

CONVERSATION

Newsletter of the Palomar College Learning Outcomes Council

How to Cook an Easter Ham

Teresa Laughlin, Faculty, Learning Outcomes Council

Years ago, I heard a story that is apropos of education. Four generations of women are preparing a meal for Easter dinner. The daughter, mother, and grandmother are in the kitchen putting a ham in the oven; the great-grandmother is in the living room resting. The daughter asks her mother, "Why do you cut the ends off of the ham before you put it in the oven?" Her mother replies, "It is the way my mother has always done it. I think it has something to do with the way the meat cooks. It is the correct way of baking a ham." The daughter then goes over to her grandmother and asks her why one should cut the ends off the ham before baking it. The grandmother says that it is the way her mother always did it, so it must be the right way to cook a ham. Not satisfied with either of these responses, the daughter goes to her great-grandmother in the living room and asks about ham preparation. At first the great-grandmother seems puzzled by the question, but then exclaims, "Oh dear, when your grandmother was a young girl, we lived in a small, efficiency apartment in the city. In this apartment we had a very small oven. I had to cut off the ends of the ham so it would fit in the oven." Although it was the time-honored way of preparing ham, there

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I Believe

Melissa Marquez, Student, Learning Outcomes Council

For as long as I can remember, attending college was all I ever wanted to do. Going to college was the only way I could gain that single piece of paper that was supposed to open my life to a world of endless possibilities—or so I had been told. It had been twenty years since I had last attended school when I made the decision to attend Palomar. When asked why I wanted to put myself through school at my age, I answered that I just wanted to get a degree so I could change careers. I wanted to learn whatever it was I had to learn in order to get that piece of paper. I had no idea what I would learn, nor did I have any expectations of any of the classes I was to take. But I have been so surprised by how much I have learned and how much my world views and interests have changed because of my college experience so far.

Going through the process of getting that career changing degree, I discovered I had more interests—in everything—than I ever knew I had. I originally wanted to go into television production and enjoyed a full semester of classes geared toward that goal, but one of the classes I took that semester was a film class. In that class I discovered that there was more to film and filmmaking

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The Power of Assembly

by Katie Townsend-Merino, Faculty Senate President

Lately, in my roles as Faculty Senate President, Department Chair, and online professor, I have spent an increasing amount of time in front of the computer. I write e-mails to communicate with my students, the faculty in my department, and to you, the faculty of Palomar College. I read e-mails from my students, from the faculty of Palomar, from the administration at Palomar, and from the Statewide Academic Senate. While I often feel connected during these exchanges, I believe that the group meeting is not yet anachronistic. The senate experience has instilled in me a strong belief in the importance and power of the group, the power of the meeting, the power of assembly. E-mails and websites are not a substitute for community.

The time I spend in physical proximity to my colleagues is the time I spend feeling most alive, most intellectually stimulated, and most empowered. I have just returned, with members of our local senate, from a Statewide Academic Senate meeting. With several hundred colleagues, gathering because we share a common educational and legislative agenda, we have received information, discussed issues of import to community college faculty, and hotly debated resolutions. I participated in presenting several breakout sessions designed to empower and strengthen local senates. I attended a breakout session on the status of nursing education that affirmed the decision of the senate and PFF to support increasing our nursing program in the right way (by hiring full time tenure track faculty). I had FUN with people. As a group we left feeling a part of something bigger than ourselves: continued on page 4

Campus Explorations – Ethics

A Campus-wide Project of the Learning Outcomes Council
Spring Semester Weekly Seminar Meeting Schedule

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

(Students who formally enroll will receive one unit of credit.)

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Interview with Michelle Barton, Director, Institutional Research & Planning

Institutional research offices are central to the work of colleges and universities, yet they remain relatively invisible to many in academia. Will you briefly describe the nature of institutional research, its scope and purpose?

In general, institutional research provides a college or university with information about its students, programs, and effectiveness. However, the purpose and functions of an institutional research office vary across institutions. At Palomar, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IR&P) is responsible for five functions: strategic planning, institutional research, internal and external reporting, matriculation research support, and data integrity. To perform these functions, we partner with faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

There's a tendency for people to think that your office deals only in quantitative data, but much of the data you collect and analyze is qualitative, right?

Yes, my office collects and analyzes both quantitative and qualitative data. For example, last semester we provided research support for the Technology Master Plan Task Force. We helped the task force conduct "focus groups" with college employees to assess how the campus community accesses, uses, and evaluates technology.

