

CONVERSATION

Newsletter of the Palomar College Learning Outcomes Council

The Learning Outcomes Momentum at Palomar College

By Berta Cuaron, Assistant Superintendent/Vice President for Instruction and Co-Chair of the Learning Outcomes Council

As we all return from our summer 2005 experiences and begin the 2005-06 academic year, there is a sense of renewed energy and enthusiasm at Palomar College.

It is this renewed energy and enthusiasm that will help continue the dialog and begin to formulate the foundation for Palomar's learning outcomes process. Under the leadership of the Learning Outcomes Council and Coordinating Committee, the conversation began last year. Many faculty, staff, and administrators engaged in the healthy debate that led to a general commitment that the learning outcomes process at Palomar College will focus on improving student learning and will not simply be about compliance with the new WASC accreditation standards.

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What I Learned at School Today

By Brad Hunt, Student, Learning Outcomes Council

"So, what'd you learn at school today?" my mom will sometimes ask. She's being funny, acting as if I were in middle school, but I happily take the opportunity to torture her.

"I'm glad you asked, Mom! We did Mendelian genetics. It's fascinating! Let me get my book so I can show you some charts!"

As a community college student, and especially as an English major, most people assume that "what I learned at school today" doesn't amount to very much. Revealing that I'm a Palomar student to new acquaintances is often equivalent to announcing a sudden death in the family or admitting I've done time for armed robbery. People politely cock their heads in a sympathetic manner and furrow their brows to convey concern. "Oh, that's okay, lots of people do that! You shouldn't be ashamed, think of the money you're saving!"

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Pushing Back

by Barb Neault Kelber, Faculty and Co-Chair of the Learning Outcomes Council

This has been a tough writing assignment. I've struggled with rhetorical issues of tone and audience, self-conscious about my representative obligations as faculty co-chair of the Learning Outcomes Council and uncomfortably aware of my history of opposition to the broader Learning Outcomes movement. In addition to concerns about this ironic tension, I've encountered a more familiar problem. Like so many of my students in composition courses, I've had trouble with focus. I've thought about discussing standards-based education in general, or the dangerous aspects of new state measures for accountability in the California Community College system. I've considered a discussion of the position of the State Academic Senate on these matters, as it urges us to take local control and to assert leadership in new, authentic ways.

Each of these topics merits more consideration, as they are among the most significant professional matters of our day, and not just for faculty. Eventually, though, a question emerges from the jumble of pressing concerns, a question I've been asking for over a decade: how do we push back? How do we answer these demands with meaningful work on behalf of our students, maintaining our best ideals about their educations?

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Tentative Calendar for the Campus Explorations Project

Day-Weekly	Time	Place	Event
Wednesdays	2 – 3 p.m.	ES-19	Campus Explorations Project

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Interview with Professor James Luna, Counselor

Congratulations on your most recent award for your art. Tell us about this award and about your art.

The Venice Biennale, one of the oldest and more prestigious art events, selected for exhibition my piece Emendatio. It's a multimedia installation—video, audio, objects, and performance—dedicated to Pablo Tac, a Luiseno who in 1834 was brought from Mission San Luis Rey to Rome to study to become a missionary. The Chapel for Pablo Tac, part of Emendatio, is an installation simulating a Catholic altar. It contains both real excerpts from Tac's account of a California mission (the only one from a Native perspective) and mock-historical implements. In Rome, Tac looked around and weighed the size and power of European culture and wondered how his culture could survive. I hope my art is answering Tac's question. At the Biennale, various nations are represented at pavilions and at other venues throughout the city, and it is my privilege to represent the Museum of the American Indian at this world event. This acknowledgement has not come easy as I have been making art for exhibit for thirty years, and achieving a global audience has taken hard work, a business way of thinking, communication skills (both vocal and written) and lots of luck—being in the right place at the right time. I will tell you, though, that even if I were not successful I would still be making art. It's a way of life for me.

How can we see your art?

