Reassignment Rights: An Update

We are standing at a watershed moment in time. The State of California has formally suspended the 75/25 mandate, drafted to ensure that a majority of college classes are taught by full-time faculty. While educators might continue to give lip service to this goal, it is no longer economically viable. Higher education, following in the footsteps of corporate America, is relying increasingly on non-contract labor. Like the tip of the iceberg, full-time faculty will become a small, but highly visible group, buoyed up by a huge shadow faculty of part-time teachers.

On most campuses they outnumber their contract colleagues 2:1. These are not temporary employees. These are long-term members of our faculty on whose proven skills this college depends.

Earlier this semester, the IA and the district met with interested department chairs to discuss their concerns about the implementation of reassignment rights for these long-term adjuncts. Although faculty voted to include this concept in our 2007-08 contract proposal and then voted again to ratify it as Article 12 in our last contract, it remains a difficult and potentially divisive issue. The rhetoric has been surprisingly heated.

In accordance with the terms of Article 12, most departments submitted their own rehire procedures last year. They were to be reviewed by both the IA and by the district. The IA completed their review earlier this semester, the district has yet to complete their review. As far as the IA is concerned, the remaining departments who made submissions have acceptable procedures in place. Those departments who did not craft their own rehire documents are bound by the default procedure. The IA is currently working with the district on a revision of the default procedure that outlines the basic tenets of reassignment. However, the differences in perspective between the district and the IA are substantial. It is possible that these differences will have to be resolved at the negotiating table.

If you would like to provide input on this topic, please attend the plenary session on April 23. The IA represents all faculty and we want to encourage an open dialogue on this critical issue.

Lynne Elisabeth Stark
President/SBCC Instructors’ Association
Instructors’ Association Response to Current Administrative Problems at Adult Education

Santa Barbara City College’s Continuing Education Division has gone through considerable turmoil over the last eight months. A new administration, extensive turnover in staff, budget restraints, and an apparent change in district priorities threaten to put long-standing adult education programs and their faculty at risk. Moreover, Continuing Education as an anchor of local support for SBCC may be undermined. The contraction of offerings, the shortening of terms, the disproportionate targeting or elimination of classes, and the unilateral rate increases for course offerings in the older adult program, particularly in the arts, crafts, and humanities, have provoked widespread public outcry as evident in the News-Press (2/11/10, 02/21/10), Independent (02/13/10, 02/25/10, 02/26/10) and Daily Sound (02/26/10, 03/02/10). The result has been a loss of public trust in and support for the adult education administration and mission. It is the first time in the history of this institution that the community has criticized and taken issue with what the college has done at Adult Education.

Continuing Education is the college’s most visible and direct contact with the Santa Barbara community. A loss of community support directly affects the entire college, causing distrust of its mission and a lowering of its reputation. Such a loss prompts the unwillingness of qualified and influential members of the community to serve on panels, commissions, and boards critical to the governance of the college. It diminishes contributions to the SBCC Foundation, and weakens community support for measures and bond issues that directly benefit SBCC. With alarm about the reach of such outcomes, the SBCC Instructors’ Association joins the Continuing Education Instructors’ Association in expressing its concerns to the District and Board of Trustees about the damaging impact their actions have had on community relations and on the curriculum, funding and management of the College’s Continuing Education Division. The actions of the administration have been characterized publicly as autocratic, short sighted, ill conceived, and destructive to the close ties between college and community. Recent disavowals (News-Press, 04/04/10) of District responsibility for the long-lived and well regarded Parent Child Workshops have further aggravated this situation.

The intent of the IA is not to determine culpability or cast blame, but to acknowledge the claims made by Adult Education students, Continuing Education faculty, and community members, and to help the district formulate a transparent process that is unambiguously based in shared governance. The administration has already begun to take steps in this direction. Through this consultative process, public trust can be restored and the strength and wisdom of the community can be focused to better help SBCC deal with the budget crisis and its impact on Continuing Education.

The IA recommends that the administration and Board of Trustees use the new Continuing Education Consultation Council to publicly assure Continuing Education students, faculty, and the community that the college is committed to maintaining the scale, scope, quality, and affordability of the SBCC Continuing Ed. program. We recognize the administration’s recent efforts to act in accordance with Santa Barbara City College’s Board Policy 2510 in pursuing an inclusive process to restore community trust and participation in shared governance, and expect them to further improve communication and process.

With collaborative effort, transparency, open communication, shared decision-making, and action born of extensive study, the administration can bring forth positive changes in public perception and in the plotting of new directions for Continuing Education, ones fully supported by District students, faculty, and our community.

The Instructors’ Association is ready to participate in the dialog, planning, and implementation of actions designed to improve and support the decision-making process that impacts all District teachers and students. We are ready to join the CSEA in serving with any college group whose mandate it is to support Continuing Education, improve community relations, and rebuild trust. Together we can find creative ways to preserve one of the college’s greatest, best loved, and most appreciated services to the community, its 45,000 student Adult Education program.

Mark Ferrer
Instructors’ Association

Response Continued

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