However, there is a difference between collecting qualitative data and performing qualitative research (i.e., implementing qualitative research methods). Within educational and institutional research, individuals perform qualitative research as well as collect qualitative data. For example, I have provided support for a faculty member using a case study methodology to assess the impact of technology on classes.

Before moving to the next question, I want to

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Interview with Professor Mark Bealo, Graphic Communications

What was your path to Palomar College?

I wasn't quite sure what degree program I wanted to pursue out of high school, so I decided to enroll at Palomar and see what areas might catch my interest. I originally thought that a career in Marine Biology or Oceanography might be appealing. I also have a love for the ocean and was fascinated by the variety of life along our coastlines. I figured that working at Sea World or Scripps Institute would make for a fun and exciting career. I was also interested in Mechanical Engineering at the time. I enrolled in classes that were applicable to all those areas but still would fulfill part of the lower division requirements just in case I changed my educational focus later. After racking up a number of units in all those areas, I realized none of them were the path for me. I had thought that I would end up designing high performance engines or working on aerodynamic bodies for vehicles or water dynamic hulls for ships and yachts. That just didn't seem like a very beneficial endeavor in trying to make the world a better place to live. I was also becoming very involved in church and wanted to make a positive impact in the world around me. Expensive vehicles or playing with animals didn't seem like the best use of my time and efforts. I did gain an amazing amount of knowledge in all of those varied areas, and am thankful for those instructors who made that educational journey an interesting and enriching one.

Where and how were you educated and trained?

My educational career became more focused after a discussion I had with an old friend from high school. Ken Block and I had often talked about wanting to make T-shirts and sell them through surf and skate shops and similar life style stores. We asked our former ROP instructors at Orange Glen if they knew where we could take classes for that kind of thing. That brought me to the Graphic Communications department here at

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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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How Faculty Unions Can Improve the Quality of Education

By Roger Morrissette,
Faculty, Palomar Faculty
Federation
Executive Officer

Nearly all political candidates claim to support improving the quality of the education system. That's what they say to get elected. Once they are in office and have to deal with multiple costly issues and an unbalanced budget, many tend to see the education budget as a big gorilla - a very big and costly gorilla. Short-sighted politicians may try to control the gorilla by reducing the budget. The latest business model trend in education attempts to control education spending by making the employees more productive. The squeeze is then put on teachers at all levels. That business model for education might work if you had an industry with many excesses and many areas of wasteful spending. The truth is that education funding has been slashed for so many years that we are functioning at a bare bones level now. Forcing increases in productivity from a

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really was no good reason to cut the ends off.


This story comes to mind when I think of the current Learning Outcomes initiative. One aspect of the initiative is the outcomes-assessment loop some call the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Cycle (SLOAC). We teachers all do this cycle constantly. We decide what we want our students to get out of the activity, class, discipline, or program, we figure out a way to convey the material, and then we use some technique to determine whether our students "got it." Discussion of this process goes on in the corridors and in department meetings all over Palomar College. Documenting this process, in a systematic way, is the challenge of the Learning Outcomes Council.

I have been teaching economics for almost twenty years. During that time I have created

activities, games, songs, and lectures that are my favorites. So when I started systematically assessing whether my students were benefiting from my repertoire, I was scared. I started out thinking about the five or six things that I want my students to learn when the class is over. Although calculating elasticity coefficients is fascinating, I went with more general things that they could use in their future academic, social, and career situations.

Once I determined what I wanted my students to take with them from my class, I proceed with the activities, games, songs, and lectures from my repertoire. The simplest way to determine whether my students were learning would be through a test; however, as any teacher knows, there are many more methods of assessment than merely testing to determine if our efforts are having the desired effect. To check for student engagement, I see if they are laughing

at my jokes. I listen to the types of questions my students are asking or notice whether they are even asking questions. I may ask students for an immediate, anonymous assessment of a particular activity. Like judges with obscenity, teachers know understanding when we see it.

To my delight, many of my old standards continue to stand the test of the SLOAC; however, to close the loop, I reflect on the value of my activities, games, songs, and lectures continuously. I discuss my triumphs and tragedies in the classroom with my colleagues as they do with me. We share the things that seem to work, particularly for the difficult concepts that baffle our students, knowing that every class is different. We determine which of our activities are effective, which enhance student learning, and which are just chopped down hams. 

than I had ever imagined. My interests shifted again, and I wanted to learn more about film to possibly work in documentary filmmaking. I was feeling a bit wishy-washy, and I decided I had to settle on something, so film it was.