My web site (jamesluna.com) contains comprehensive visual examples of my work in both stills and in video and general statements about my work as well as an updated list of articles published

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Interview with Professor Vicki Ganguli, Librarian

How did life bring you to librarianship?

After a few years as a wildlife biologist in the Canadian arctic, and surviving the crash of our survey plane in my last field season, I was ready to make some big changes in my life—beginning with a return to graduate school. Although I loved biology, I was not ready to devote my professional life to its study. There was much much more to explore! Our company's research librarian, whom I first mistook for a secretary, talked to me about her education. I had secretly envied her since her job required that she be involved in all the research that was going on in our company, and I was not—and I was shocked to learn she had to have a Master's degree to call herself a librarian! But the more we talked, the more I considered librarianship an option for me. So I applied to our local library school at Dalhousie University and won a scholarship intended to encourage science majors to attend library school. I deferred library studies for one year and used my "crash money" to spend a glorious year at our local art college. After library school my first job was with the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI) in Ottawa, and I have worked at an architecture college and various community colleges since then, including Palomar, which of course I love!

In this age of marvelous electronic databases that we can access from our personal computers, what does the library as a physical structure—a brick and book setting—mean to you?

Well, you are right, those databases and pc's are marvelous. I love them. And I'm an Internet junkie too. But I feel a little defensive when asked questions like

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The Learning Outcomes Council

Membership on the Learning Outcomes Council is fluid. If you are interested in joining the Council, please contact the Office of Instruction or the Faculty Senate. Held on the first Thursday of each month, the Council's meetings are open to all.

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The Senate in Context

By Katie Townsend-
Merino, Faculty Senate
President

"Anybody can become angry - that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way—that is not within everybody's power and is not easy."

— Aristotle

How can the Faculty Senate at Palomar be most effective? To answer this question, it is important to understand the basis of Academic Senate power across the state. First, our power is explicitly mandated in Education Code (which is LAW resulting from legislation) and second, from Title 5 regulations (which are guidelines written in reaction to the law and, while these regulations are not law, they are regulations with the force of law). Understanding precisely HOW we are empowered by the state gives us greater opportunity to ACT as an empowered body.


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As we venture forward, last year’s dialog inspired a conversation and connection among faculty that many have welcomed. It is this conversation and connection among faculty that I believe will lead to the creation of a very powerful, successful process at Palomar that other sister colleges will come to envy. The conversation has not only taken us back to the essence of what we do in the classroom but has provided a new venue for faculty to share teaching strategies, assessment philosophies, and documentation practices. It is this individual and collective cross-discipline dialog among Palomar’s talented faculty that may help define processes that are flexible and respectful of academic freedom and the teaching profession.

The learning outcomes dialog has already sparked a first for Palomar College: “Campus Explorations: Ethics.” From the disciplines of Political Science to Fashion,

the topic of ethics will be threaded throughout course content discussions and learning experiences. With faculty and students in over 100 sections participating in this pilot college-wide learning community, it has the potential for many positive learning outcomes for our students. Staff and administration will also be encouraged to participate in the panel discussions, guest speaker series, and weekly seminars. This campus-wide learning community may prove to be the catalyst for increasing the understanding of the learning outcomes movement and for setting the stage for developing a process at Palomar.

Having been a faculty member and administrator in community colleges for over twenty years, I am both excited and challenged by the learning outcomes initiative. Colleges are being asked to define learning outcomes at the course, program, and college level and to

assess and provide evidence of student learning. We know the assessment and documentation exists. The evidence is both qualitative and quantitative. How we collect such information in a systematic, formalized manner is the challenge. We are committed to an open process at Palomar—the “cookie cutter” model is not the direction we will take. Creating a process that supports Palomar’s culture is the right thing to do. Faculty will continue to lead the way with the support of administration and staff. The focus will be about improving student learning. The momentum of learning outcomes is positive and invigorating at Palomar College. The expertise and engagement of faculty is essential to creating a successful process. I invite you to join us this year as we continue the dialog, debate, and development of a learning outcomes process for Palomar College. 

