



## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FACULTY SENATE

March 30, 2026

**APPROVED**

### **ATTENDANCE**

**PRESENT:** Ben Adams, Russell Backman, Elijah Barnes (ASG), Mary Ellen Brooks, Alexandra Doyle Bauer, William Dalrymple, Kelly Falcone, Gene Gushansky, Jason Jarvinen, Scott Klinger, Melissa Martinez, Michael Mufson, Beth Pearson, Russell Sheaffer, Tanessa Sanchez, Karl Seiler, Nina Shmorhun, Nicole Siminski, Alyssa Vafaei, Ashley Wolters, Anastasia Zavodny

**ABSENT:** Heather Elliott Pham (Zoom), Lawrence Lawson, Vicki Mellos (Zoom)

**GUESTS:** Michelle Barton, Erin Feld, Dean Ferrero, Matt Grills, Luis Guerrero, Ben Mudgett, Elena Villa Fernández de Castro

All votes are presumed unanimous unless indicated otherwise.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Faculty Senate President, Elizabeth Pearson, in LRC-116 at 2:30 p.m. The meeting was also streamed live on ZOOM.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Erin Feld, a member of the Professional Development Committee, provided a comment regarding the "Professional Development Terminology Update" listed as an information item on the agenda. She clarified that the Professional Development Committee had not yet voted on the proposal to change the term "Professional Development" to "Professional Learning" and expressed concern that the change was being presented as a finalized decision by the committee. Feld emphasized the need for broader outreach to the campus community to solicit feedback before undertaking the significant workload of updating the term, which appears over 4,000 times on the college website.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Luis Guerrero announced the statewide "Reclaiming Joy: Human First Teaching in the AI Era" watch party event scheduled for April 17th at the EDGE Center, which will feature keynote presentations on human-first teaching in the context of AI capabilities.

Senator Sheaffer shared that the next queer film series event would take place on April 8th, featuring a screening of the film *National Anthem* and a discussion with a member of the San Diego Gay Rodeo.

Senator Brooks announced the grand opening of the Pride Center in its new location on Thursday and encouraged attendance.

Senator Klinger highlighted a regional story by the *Voice of San Diego* regarding AI and education, noting it as an opportunity for faculty to have their voices heard on the topic.

President Pearson reported that the college is allowing low-enrolled Fast Track 2 classes to proceed without cancellation, which she interpreted as a possible sign that faculty concerns regarding low enrollment classes being canceled are being heard.

President Pearson shared updates on the establishment of a centralized call center on campus hopefully by Fall 2026 and mentioned that graduation organizers are exploring a live-streamed overflow area for ceremonies.

President Pearson highlighted The Comet Connect weekly newsletter that was introduced as a new student-focused communication tool.

President Pearson reminded faculty of the April 3rd deadline for nominations for the Scholarly Achievement, Gift of Time, and Faculty Service Senate awards and urged senators to encourage their colleagues to submit nominations.

President Pearson noted that several Senate seats that have not yet been filled.

President Pearson requested that faculty complete the ongoing survey: Faculty Perspectives on The Faculty Senate and Shared Governance at Palomar College, which currently has few responses.

President Pearson announced that Senator Shmorhun will be the delegate for the ASCCC resolutions, and senators were asked to review the resolution packet to provide feedback.

## **AGENDA CHANGES**

None.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MSC: Shmorhun/Adams**

Faculty Senate to approve the minutes for March 16, 2026 as amended.

The motion carried.

## **ACTION**

### **A. Committees on Committees (Exhibit 1) – Zavodny**

**MSC: Zavodny/Klinger**

Faculty Senate to approve the result of the ballot for the regular committee appointment.

The Motion Carried.

#### **Student Journey: Enrollment to Completion Committee**

**Kristen Marjanovic (EHPS), Faculty at-large (25-26)**

**MSC: Mufson/Gushansky**

Faculty Senate to approve the result of the ballot for the Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services (VPFAS) hiring committee.

The Motion Carried.

**Brian Anderson (Military Leadership), Faculty**

**Abstentions: 1:– Senator Zavodny**

Discussion Included:

A Senator underscored the critical nature of this position, arguing that the future of program growth depends on a Vice President who is not solely committed to an efficiency model.

### **B. Curriculum, (Exhibit 2) – Mellos**

**MSC: Doyle Bauer/Adams**

Faculty Senate to approve the curriculum changes made during the March 18, 2026 Curriculum Committee Meeting.

The Motion Carried.