After settling on film as a major, I then went about taking the classes required to transfer to a film school, but another change came along when I took a history class with Dr. Dudik and I realized I really enjoyed learning about history. History came alive to me as I sat in Dr. Dudik's class, but I continued my journey for that film degree. Dr. Dudik supported my goal of filmmaking and encouraged me by constantly giving me newspaper stories and letting me know when she thought a book or a person's story would make a great movie. I really began to believe I could connect my two interests. I worked hard to learn more about history by taking every class Dr. Dudik was teaching so that I could gain more film ideas based on stories from history.

As I finished my last required history class, I was torn between taking the WWII class taught by Dr. Dudik just for interest and another class required for transfer. I signed up happily for

the WWII class and attended every Saturday morning eager to learn. The curriculum and the experience of the class itself changed me inside as a person on levels that I am still not able to fully express in words. I learned more about myself in that class than in any other class I have ever taken. I learned that the experiences of soldiers should be told no matter which war they fought in, and I grew to feel something for the boys in Iraq for the first time. I shared time with people who experienced WWII first hand, I shook their hands, and I cried listening to their stories, their losses, and their triumphs. I began to realize that I had to do whatever needed to be done in order to have the chance to tell the stories of history for the rest of my life.

After four years of classes, off and on, I have really, finally, settled on a major. I am a history major with the goal of teaching history at the college level. I have become more motivated to finish school than ever before, and I look forward to a future of teaching about the past. I never realized taking classes would open up interests within me I never knew were there. Now that I know how college can change the direction of a student's life plan, I can also

see how all of the classes associated with GE requirements are necessary in order for that direction to be realized. I can also see how a student needs to be able to bounce from one direction to another in order to find the path that is her or his path.

When I first came back to school, I asked myself often why I needed to take math or science to be a film major. I know now that the why is easily answered in that those required classes create the journey to self discovery. I would never have taken a history class had it not been required because I did not like history when I was in school while young, but because I had to take the classes, a love for history and a desire to know more was able to grow within me. I also learned that all of the classes are connected to each other. Some are more directly connected than others, but in order to understand the concepts presented in one subject or to be able to do the work in those classes you have to have an understanding of the concepts of the other subjects. I have learned that math, science, psychology, statistics, and even health are all related to history in some way, whether in a large or small way, but still related.

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we see ourselves as part of a community of faculty representatives. I see, clearly, how much better off we are at Palomar than some colleges are right now. (Other faculty are being told that they cannot participate in site visits for their new presidential hires.) And I see other areas (i.e., our faculty hiring prioritization process) where we should use our faculty right to participate in decision making more effectively.

I feel similarly invigorated when I spend time with colleagues in both my department and discipline. I love to discuss pedagogy with faculty who teach in the same discipline as I do. By trading both effective teaching ideas and sharing stories of triumph (and defeat), we don't feel so isolated and alone; we belong to a community of psychology teachers. Teaching can be a lonely job if you haven't noticed. It can be a solitary pursuit, and we are now making the time to spend physical space with one another, sharing our common interest in the education of our psychology students. Spending time having fun (fun is vastly underrated) with those with whom I work can mediate tension when there are inevitable disputes.

Serving on shared governance committees enlarges the community. We are, at that time, a community who has the common overarching goal of serving student needs. Most folks, most of the time, try hard to see how the decisions we make affect the larger college community, including students, faculty, and staff. My understanding of this larger picture at Palomar has been informed by participation on committees with articulate members of other constituent groups. I thank them for this part of my education.

When any group of us works together for any length of time, we will eventually find an issue upon which we disagree. Most often, but not always, we can discuss our way to a resolution that meets mutual needs. When this discussion occurs during assembly, a gathering together of the community, everyone gets heard equally, and everyone has a right to hear the same argument from the same person and to hear how the argument was actually said. (The non-verbal portion of the communication fails in e-mail; hence we use 😊 and ☹️.) Everyone has a right to change their mind because they heard a new argument. Harmony, while

nice, is not a requirement for assembly to be powerful. It is powerful, in part, when such assembly occurs in an attempt to decentralize power and share decision-making. Some of the most contentious shared governance meetings I have attended are also the most empowering. In my opinion, the best leaders do so by sharing their power.

