarding Distance Education Chairs for each college. It seems that DE chair compensation was negotiated at a .2 before the pandemic. It seems that the compensation needs to be increased given the increased workload.

4. The curriculum process will have two tracks: regular and emergency. Faculty are able to make the decision to offer online or hybrid only under certain conditions (such as the pandemic). There is the worry that administration (administration has the right of assignment) will offer classes that are not designed to be online because it has been done before. Academic Senate is dedicated to advocating that faculty are subject matter experts and should always drive those decisions.

5. The fall schedule was also discussed in District Academic Senate. Fall will most likely be similar to summer session, with STEM & CTE labs that cannot meet online will be hybrid and utilize social distancing while in class. Face to face classes appear to be off the table as the pandemic does not seem to be ending by then. Equity continues to be an ongoing issue that will most likely persist in the fall.
6. Dariush – The District must make an official decision and post a public announcement about the fall semester. Department chairs must have enough time to schedule classes, especially for Part-Time Faculty as they will need to also have enough time to properly plan as many teach for multiple districts.

7. Academic Senate at all three colleges have had lengthy discussions on the validity of ALLY in Canvas. Senators and faculty are reporting the same questions about how the score seems to give a false picture of how accessible the class truly is. Students need to be kept as the top priority in this process.

8. Jennifer – the ALLY score seems to be a random number that does not actually look at the quality of content. For example, it could be at 100% because there is only a syllabus on the Canvas site and no content (or the content that is there is bad).

9. Quintin – so one way to bring a score down is the link to websites instead of putting that content on your Canvas site or having a pdf handout. The issue with that is that the website that is linked might not be accessible to the student. However, linking to websites is somehow better? That makes no sense in terms of actually helping students.

10. Asatar – it seems that actually having a human sit down and look at your classes and content would be beneficial instead of relying on a program. Yes, Ally can give some data on courses and give a tangible number to work towards but the issue is that some of the fixes are wasteful of district resources, complicated, and not actually helpful to real students.

11. Peter – What about some colleges offering some classes online but other colleges not offering those same classes online? Faculty need to be trusted to make those decisions as they are subject matter experts. Disciplines across the district need to work to be on the same page for the benefit of students.

12. Joint Resolution – The Faculty Association and the Academic Senates of all three colleges are all in agreement that these issues need to be addressed by the District. A Joint Resolution will be issued by both the Faculty Association and the Academic Senates.

13. Accessibility – Dariush suggested that besides faculty, the staff members who are providing much needed assistance to faculty are also overwhelmed with the monumental task of transitioning all face to face courses to online and then making them accessible. Even with the faculty mentors, there is still not sufficient support to all faculty in this challenging process. If fall is online, most of these same issues with Canvas and accessibility will persist with many classes that might only be offered in fall. Rhonda used her classes as an example as none of her fall classes have been on Canvas previously so workload of having to repeat the same problems as spring is daunting. This severe understaffing needs to be addressed for the long-term especially as it seems this global health crisis will not end as quickly as hoped. We need more staff on the front lines helping faculty.
14. Dariush reported his frustration for some of the managers both at the District and the college levels downplaying the amount of work that it is to make classes accessible as most of them have no personal experience in transitioning a face to face course to the online format and making it accessible.

15. Rhonda – the Disability Resource Center needs to always be included in the process of accessibility as these issues are very much under that office’s purview, as well. A process of accessibility should be institutionalized where students initiate help when they have an issue.

16. Rhonda – many faculty members are only one week ahead of their students due to the workload on teaching online so the ALLY score will continue to shift with added content. What we really need is more institutional help preparing our material so that it is compliant from the onset rather than backtracking, which is so stressful.

17. Fabian – there needs to be benchmarks for faculty to follow that is focused on the student in need and the content of the course.

18. **Public schools reopening** – Rhonda discussed Governor Gavin Newsom’s 6-marker plan to reopen schools. The concern is that Riverside County still does not seem to be flating the curve as the highest mortality rate for the area was just a few days ago. It is unknown what the Riverside County Health Department will decide for our area or when it will actually be safe for us to teach groups of students in person again.

19. Fabian – the District needs to do the right thing and be ahead of this. Protection for students and faculty needs to be at the forefront. Especially for students, faculty, and staff that have underlying health conditions.

20. Also, many faculty members have contacted the Faculty Association Executive Board regarding their concerns with the fall semester as many have children that will most likely be at home if public schools close again.

21. **New hires for fall** – Rhonda is concerned about new hires for the fall semester where the primary modality for those new faculty is labs or face-to-face classes. It will be difficult to fill their schedule with online only classes as some interactive classes, such as ceramics, cannot be taught online.

22. **Hiring** – In a department, a committee created the job posting for a faculty position and when the posting was made public, it was discovered that some of the language was changed and some of the requirements for applicants were removed. The rational for this change is unknown for when the posting was released by Human Resources.
23. Dariush made it abundantly clear that hiring is a faculty driven process and at no point HR has the authority to unilaterally change the job description and requirements that has been decided by the subject matter experts and the department.

24. **Submitting FLEX** – Rhonda reported that she is the test-run person for the FLEXtrack workaround for faculty but is still not able to log-in. The District has been working on the issue of faculty not having access and will provide an update as soon as the issue is resolved.

25. **Part-Time Faculty evaluations** – will the Part-Time Faculty evaluation forms be adjusted for online teaching? Rhonda explained that student surveys can and have been conducted in online classes.

26. Diana – Is it fair to update the evaluation criteria during this crisis? Especially when the evaluation process is tied into the process for preference? Jeff explained that some of the criteria might not fit into the situation that we are teaching right now. It seems that this is an issue that the Faculty Association will be addressing.

27. Elections – Nominations are almost over and the voting period will be starting next week.

28. Dariush proposed a letter of support for Bill SB 493 drafted by one of extremely bright RCC alumni, Maha Ibrahim – Gender Equality in Education Act. “SB 493 will address this gap in state law by outlining processes for institutions of higher education to follow to respond to and investigate sexual harassment and assault, in order to ensure clarity for students and a fair process for both the complainant and respondent to protect the civil rights, safety and well-being of all students. Provisions of the bill include:

- Notice requirements to ensure students are aware of the school’s processes and who they can report to;
- Transparent investigation processes to ensure a fair and equitable process for all involved;
- Required training of employees engaged in the complaint and investigation process.

Additionally, SB 493 will ensure that we faculty and other staff members of California’s higher education institutions receive trauma-informed and valuable training for ourselves so that we are supported with tools, information, and institutional backing to help our students when they come to us with concerns or have been harmed by sexual harassment or assault. As educators, we deserve this investment in our skill sets, resources, and competencies to deal with difficult real-life occurrences and challenges that our students bring to our attention, and we support institutional administrators and staff receiving similarly appropriate trainings to ensure the protection and civil rights of our students.”

29. The motion for the Faculty Association Executive Board support was made by Fabian, second by Jeff, unanimous approval with no abstentions.
30. The graduation ceremony at Moreno Valley College – Jeff reported that it has been proposed to move the 2020 graduation ceremony to 2021. This seems incredibly supportive of students that have worked hard to meet those requirements. It seems that this plan might add another workday and if so, that would need to be negotiated.