

LOS MEDANOS COLLEGE ACADEMIC SENATE CONSTITUTION

Amended June 13, 2013

Purpose: To clarify and modify the current Representative Academic Senate structure in order to enhance efficiency, inclusiveness, communication, and accountability.

Introduction: The Academic Senate of the Whole was originally established when Los Medanos was a more compact and a more unified institution. The charge of deciding basic policies and molding a fledgling college brought almost all faculty together in a highly energetic and well attended forum. As the years passed, the college grew and became necessarily differentiated. Faculty were tasked with many instructional and administrative responsibilities that kept them from regular Senate attendance. College governance demands a high level of faculty participation, but competing professional priorities made it more and more difficult for most faculty to maintain that commitment.

We were unwilling to deal with this dilemma by trying to coerce or cajole reluctant faculty into attending Senate meetings, or by settling for persistently low faculty participation. The faculty thus established a Representative Academic Senate to attain several important goals:

Efficiency: A Representative Senate includes faculty members specifically designated to attend meetings, vote on behalf of their departments, and facilitate communications between the Senate and the non-attending faculty. Representative Senators should be more likely to take an active interest in Senate proceedings. A Representative Senate is easily divided into operational committees, thus spreading assignments and fostering more focused deliberation.

Inclusiveness: A Representative Senate is less inclusive than a perfectly attended Senate of the Whole, but much more inclusive than the poorly attended Senate that was replaced in the last position paper. The inclusion of two voting part-time Senate representatives gives a strong Senate voice to the part-time faculty who serve this institution. A reasonable voting quorum increases the likelihood that no decisions are made without widespread support.

Communication: Each member of the representative Senate is responsible for explaining Senate proposals to, and soliciting feedback from, the members of his or her constituency.

Accountability: Each member of the Senate represents a well-defined constituency with common perspectives and interests. Senators are responsible for communicating Senate deliberations to these individuals, and for soliciting their input prior to important Senate votes.

Unfortunately, the current Senate Position Paper is incomplete and unclear on key aspects of Senate procedures and membership. This has created some confusion during Senate deliberations. We submit the following proposal, along with a companion bylaws document, for ratification by the LMC faculty. It is the hope of the Senate membership that these documents will improve and strengthen Senate operations by streamlining membership, clarifying procedures, and specifying the relationship between the Academic Senate and other important campus governing bodies.

Proposal:

Senate Membership And Voting

1. All meetings of the Academic Senate will be open to all faculty. Any faculty member has the right to speak at Senate meetings, but only elected Senators (or their proxies) will have a vote in the Senate.
2. Each Senator may choose one faculty member as proxy to vote in their absence. The proxy must teach in the same division and have the same employment status (full or part time) as the Senator who chooses them.
3. Senate votes will normally require the presence of a majority of the Senate membership at the Senate meeting (a quorum of 50% plus one person). The votes of each individual Senator will be recorded and kept in the Senate office.

Senate Officers

1. The Representative Senate will have three officers. These are the Senate President, the Senate Vice-President, and the Senate Secretary. Each will have duties specified in the Senate bylaws, and collectively they will form the Senate Council.
2. The Senate President, Vice-President, and Secretary will be elected by a vote of ALL Faculty members (by a paper or e-mail vote taken between Senate meetings). A minimum of fifty faculty members must vote to validate the election of a Senate officer. At least thirty-five of the voting faculty must be full-time faculty. The candidate who receives the highest vote total wins the election.
3. The Senate Secretary and Vice-President will not be counted toward the voting quorum, unless they are also elected Senate representatives.
4. The Academic Senate President will preside over the representative Senate, but will vote only in the event of a tie. The Senate president will not be counted toward the voting quorum.