As a Catholic atheist, I miss the gathering (clearly, in my case, not the dogma) on a regular basis of human beings with a common purpose. I, most often, find serving with our senate "assembly of faculty" with a common purpose a great pleasure and an honor. Thus, I exhort you to assemble. Participate in the life of the college. Be involved on campus. You can assemble to effect change and find community in many ways: on the senate, in the union, on a committee, as a faculty club advisor, at department meetings and parties. Come to Campus Explorations lectures, participate in any number of film series, or go to professional development activities. Get out of your chair. Leave your computer, and gather with others.



Interview with Michelle Barton, continued from page 2

go back to how you framed this question. This is an interesting question because you framed it at the data level rather than at the level of research and methodology. I often hear people talk about quantitative and qualitative data as if they are distinct. After all, quantitative data are numbers and qualitative data are words, right?

In research, the distinction between quantitative data and qualitative data is often blurred. All qualitative data can be summarized quantitatively, and all quantitative data are based on underlying qualitative judgments. Ultimately, it doesn't matter how one thinks about or views qualitative and quantitative data; to do good research, you must collect both.

What drew you to this line of work? And, in particular, what drew you to academia?

I am not sure if I was drawn to this line of work. Seriously, who aspires to be an institutional researcher? However, I enjoy what I do. I work in the field of inquiry. I love to ask questions and try to answer them using sound research approaches. Further, the results of research often lead to another question to be answered.

As a graduate student, I was fortunate to work for Dr. Plotnik at San Diego State University (SDSU) and teach Introductory Psychology. Also, I was fortunate to work for Dr. Jones and conduct research in the area of feedback and goal setting. I loved the academic environment. Prior to coming to Palomar, when asked what my favorite job was, I always responded that it was when I had the opportunity to work at SDSU. What better place to do research than on a college campus? What better people to do this research in service to than students?

I've been fortunate on two occasions to hear you speak on the Student Engagement Survey. How do you hope this college will use the survey's findings?


In spring 2004, Palomar administered the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) as part of our ongoing strategic planning process. We administered this questionnaire in order to assess our students' involvement in their education. Many student surveys include questions that address satisfaction with services and instruction. The information collected from these surveys is good. However, a lot of research exists on the impact of student engagement on student success. We wanted to learn how our students engage in activities related to their education, not just whether or not they are satisfied.

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"I Believe," Melissa Marquez, continued from page 3

What I wanted to learn in college and what I have learned is so far removed from each other that what I actually learned caught me by surprise. I think that what I have learned is exactly what a college student is supposed to learn, that everything is related and the only way to self-discovery is by taking the journey and paying attention along the way. I

learned that the piece of paper I desired was only a small part of what I would gain by my college experience. As students, in order to gain all that is available through the college experience, we have to be open to the changes happening within us and remain focused on achieving the goal of realizing the best course to take for a happy and successful future. I

believe that if people graduate from college feeling as though they have discovered their true interests, learned something beyond the subjects themselves, and have created goals for success and achieved them, then college has done its job. 

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.

- o All speakers' presentations, discussions and films will be open to the entire campus community.
- Please encourage your students to attend any of these sessions that seem appropriate to your subject.
- o **Connected Occasions** will be offerings such 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.

A SINCERE THANK-YOU To Everyone Who Responded To Our Call For Volunteers
To Interact With Our Students In This Interdisciplinary Project!

Weekly Agenda Schedule:

Please note: we're still looking for volunteers to [plan Connected Occasions](#) ([view and discuss a film](#), [sponsor a guest on campus](#), [offer a performance or exhibit](#)).

January 18 – Introduction to the project /
enrollment management
Barb Neault Kelber (Instructor of Record)

**January 25 – Getting Started...PLEASE
CONSIDER BRINGING YOUR STUDENTS!
"Ethics: Understanding Students' Worlds"
This session will frame an approach for a series
of Student Forums on the College Experience
(schedule, TBA).**

Faculty,
Learning Outcomes Coordinating Committee
Brent Gowen, Barb Neault Kelber,
Teresa Laughlin, Deborah Paes de Barros,
Lori Waite