Colleges are assessed in a variety of ways. Newspapers, various levels of government, and the institutions themselves are deeply interested in determining the value of an education at each establishment. However, the most damning, erroneous, and widely recognized assessments come as word of mouth. It’s difficult to convince friends who attend four-year universities that I’m receiving a quality education. They drop subtle hints about the inadequacies of my college, certain of their school’s superiority. “This burrito reminds me very much of a passage from Moby Dick, which I’m sure you haven’t read. Anyway, let’s catch a movie.”

The fundamental problem is this: How does one prove the value of her/his education when the entire experience of college, the conscious and subconscious learning

process, is ultimately unquantifiable? This dilemma must always be considered when attempting to construct a formal assessment or interpret someone else’s assessment of an institution. Say, for example, that the availability of professors during office hours is factored into the quality of the experience at Palomar College. What can not be determined, quantified, and regurgitated is the quality of those office hours. I have learned much from my professors both in and out of the classroom. Not only are their doors usually open, but they indulge my questions with an unexpected degree of enthusiasm. I have appreciated lectures both from extreme liberals and conservatives, Postmodernists and Victorians, the unnervingly organized and the hopelessly cluttered. Last year I had an English professor who routinely

became so energized by our topics of discussion that he’d lean against the blackboard, conducting our conversation like the maestro of a symphony and squirming with excitement about our growing interest in English literature. And routinely he’d leave that room with the back of his shirt completely covered in chalk dust. Experiences like these led to my choice of major. Experiences like these have entirely redefined the course I will take in life. However, you won’t find a category on any formal assessment of the enduring influence of higher education entitled “Amount of Chalk on the Backs of Professors.” There is no way to evaluate the influence that the conflicting ideas and passions of professors and fellow students have on an individual’s college experience and subsequent life

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By way of an answer, it occurs to me that I ought to focus here on a couple of concrete examples indicating the nature of our college’s response thus far. In our commitment to faculty ownership of curriculum development, as well as in our plans for the Campus Explorations project, the Learning Outcomes Council intends to resist reductive trends wherever possible. In both stated commitments and careful planning, we intend to reinforce this important idea: at Palomar College our students encounter an opportunity to become more educated citizens, and our highest ideals about that opportunity should be at the center of this conversation.

The college version of standards-based education comes to us in the form of new accountability measures and accreditation standards focusing on Student Learning Outcomes. Because of legislation such as “No Child Left Behind,” and local designs such as “Bersin’s blueprint,” our K-12 system has seen a significant shift, as increasing amounts of energy and time go toward testing, assessment, and accountability. The community colleges now face some of those same potential consequences, and if we hope to push back against the most reductive possibilities, faculty expertise in discipline content and curriculum will be most critical.

The language and application of management models for efficiency and customer service come through loud and clear in the new standards adopted by the Accrediting Commission of California Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), an arm of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). These standards were adopted in spite of enormous opposition from faculty representatives up and down the state, and you can see them in their entirety at the ACCJC website. For now, consider

the following excerpt spelling out the accountability piece:

The institution engages in ongoing, systematic evaluation and integrated planning to assure currency and measure achievement of its stated student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution systematically strives to improve those outcomes and makes the results available to appropriate constituencies. (Standard II.2.f.)

This will mean different things to different people, of course, but the faculty has primary responsibility for curriculum and program development, and we should all think critically about the establishment of any “systematic” approaches to evaluation and assessment. Beyond that, we should ask who these “appropriate constituencies” will be, and we should question the underlying assumptions embedded in all of the current language of Outcomes. Our council will ask departments, disciplines, and work groups to consider these questions during the coming school year, as we move forward with our specific approach for Palomar College, foregrounding faculty expertise as the heart and soul of any conversation about student learning and measurable (or immeasurable) outcomes.