**C. PFF/Senate President Hiring Committee Agreement, (Exhibit 3) – Pearson**

**MSC: Shmorhun/Gushansky**

Faculty Senate to approve the agreement between the PFF and the Faculty Senate regarding seating faculty on the Superintendent-President Hiring Committee.

The Motion Carried.

**INFORMATION**

**A. ASG Report, Miller**

Elija Barnes, attended on behalf of ASG Rep Miller, and reported on ASG activities. He detailed their participation in the Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SCLCC) General Assembly where they voted on advocacy priorities including food assistance and opposition to the use of AI detection as sole evidence of academic dishonesty. The ASG is also organizing an upcoming Earth Week event for the week of April 20<sup>th</sup>.

**B. Institution Set Standards and Stretch Goals – (Exhibits 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3), Barton**

Michelle Barton presented the Institution Set Standards and Stretch Goals for the annual ACCJC report. She explained that "standards" represent the institutional floor, while "stretch goals" are aspirational targets for metrics such as course success, certificates, degrees, and transfers.

For the current year, the college exceeded its success rate standard of 71% and its stretch goal of 72% by achieving an actual success rate of 76%. Barton noted that while standards were met for certificates and degrees, the college did not reach its stretch goals for those categories.

A significant point of discussion involved transfer rates, which have dipped below the set standard. Senators debated whether to lower these goals given the worsening economy and the closure of several regional private colleges, with some arguing that as a community college, Palomar should prioritize local skill development over transfer volume.

Barton cautioned against backing off from these standards, noting that ACCJC applies a rubric to evaluate institutional commitment to its mission.

The Senate agreed to table the final decision on these goals until the April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **C. Burden-Free Access Materials - (Exhibit 5), Dean Ferrero**

Dean Jenny Ferrero presented an informational overview regarding Burden-Free Access Materials, a shift driven by Title 5 changes and a Chancellor's Office focus on ensuring students have burden-free, first-day access to required course materials.

Dean Ferrero explained that "instructional materials" encompasses anything required for student success, including textbooks, test packs, and specific equipment like steel-toed boots or nursing scrubs. She emphasized the necessity of accurate course notes during registration, so students are aware of all potential costs upfront.

A statewide task force was formed in 2024 to develop strategies to shift the financial burden from students to institutions by 2030, which includes increasing the use of Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) and Open Educational Resources (OER). At Palomar, a workgroup has been meeting monthly to identify issues and standardize processes such as textbook adoptions.

During the discussion, a Senator shared an example from CTE programs, noting that students often drop classes because they cannot afford equipment costs, sometimes up to \$300, costs that occur before their financial aid is dispersed.

Another Senator raised concerns regarding the lack of district budget transparency, arguing that lottery funds should be more clearly allocated to cover student costs. There was also a critique of the use of a for-profit bookstore on campus, noting that students often pay higher prices than they would on platforms like Amazon.

A Senator inquired about the use of older textbook editions to save students money; Dean Ferrero confirmed that faculty maintain the academic freedom to select older versions if they choose.

Finally, a Senator expressed concern that standardizing "low cost" labels for unstaffed classes might infringe upon the pedagogical freedom of the faculty member eventually assigned to the course.

### **D. GE Subcommittee, (Exhibit 5), Mellos, Mudgett**

Tabled.

### **E. Professional Development Terminology Update – (Exhibit 6.1 & 6.2), Guerrero**

Luis Guerrero presented the Professional Development Terminology Update.

He explained that new Title 5 regulations and the ACCJC Standard have transitioned from the term "Professional Development" to "Professional Learning". This change is intended to shift away from the

idea that development is a finite stage and instead emphasize continuous growth for all employee groups, including classified staff and student employees, rather than just faculty.

Guerrero noted that while the name change is a proposal currently before the Professional Development Committee, the Title 5 changes regarding allowable Flex calendar activities take effect regardless of the nomenclature.

Several senators discussed the procedural status of the change, with President Pearson clarifying that the name change cannot come to the Senate for action until the Professional Development Committee officially votes on it.

Guerrero invited senators to provide feedback during the public comment section of the committee's upcoming meeting.

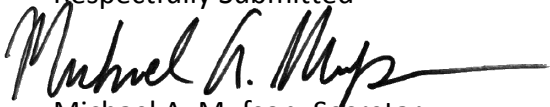
## **DISCUSSION**

### **A. Faculty Senate Discussion Regarding Change in Eligibility for Senate Council – 9Exhibit 7), Shmorhun**

Tabled.

## **ADJONRNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted  
  
Michael A. Mufson, Secretary