February 1 – "Ethics and Language"
R. Dillon Emerick, Philosophy

**February 8 – "Developing Moral
Responsibility among Teachers"**
Kathy Grove, Sociology

Connected Occasion (to begin sometime that week)
"Palomar Reads: To Kill a Mockingbird"
Barb Neault Kelber, Facilitator

**February 15 – "Ethics: Truth, Lying,
Honesty"**
Virginia Shabatay, English

February 22 – "Police Ethics"
Morgan Peterson, Administration of Justice

**March 1 – "Ethics: Evolution, Religion, and
the Study of Science"**
Phil de Barros, Anthropology

**March 8 – "Ethics and the Power of
Rhetoric"**
Laurie Masten, Speech Communications

Connected Occasion
**March 9 – Performance of The Magic Fire,
4 p.m., Brubeck theatre, discussion following.**
Pat Larmer, Director, Performing Arts

**March 15 – "Look Who's Talking:
Ethics and the Students' Perspective"**
The Telescope staff

March 22 – Spring Break

**March 29 – "Research Ethics: Methodology
and Practice"**
Fred Rose, Psychology

**April 5 – "Ethics and Corporate Social
Responsibility"**
Mary Cassoni, Business

April 12 – "Ethics and the Politics of Race"
Rafiki Jenkins, English

April 19 – "Ethics and Religion"
Panel discussion

April 26 – "Ethics: Confronting Poverty"
Teresa Laughlin will organize an
interdisciplinary panel

Connected Occasion
April 27 – Thursday
Performance of *Necessary Targets*,
4 p.m., Brubeck Theatre, discussion following.


May 3 – "Ethics and the Idea of War"
Peter Bowman, Political Science

Connected Occasion
May 9 – Tuesday –Film,
To Kill a Mockingbird, Bob Shepard,
Film Studies, Introduction to the film.
Viewing; Discussion; Interdisciplinary
panel???

May 10 – "Ethics and Media Issues"
Department of Communications

May 17 – Celebrate!

Please Note – the schedule is subject to change.
Feel free to get involved, to offer suggestions,
or to get updates:

Contact the Learning Outcomes Council
Barb Neault Kelber – Call x2402 or
e-mail bkeller@palomar.edu 

One of my favorite questions on the CCSSE asks students how many times they revise a paper before turning it in. Other questions address the amount of time students spend studying, how they interact with faculty and other students, the skills that they use in their studies, and the support services that they value and access.

We collected a lot of rich and valuable information. I am hopeful that the college will use the findings from this survey as part of a comprehensive effort to address first-time student persistence (i.e., the percentage of first-time students who come back for their second semester). Also, I am hopeful that the college will use the findings to help us shape how we interpret and frame our efforts to assess Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

Finally, as the accreditation standards emphasize ongoing evaluation, I would like to administer the survey again. This would allow us to monitor changes in student engagement and involvement over time.

To your mind, what's the most useful data your office provides?

The most useful data that my office provides is information that answers a question related to students and their success. For example, many years ago members of the Athletic department wanted to know how well Palomar athletes were doing in their classes. We were able to provide some information that helped them answer this question. We continue to

complete our Athlete Tracking Study every few years. Specifically, we track student athlete persistence, academic performance, and completion. Based on the results of these studies, the Athletic department has implemented several initiatives to help their students successfully complete their educational goals at Palomar.

Your office is heavily involved in the Learning Outcomes initiative at Palomar. How will the work you're doing with Outcomes fuel the college's accreditation process?


We hope that the work we are doing with Outcomes not only fuels the college's accreditation process, but provides valuable information and promotes continued dialogue around teaching and learning.

The accreditation standards approved by WASC in 2002 changed the accreditation process. The process no longer starts one to two years before a scheduled site visit. Further, it doesn't end as the accreditation visiting team walks out the door. The process is now one of ongoing dialogue, planning, assessment, and reflection about what we do to provide the best possible teaching and learning environment for our students.

My office is committed to supporting our faculty as they lead the effort to assess Student Learning Outcomes. This may involve providing research and analysis support as well as offering examples of

how others address assessment and SLOs. Also, it will likely include organizing and presenting information related to Palomar's SLO assessment process. The accreditation standards are clear; a community college must assess Student Learning Outcomes at the course, program, and institutional level. However, the accreditation standards do not direct or define how an institution shall do this.

By traditional measures of performance, community colleges often appear unsuccessful to policy makers and the general public, particularly when assumptions about student performance are based on the outcomes at selective, four-year institutions. How should we community college educators answer these critics?