The Campus Explorations project has developed as a specific response to the idea that we should attempt to measure the immeasurable. Note the language of the accreditation standards outlining some of the “comprehensive learning outcomes” for general education:

A recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen: qualities include an appreciation of ethical principles; civility and interpersonal skills; respect for cultural

diversity; historical and aesthetic sensitivity; and the willingness to assume civic, political, and social responsibilities locally, nationally and globally. (Standard II.A.c)

I find this language somewhat chilling, and not because I think these elements of education are unimportant. Indeed, the opposite is true, and I feel compelled to resist the suggestion that we might treat these very important qualities as “measurable” outcomes, that we might claim to assess them fairly and consistently in the way that we can assess demonstrable skills. As a teacher of early American literature, I hear the words of our nation’s Founders ringing in my ears, and I worry that we risk a fundamental betrayal of the ideals of public education.

At the college level, ideas such as citizenship, ethical principles, and social responsibility should be considered in all their difficult complexity, distinct from the “citizenship” of the K-12 classroom. In a college district that includes within its boundaries both a military base and a reservation, we are obligated to approach these elements of education with care and respect, recognizing their powerful intellectual and philosophical foundations.

Given this consideration, the Learning Outcomes Council and the Faculty Senate have endorsed the Campus Explorations project, a kind of campus-wide learning community to allow for complex, interdisciplinary, academic discussions of issues and ideas like the “immeasurables” listed in the standards. First presented by Dean Pat Schwerdtfeger, the Campus Explorations project allows for the entire campus community to vote for a central theme, and this year’s inaugural topic is “ethics.” In years to come we hope to encounter some of the other


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“Pushing Back,” by Barb Neault Kelber, continued from previous page

suggestions that were contenders on our very intriguing list, topics such as human rights, peace and war, and the environment.

Campus Explorations will involve faculty in conversation with their students and the broader campus community, as we'll invite them to discuss ethics and ethical issues in relation to their disciplines and professional expertise. In this way, students will be exposed to interesting, complex discourse on this subject and others, and they'll become more aware of

the disciplinary nature of knowledge and critical thought. In terms of assessment, we will argue that we do well to assess our institutional commitment to the complex humanity of our students rather than to the reductive language of standardization. If we can say that Palomar College provides authentic opportunities for students to grow in the knowledge that they are connected to their communities, connected as citizens of the world, then perhaps the conversation about learning outcomes will have been a conversation worth having.


In addition, the Campus Explorations project and other such endeavors, whether undertaken in individual classrooms or elsewhere, will allow us to demonstrate to the accrediting commission and other “appropriate constituencies” that Palomar College recognizes its role in the education of free citizens. In doing so, we effectively push back against trends and regulations that might ask us to do otherwise. We invite you to join us, shoulders to the wheel. 

“What I Learned at School Today,” by Brad Hunt, continued from page 3

experiences. And because there is no way to evaluate the influence, the college experience doesn't get the acclaim and appreciation it deserves.

My high school counselor did not think I should go to Palomar. “You'd be crazy!” she insisted. Her eyes widened when she spoke that word-crazy-to accent the

sheer lunacy of attending a community college. “You'll be in classes next to forty-year-old single moms and the same people you went to high school with.” It turns out, I have had classes with forty-year-old single moms, and some of the people I went to high school with, and Marines, and the extremely young, and the extremely old. And even now, as I reflect on that fact, I can't even articulate the tremendous

influence those people had on my positive Palomar experience. Assessments are essential and also essentially imperfect. Whether criticisms come from a friend, a newspaper, or a regulated governmental body, they must be interpreted cautiously. “What did you learn at school today?” is difficult to answer accurately and even more complicated to translate into bar graphs and pie charts. 

