

Senate Chair's Report – March 2012

The Senate's Budget – Assigned-Time

In January I outlined the results of our budget discussions with the Chancellor and the Executive and Associate Vice Chancellor. The model that determined the total allocation for Senate assigned-time (\$539,366) described two Senators from each campus minus 7 positions for first-year Senators. (This budget line was \$387,816, which is the cost of 39 positions with 0.20 release (6 semester units or 9 quarter units annually.)

I support our commitment to give the Executive Committee the authority over the budget, which means that next year's executive committee would make the allocations, but it makes sense that the Senate should commit now to an allocation structure so that campus elections are informed by the fiscal implications. During our *Committee of the Whole* session we can advise next year's executive committee concerning this allocation. We can also take the time, if we wish, to advise next year's Committee on priorities for unallocated assigned-time funds which sometime occur when Senators turn down their allocations. In January I laid out a possible structure for setting priorities among the various groups: first-year Senators, the third Senator from the 7 large campuses with one or with two funded Senators, etc. The likelihood of needing a map for these scenarios is quite small and I advise the Senate not to spend much time, if any, sorting through these choices.

The Senate's Budget – Staffing

Part of the 2012-2013 budget proposal for the Senate was the reallocation of Sharon to a half-time commitment in another department within Academic Affairs. This change took place at the end of January, so the Senate will be coping with a 25% reduction in staffing for the rest of this year (and beyond.)

To cope with this reduction, we are asking Senators to help minimize the staff time needed to track travel claims and expenses by following one of these two patterns **within one week after the plenary** (or other meeting): 1) If you prepare your own travel claim, send Tracy a copy of the travel claim and the notice that you have turned it in; or 2) If someone else prepares your travel claim, report to Tracy **within one week** the notice that you have turned in your receipts for claim preparation and the name of the person preparing your claim.

STAR Act Implementation

A Senator asked for a tally of the number of American Institutions waivers approved by the Chancellor in the context of SB 1440 (The STAR Act.) The answer is easy: there have been no approvals of AI waivers, nor have there been any requests for such. Past experience has indicated that such answers are not accepted by all Senators, so with the cooperation of University Dean Christine Mallon, we polled each of the campuses for their knowledge of local requests. It was clear from the responses that a few do not have a clear understanding of the process for AI waivers (which can be found in Executive Order 1061, <http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-1061.html>) but that none had requested that the Chancellor consider such a waiver.

Progress continues on several fronts of the SB 1440 implementation process. Two additional Transfer model Curricula have been approved (Music and Elementary Teacher Education.) CSU campuses will be asked to evaluate them for “similarity” this month and then we will tally the “similar” designations and ask the other campuses to consider modifications to fit into the structure. CSU campuses have steadily been turning their “not similar” answers into “similar” designations so that all CSU campuses have degrees similar to at least half of the TMCs and eight campuses have found all 16 (so far evaluated) to be similar. An additional 14 disciplines are in various stages of TMC development and many of those could be completed within the month.

The 112 campuses of the Community College system have succeeded in developing 310 Transfer AA degrees so far from the approved TMCs. Their task of designing degrees is obviously more time-consuming than the CSU process of determining “similarity” but they have a lot to yet accomplish. The recently released report of their Student Success Task Force (<http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/PolicyInAction/StudentSuccessTaskForce.aspx>) points to a refocus of their mission which will include transfer preparation and may heighten interest in the STAR Act mechanisms.

Calstate Online

By now you have received several documents describing the features of the Calstate Online initiative and have access to an expanding website, <http://www.calstateonline.net/>. A series of open-forum phone call meetings is planned (March 12, 20 and 29) to further inform interested parties. While Calstate Online envisions providing coordination and some services centrally, the curriculum and programs will emanate from our campuses, similar to our Extended Education operations, and in that light, the quality and content of the offerings will remain in faculty hands.

Legislative Advocacy

Significant time in our March plenary will be devoted to legislative advocacy efforts, including resolutions on several bills and training for Senators to participate in advocacy within their own legislative districts. I have spent several days in Sacramento during the last two month interacting with legislators and their staffs on various issues, but mostly on the issue of textbooks and course materials. The Legislative Audit Committee and the Commission on Student Aid both held sessions on this topic. My lead point in all contexts has been that faculty need to continue their role in deciding on appropriate course materials and are capable of weighing student-cost issues into the matrix of quality, practicability, accessibility, and a host of other aspects that determine the choices in the education process. In spite of assurances from the bills’ authors, I cannot help but worry about the tendency of legislators to mandate rather than advise.