I am not sure if one can ever fully answer the question of a critic. As a result of the efforts of community colleges to assess Student Learning Outcomes, I would hope that we could better position ourselves to describe what we do well. The assessment of student learning is not about filling in bubbles or checking off boxes; it is about authentically assessing, documenting, and discussing what we do in some systematic way. I know the word systematic is worrisome. However, if we can show that we continually reflect upon and discuss student learning outcomes, then we will have quite a bit of information to respond to the critics. 

Palomar, an area of the campus where I had no idea what students and teachers did. The printing industry was going through a radical change at that time due to the advancement of technology. We went from doing everything by hand with light tables and graphic arts cameras to using Apple's little Mac Classic with programs like Adobe's Illustrator 88 and Photoshop 1.2 for all of our design work. I had already been at Palomar for three and a half years and had no idea of the wealth of training that I was about to receive over an extended stay in the Graphic Communications department. I continued on with various graphics classes while also finishing up my degree requirements, while Ken turned his focus to printing shirts and eventually starting Droors Clothing Company along with another Palomar Student. Droors eventually became known as DC Shoes and recently was sold to Quicksilver for somewhere around \$120 million. (I just like to include that bit of information because I really like success stories about Palomar students, especially those from Graphic Communications.)

I earned my first AA in General Education in 1990, but stayed at Palomar to earn a Graphic Communications AA in Screen printing. The department seemed to keep coming up with new courses every year, so I kept registering for different classes. I eventually earned other degrees in Electronic Publishing, Graphic Communication Production, and Graphic Communications Management. I was working as a graphic designer at an advertising firm in Rancho Bernardo while also taking classes a couple of times a week. I was looking forward to transferring to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to continue with graphics but another discussion with a friend who was already in that program changed my focus yet again. My friend Angela had gone through Palomar's GC program and was almost ready to graduate from SLO. She told me that she had gained more hands on experience while at Palomar but was happy to be receiving the Bachelor's that would help her advance in her career. I wanted to learn how to do more in order to eventually run my own company, so after that conversation I finally knew what direction I needed to continue in.

After earning a whopping ten AA degrees at Palomar [General Education, Mathematics, Economics, Business Administration, Public Administration, and Liberal Arts and Sciences in addition to the others mentioned], I enrolled in CSU San Marcos' Business Administration program. A month after leaving Palomar, Neil Bruington asked me to consider coming back to the GC department to teach a summer screen printing class. That began my adjunct faculty career in graphics. I went from teaching screen printing to instructing classes in illustration, digital imaging, and video editing while a part timer at Palomar and Mira Costa. I eventually added web page layout, multi-media, visual effects, and compositing in addition to other courses once I became a full time faculty member here. Since 1997 I have taught fourteen different GC sections. I finished my Business degree at CSUSM in 2000 as part of the top team in the Senior Experience program. It was definitely a high point in my college education. I never received straight A's till finally applying myself at Palomar and taking four hours a day to study in the library. The diligence continued to pay off at CSUSM.

Have you worked in business or industry?

As I stated, I was a graphic designer for a firm in RB for a while. I eventually started my own business creating graphics and producing videos on a part time basis in addition to teaching. That still keeps me fairly busy outside of the college and allows me to keep current with technology and tools of the trade. I guess part of being current means that I usually end up bringing my own equipment into the classroom for students to use. The college often does not have the money to purchase quality gear for student use, so I try to make up the difference when possible. I also am asked to be a consultant or advisor on a regular basis due to my ties with industry. That is always an enjoyable experience. You just come in for a short time to help the client get focused and productive once again; then it's back to your own work. Sweet deal that one.

I assume that for professors in Graphics

Communications, it's important to stay current with the tendencies and trends, the wants and needs of the private sector. Is that so? What do you think is the ideal relationship between academia and the private sector?

We teach a ton of software applications in our department. Many of the programs are updated on a yearly basis. Some get replaced by a competitor's product that does a better or more efficient job for members in a given industry. It would almost be impossible for Graphic Communications instructors to be relevant to the needs of industry if we did not have a continuous dialog with industry personnel or were not keeping in tune with technology advances and trends. That is why I am often away at a trade show, getting certified in another application, or catching up on reading the various books and trade publications that are relevant to the areas that I teach.