Campus Explorations – Ethics: Right and Wrong and In Between

Open to the entire campus community. Students who formally enroll will receive one unit of credit

- We anticipate allowing discussion to extend to 4 p.m. if necessary, and films will be shown beginning at 3:30 p.m.
- All speakers' presentations, discussions, and films will be open to the entire campus community.
- Connected Occasions (this is the name assigned to them in the class schedule – perhaps next semester we'll call them “Bridges”) will be such offerings as panel discussions, performances, exhibitions, guest speakers, and we hope these occasions will be organized by participants as far as the details of time, location, etc.
- We've ordered one book: *Being Good: A Short Introduction to Ethics*, by Simon Blackburn, published by Oxford UP. The cost at the book store will be \$10.50

Weekly Agenda Schedule:

August 24 –

- Introduction to the project / enrollment management
- Barb Neault Kelber (Instructor of Record)

August 31 –

- Getting Started – literature and images; Critical thinking about ethical issues.
- Barb Neault Kelber

September 7 –

- “The Language of Ethics”
- Guest speaker: Michael Lockett

September 14 –

- “Ethics and the Media”
- Guest speaker(s): Wendy Nelson
Film at 3:30: *Shattered Glass* (a true story of plagiarism).
- Discussion to follow.
Perhaps this week we could also have a panel discussion or roundtable on ethics in journalism and the broader media.
- Participants: TBA

September 21 –

- “Ethics in the Classroom and Beyond”
- Guest speaker: Bill Jahnel
Panel discussion/roundtable (this can happen as part of Bill's time, or it can happen at another time and place, TBA): Peter Bowman, Judy Cater, Phil DeBarros, Tom Ventimiglia

September 28 –

- “Sexual Ethics”
- Guest speaker: Katie Townsend-Merino
- This might be a good week for a panel discussion.

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about the work. There is also an updated schedule listing upcoming exhibits, performance, and lectures. One could also do a web search to find other information about my work.

How does your art inform your counseling?

It may be the other way around. In counseling the diverse population of students that Palomar has, I've found that I am confronted with every imaginable situation, background, and dream that students have for their futures. In my art I speak not only to my life as an American Indian in American society but also to American society in large. In my art, I try to keep alive ways of being by exploring overlooked areas of various cultures. I'm interested in the emotional content of people's lives, in the complexity of people's day-to-day lives in cultural settings. And I

can't imagine a better place than a college to view cultures as they are expressed in individuals.

What's the most important work you do with students?

During the last couple of years, I have seen a marked increase in the number of students who want to major in art. All students are important, but in seeing art students I can share real life experiences as a working artist. Many art students have idealistic ideas about being an artist, so I find it important to tell them what I have found—that in addition to talent you need to be a businessperson and a communicator. For example, I ask them directly, "What kind of career are you considering if you are majoring in studio arts? It usually goes quiet as they had not thought of this, and I can tell you as

an art major that I didn't either. I point out to them that they can do another gig in the art world and thereby support their art habits.

What do you want students to gain from your meetings with them?

It is not my intent to rain on anyone's future plans, but I feel I can give them the best possible information for them to begin to research and assess their interests and take classes that will either confirm these interests or get them to look at the bigger picture. I mean, majoring in a given field does not always guarantee the graduate a career in that field. But what do I emphasize? I always ask students, "Wouldn't it be great to wake up each morning and look forward to going to work at something you enjoy and make a comfortable living from?"

Campus Explorations, Weekly Agenda Schedule, continued:

October 5 –

- "Reflections on Ethics and Religiosity in Tartuffe"
- Guest speaker: Michael Mufson
- During this week, a performance of the play, Tartuffe, will be offered for our consideration.
- Also, this will be Comet Week, so we'll partner again with the ASG for the second annual Free Speech Rally at Noon on the Student Center Patio. The seminar class will revisit this topic in later weeks.
- We'll be looking for volunteers to help with the rally...how about you?

October 12 –

- Continuing reflections on comedy and drama. "Ethics, Religion, and Politics in Arthur Miller's The Crucible."
- Barb Neault Kelber and panel participants?
- Film at 3:30: The Crucible (discussion will follow)

October 19 –

- "Focus on the Founders: Ethics and the Constitution"
- Guest Speaker(s): TBA

October 26 –

- Possible Topic – Ethics and the Sciences in Public Education
- Guest Speaker(s): Candi Francis
- Panel Discussion on Evolution and Creationism, perhaps on bio-medical ethics? or something else?

