May 14, 2020

Members of the Academic Senate:

I am writing to apply for the position of Distance Education Chair for the 2020-2021 Academic Year. My experiences in the classroom and as a faculty leader have given me the qualifications to make a strong contribution to the college in this position.

I have taught online classes since 2009 when I began teaching Western Civilization online for Prince George’s Community College in Largo, Maryland. I served as the subject matter expert at PGCC, providing content advice to the college’s curriculum committee as many of the history classes moved to an online format for the first time. In nearly eleven continuous years of online teaching I have developed courses in American history, the history of sexuality, and World/Western civilization. I have experienced both the challenges and opportunities inherent within the distance education format, and I have developed a pedagogy of online learning that seeks to leverage the best technologies, web-based platforms, and learning management systems to provide quality learning experiences for our students. My pedagogy of online learning is rooted in the strong belief that student learning outcomes can be achieved in a comparable, yet distinct method used in face-to-face classes.

My experience as a leader in shared governance at LMC has also given me a unique perspective that will allow me to provide the leadership needed in distance education at this time. I have served one term as chair of the college’s general education committee and one term as the president of the Academic Senate. I have also served as chair of the Local Planning Group. As president of the Academic Senate I also had roles in major college and district committees, including Shared Governance Council, Strategic Enrollment Management, Consultation Council, Planning Committee, Accreditation Steering Committee, District Governance Council, and the United Faculty executive committee. While serving in these roles I developed facilitation skills that have allowed these groups to function smoothly and properly. I have worked to build consensus among faculty, most recently demonstrated by the adoption of the reformed General Education package. This effort began more than three years ago while I was chair of the General Education committee. I learned to have difficult conversations with faculty and administrators while pursuing a common goal. I have also not been afraid to take a difficult position if I felt the best interests of faculty and students were at stake. The ability to lead a committee, build consensus, and represent the interests of faculty and students will be greatly needed as our college faces the continued challenges posed by the current pandemic. My demonstrated leadership skills combined with the personal connections I have made with almost every level of 4CD’s leadership will allow me to begin to make an effective contribution from my first day as Distance Education chair.

My term as distance education chair would be focused upon four concrete and measurable goals: 1) producing a detailed plan for professional development 2) ensuring that online education serves as a method to create equitable outcomes among disproportionally impacted groups 3) working with the curriculum committee to ensure effective approval process for DE classes 4) continuing the work of getting our online offerings aligned with OEI/CVC standards (for faculty who wish to make this transition.) I have several detailed ideas for achieving each of these goals, and I look forward to discussing in more detail with you during an interview for the position.

Sincerely,

Joshua L. Bearden, PhD

Social Sciences Faculty