Trade shows are a great source to find the contacts that will help us keep the cost down on software, hardware, and equipment. Once you have established a relationship with the individual who understands the needs of educational institutions, then you have a better chance of getting at least some of the items that your department needs to better serve our students.

We teach technology. And technology can get quite expensive. Our suppliers need to understand that our students will often end up using their products in the future. If the supplier can get us what we need at a price that will work within an extremely constrained budget, then both parties will benefit over the long haul. But we don't just take our cues from what the suppliers come up with. We have advisory committees that help ensure that what we are teaching in Graphic Communications is both relevant and helps fulfill the needs in the community. These advisory groups are made up of local business people, other instructors (secondary and higher Ed.), administrators, and professionals in the various fields that our department covers - web, print, and multimedia production.


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work force that is overworked and underpaid breeds resentment and ultimately creates a reduction in productivity. Good teachers leave the system or become less motivated to do the best for their students, and the quality of education wanes.

What if politicians saw the education budget not as a big gorilla but instead as a starving monkey - a small, starving, dying monkey? Because that is what it is. What if someone could show them that spending more on education would increase the quality of education? I know, it is a wild, crazy concept, but it just might work. What if K-12 got money for the arts and sciences and after school sports, music, or education programs? What if Sacramento gave the community colleges more money? Let's take a moment and dream for awhile. More money would mean more full-time teachers to strengthen all disciplines and increase the opportunities for

part-time faculty. More money would mean having classrooms with new carpets, new drapes, new furniture, and functioning data projectors. The classrooms would be clean, welcoming, and fully functional. More money would mean expanding our libraries and our support services for all students. More money would mean increased salaries for all faculty and staff, protected benefits, compensation for all work-related duties, travel funds, and dues for professional organizations. A well compensated and supported workforce will lead to improved quality of education.

Believe it or not, there are people working right next to you that are fighting to make that dream a reality. It is an enormous battle. Your faculty unions take on this fight for you whether you join them or not. They always can use your help. Whether it is your very own Palomar Faculty Federation (PFF) working with the district for better working

conditions at the local level, or the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) working to fight those in Sacramento that are trying to reduce spending on education, or the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) who are fighting the US government at a national level, they are all fighting for you. All of these unions are working to improve your standing both inside and outside of the classroom. Please support your unions by first joining, then working on committees, and volunteering your time and energy. Together we can improve the quality of life at Palomar College and, ultimately, the quality of education for all students. 

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If we as a department want to go a certain direction, but the advisory group convinces us otherwise, then we refocus our efforts until they are relevant to the needs of our students and industry. Sometimes we want to push the envelope and will run a new program idea past the advisory board. They often will encourage us to keep striving for cutting edge technology even when they themselves are a few years from making the upgrades.

So what you end up having is a need to effectively communicate and understand what both ends of the private sector either can do for you, or what they need you to do in order to prepare the students for them. In my mind that ideal relationship would entail getting our instructors and students the software, hardware, equipment, and training they need at economically feasible prices (given a way too limited budget, right?). It would also include businesses seeking Palomar as a viable training ground for new personnel, an excellent source to retrain current employees, or a great place to advertise paid internship opportunities (I'm not big on the work for free thing).

Here's a non sequitur. I know that you're very involved in shared governance of the college, serving on the Faculty Senate, on the Instructional Planning Council, on the Computer Committee, and I suspect others. How does faculty participation on councils and committees promote good teaching and good learning?

Well here is the deal with how I got more involved. Someone had nominated me to the Faculty Senate. There had been a slew of e-mail going around at the time that made me wonder where all of the logical and reasonable types were who I would expect to be serving on the various committees. I was upset enough with the way things were going that I finally accepted the nomination. I was subsequently elected and have continued to become more involved.

I have seen major decisions being made that affect faculty in one way or another. Some are good, others are not so good - sometimes ridiculous. I want to be a good instructor, and I want all students at Palomar to have

an excellent learning environment. That means that I need to take part in the shared governance process here at the college. I can not put my faith in a man or woman and expect to never be disappointed with their decisions or actions. None of us are perfect, and some have their own detrimental agendas. Therefore, I have accepted my individual responsibility to serve on various committees. And pray God will give me the wisdom to make the right decisions for the benefit of all. I pray the same for my colleagues who serve as well. For those logical and discerning individuals who have yet to serve, I hope these words encourage them to accept their responsibilities and become active members of the shared governance process. We need them! 

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