November 2 –

- Business Ethics
- Guest Speaker(s): Bonnie Dowd
- Film at 3:30 – The Insider (discussion will follow)

November 9 –

- Environmental Ethics
- Guest Speaker(s): Teresa Laughlin
- Panel discussion?
- Caring for the Arboretum?

November 16 –

- "Transformative Ethics – Thinking about How we Think"
- Guest speaker: William Leslie
- Film at 3:30 – The Long Walk Home (discussion will follow)

November 23 (day before Thanksgiving)

- Topic?
- How about "Reflections on Ethics and Thanksgiving: Our Complicated History"?
- Guest speaker(s):? Multicultural studies folks? American Indian Studies?

November 30 –

- Opening our Eyes to the World. Ethics from a Global Perspective. "International Volunteer Work in Dharamsala, India."
- Guest Speaker: Cristina Tejeda

December 7 –

- "Improvising Ethics"
- Guest Speaker: Michael Mufson (and students)

December 14 –

- Topic?
- How about "The Ethics of Celebration: Thinking Outside 'the Holidays'"?
- Guest speakers: Community Members whose work is to combat poverty and homelessness.

PLEASE NOTE: this leaves lots of "areas" and disciplines outside of our focus, but that might be a necessary fact of time constraints for this first time out. We can cover a lot of those areas, perhaps, in our plans for the Spring Semester program and with Connected Occasions. What are your thoughts?

this because many people think that the internet is offering the same as books and it doesn't, not yet. And computers and online instructions aren't yet the same as having an expert sit down with you and walk you through your research, step by step, and show you how to be a knowledgeable consumer of information. Those two reasons are, in a nutshell, why I believe a physical structure to bring it all together is so important. But for community colleges, these factors aren't just important; they're critical. Our students need experts who love to teach, quality equipment, the right online and print resources, as well as that less tangible service: an environment for the culture of learning. Many of our students don't have easy access to computers off-campus, and even if they do, their home environment is not always conducive to learning. There are also students who are financially well off but who are "information-impooverished" and whose online research starts and ends with the Internet. They all need to be able to come to a place where they can absorb both the information we offer and be immersed in the learning culture which exists here.

To your mind, how can you as a librarian be most useful and influential to students?

As a librarian at a community college, I try to pass along my own love for information gathering, while being enthusiastic about their own research topics. I need to be open-minded and non-judgmental while I am working with students, and make sure they know the difference between an objective and subjective approach to learning, and how to rate the quality of information that they've retrieved. This starts the students on the road to what we call "information competency".

So many students approach bibliographic research with trepidation and fear that sometimes what they need is reassurance that someone will stand by them and see it through to the end with them. That is also part of the culture of learning here at a community college - students need a sense of security, a calm, encouraging environment to be able to grow and learn - and a sense of excitement too! Helping to provide that is a big part of my job.

Lastly, it's important for students to know that being good information consumers doesn't start and stop with their college education, but they need that skill as lifelong learners and as full participants in a democratic society. This would be the longest-term goal that I try to pass along to students.

Do you typically get to see the results of your good work with students?

I certainly do, by their immediate words of appreciation and their sense of relief or exhilaration. We also ask for written feedback periodically after giving library orientations to class groups. And, of course, the faculty whose classes we instruct are, overall, quite grateful and even pick up a few pointers to help them in their own research. What many of us would love is to have more dialogue with faculty, even constructive criticism! How do they think we are doing with their class? Are there some issues or concepts that need more clarification with their students? Once the research papers are turned in for grading, is there a pattern of missing information, a lack of quality in their information sources? More interaction with faculty will help us to continue to fine-tune our library instruction, perhaps adding new modules or changing our emphasis for the students' benefit. We all want the students to excel and will do what needs to be done to make that happen.

When you gave my students a library tour--and it was splendid, by the way - you emphasized that libraries give us access to wisdom. Then you added, "And that's what we all want, isn't it - to become wise?" Do you think most of our students have wisdom on their minds? Maybe another way of asking the question is, Do you think most of our students know that they want to become wise?