Ratification of the Senate Constitution And By Laws

1. This new Senate constitution may not be ratified until a convocation of the whole faculty has been completed. After the convocation the entire LMC faculty may vote on this document. The quorum necessary to legitimize this vote will be half the number of full time LMC faculty members. Both full and part time faculty may speak and vote during or after the convocation. If part-time faculty cast more than one- third of the total votes, their votes will be differentially weighted to one-third of the final total. The support of two-thirds of the voting quorum will be necessary to adopt this new constitution.
2. Once adopted, this Senate constitution may not be altered until a new convocation of the whole faculty has been completed. After the convocation, a quorum of at least fifty LMC faculty members (including a minimum of thirty-five full-time faculty) must vote to legitimize the changes, and the changes may be approved by a simple majority of the voting quorum. Full-time and part-time faculty may vote and their votes will be counted equally, but a minimum of thirty-five full-time faculty must vote to legitimize the result.
3. This document will be supplemented by a Senate bylaws document that will specify election, voting, meeting, and recall procedures, as well as the duties and responsibilities of Senators and Senate Officers to be followed by the Representative Senate. The new bylaws document will be presented to the faculty at the same convocation as this Senate Constitution, and faculty may vote for or against each document separately on the same ballot. The ratification procedure for the new bylaws document is the same as the procedure for the new Constitution.
4. Once ratified, the new Senate bylaws may be modified by a Senate vote. A new convocation of the whole faculty will NOT be necessary to modify the Senate bylaws after their initial adoption.

Relationship Of The Senate To The Curriculum Committee

Title V (s.s. 55002, 53200, 53202 & 53203) and the California Education Code (s.s. 66720, 70901 & 70902) outline a special relationship between the curriculum committee and the academic Senate. To fulfil the letter and spirit of these regulations, the following rules shall govern this relationship:

1. The academic Senate is responsible for electing faculty members to the curriculum committee, and for ratifying the curriculum committee position paper as well as reviewing curriculum committee bylaws or procedures as necessary.
2. In accordance with the Position Paper of the Academic Senate on Curriculum Committee Governance (3/24/03) and relevant sections of the California

Education Code and Title V, the Curriculum Committee has the following responsibilities:

- Approval of courses and course prerequisites
- Placement of courses within disciplines
- Approval of Local certificate requirements
- Course grading policies
- Standards or policies regarding course preparation and success
- Verification of course articulation

3. The academic Senate members and officers shall receive (via e-mail or paper mail) copies of the agenda and minutes of the curriculum committee as soon as these documents are available.

4. The Curriculum Committee chair will serve as an ex-officio (non-voting) Senate member.

5. The academic Senate will expect to receive at least one presentation/update from the curriculum committee chair each semester. This presentation should include information about any articulation or prerequisite changes to courses that are required for the LMC AA degree.

6. The Senate may choose to discuss issues pertinent to the curriculum committee charge. These discussions should, if possible, be held with the curriculum committee chair in attendance. If this is not possible, then the Senate President will inform the curriculum committee chair of the substance of these discussions.

7. The Senate MAY NOT overrule curriculum committee decisions on course approval or other course changes.

8. The academic Senate retains the right to approve the PATTERN OF COURSES required for an LMC AA degree (subject to district and state regulations) and, adhering to the letter and spirit of AB1725, the academic Senate will be consulted by management BEFORE the addition or deletion of academic programs at LMC.

Relationship Of The Senate To The Shared Governance Council (SGC)

1. The academic Senate shall elect three faculty members to serve as voting members of the SGC.
2. Faculty members on the SGC will serve two year terms.
3. There is a term limit of three consecutive terms for faculty members serving on the SGC.
4. Copies of all SGC meeting agendas and minutes should be sent to all members of the academic Senate (via e-mail or paper mail) as soon as these documents become available.
5. Faculty members serving on the SGC will be expected to report back to the Senate regularly to discuss academic and professional matters and other relevant topics under consideration by the SGC.
6. It is assumed that the SGC members will consult with the academic Senate before making final decisions on academic and professional matters as outlined in Title V.