Of course, I sometimes tire of giving a monologue and want to prod the students to speak, even if it's to argue. Perhaps some would be provoked into asking themselves that question, but I don't really think many of them are interested in the whole issue of wisdom right now! I think they feel the need to get through the assignment, the class, college and get a job, period. That's where their pressure is. I believe as they age, attaining wisdom will become more important to them, though.

The progression from information to knowledge to wisdom is really what I am talking about, and teachers and librarians are ultimately pointing students in that direction. I do believe as knowledge increases in our personal and professional lives, and we then reflect upon and "cross-reference" that knowledge, we will be ever closer to attaining wisdom! To conduct ourselves well in our personal lives and reach our full potential, to lead our children, to contribute meaningfully in our communities and at our workplace, and finally to engage with other citizens of the world as freethinking democratic individuals - we surely must aspire to be wise. ♪

That is, while we have legal authority, we must be vigilant in enforcing our authority. As is often stated at statewide Academic Senate institutes, IT MAY BE THE LAW, BUT IT IS UP TO YOU.

What legal authority do we really have? Ed Code § 70902 (b)(7) gives us the right to participate effectively in governance by stating that “The Governing Board shall . . . ensure . . . the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendation in the areas of curriculum and academic standards.” Title 5 § 53200 further defines academic senates in this way:

(B) Academic Senate means an organization whose primary function is to make recommendations with respect to academic and professional matters.

(C) Academic and Professional matters means the following policy development and implementation matters:

1. Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites.
2. Degree and certificate requirements.
3. Grading policies.
4. Educational program development.
5. Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success.
6. College governance structures, as related to faculty roles.
7. Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes.
8. Policies for faculty professional development activities.
9. Processes for program review.
10. Processes for institutional planning and budget development.
11. Faculty Hiring Policy and Faculty Hiring Procedures.
(This is specific to Palomar)
12. Other academic and professional matters as mutually agreed upon.

Under this same Title 5 regulation, the district is required to CONSULT COLLEGIALLY with the senate on Academic and Professional matters, and in our case, the Palomar Governing Board is required to RELY PRIMARILY UPON (this means that our recommendation will normally be accepted by the board except for compelling reasons, based on a clear and substantive rationale, which must be provided IN WRITING to the senate) in the above matters. Further, it is Title 5 that provides that

(F) Appointment of faculty members to college committees shall be made by the Academic Senate .

This provision is important; the only other body that can appoint members to college committees is the Palomar Faculty Federation.

Finally, it is Ed Code that gives us any say regarding tenure evaluation procedures: “The faculty’s exclusive representative shall consult with the academic senate prior to engaging in collective bargaining regarding those procedures.” We also are empowered by the same sections regarding waivers of minimum qualifications and equivalency, hiring criteria, administrative retreat rights (policies developed jointly with administration), minimum degree requirements, evaluation procedures (association consults with senate), and faculty service areas (association consults with senate).

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OKAY, SO WHAT? To me this much is clear: The faculty is best served by a strong senate and a strong union who work together in their areas of mutual responsibility and who respect the roles and responsibilities of the other body,

understanding that we both represent the same faculty.

Our Faculty Senate, while having a strong basis in law and regulation, works only if we CHOOSE to use the tools it offers us. Participating on the senate and on college committees demonstrates a desire to MAKE shared governance work. (Interestingly, that phrase is never seen in Ed Code or Title 5). There is much we CAN make our own.

But to the dismay of some (and sometimes all), there is, as yet, no “Title 5 and Ed Code Violators Prison.” We have only the knowledge of our rights combined with a strong, unified voice of opposition when we feel our powers are abrogated.

After my many years at Palomar, I have only recently become aware of the legal and historical context of our senate. This knowledge has been most helpful in guiding me, and I am grateful to the statewide Academic Senate for both its outstanding website, <http://www.academicssenate.cc.ca.us/index.htm>, and training it has provided. I know that this information is dry, but I have found it enlightening to be able to identify what gives the senate its power. I hope you do as well.

“Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.”

–Samuel Johnson

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