

January 26th, 2016 Senate Faculty Caucus Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Sarah Beck, Anna Radlowski, Roman Santos, Norayne Rosero, Louise Charbonneau, Don Kelly, Mildred Treis, Colleen Bolton, Joyce Baumann, Tim Thomas, Christine Miller

The meeting began with an approval of the minutes for the December 8th, 2015 Faculty Caucus meeting.

In attendance was Nick Tutino and Tom Squires to update Faculty on the Bookstore and address current bookstore concerns and issues. The concern was once again raised about unexpectedly high cost of texts and one incident where older additions of books were priced at the full price of new additions. In the latter situation it may have been a disconnect between the publisher's pricing and Follett. Nick Tutino mentioned the Amazon Price Match Program where prices of texts at Amazon and Barnes and Noble will be matched as long as it is the exact same ISBN number and is an item in the main sales area. A conversation ensued regarding clearer communication between the bookstore and faculty to clarify pricing. Caucus was told that the standard markup for new text books is 30%. There can be exceptions made to this if a Faculty establishes an arrangement with the publisher and the bookstore staff is aware of this arrangement ahead of time. Tom Squires mentioned the Discover Software Program that is currently being developed between Follett and the MVCC IT department. That software will allow faculty to research materials to be offered at the bookstore and may allow for online book orders to be create that will then channel through Center Deans before being sent to the bookstore for fulfillment. Follett does set aside a \$2000 scholarship fund as part of profits made. The fund is managed by Lynn Breen of the ASC office. Faculty suggested that making students more aware of this might help create "good will" between students and the bookstore, it would also give more students the opportunity to apply for the scholarship. Nick Tutino said that moving forward, he is willing to address any concerns or problems that arise with texts and sale of course materials and that faculty should contact him directly when issues arise.

Discussion arose surrounding some instances of courses being cancelled this semester after the first meeting. Some surprise was expressed at this being a possibility and the question was raised if there is any precedence of this in the past. Other faculty had mentioned that there have been some prior instances of this. It seems that this has happened in a case where the course had the numbers to run as of the course cancellation date but whose numbers dropped substantially between this date and the first week of classes. Some faculty agreed that there could be such circumstance where numbers had fallen low enough after the cancellation period that running the class wasn't feasible. The final sentiment was that this situation should be avoided if possible, but it was understood that there might be isolated incidences where this would be unavoidable. Also, it was mentioned that there should be protocol in place for contacting both the faculty member affected by this cancellation to explain the situation, especially if it is a course taught by an adjunct, and the students should be contacted and helped to rearrange their schedule to minimize the impact on them.

Don Kelly informed caucus that the final draft of the Academic Freedom policy has been completed and that the latest version of the statement will be brought to the next College Senate meeting for final approval. Caucus was also informed that the initial Applied Learning Document is nearing completion and is due to be sent to SUNY by February 15th.

In open forum a faculty member rose the question of a grading system that includes + and – assigned to letter grades. Several faculty mentioned the history of this in the past at MVCC and the concerns raised when this discussion has occurred before. Main issues surrounding the + and – system involves the concerns about transferability in the cases of C- grades. Also, one faculty suggested that in the end when a given student’s + and – grades are averaged the overall impact on their final GPA might likely be nominal. However, faculty tended to agree that the + and – grading system would make it easier to grade students. A second question raised in open forum surrounded seamless transfer. Faculty would be interested in statistics as to the impact on, and success for, students since the implementation of seamless transfer. Finally, Faculty raised a series of questions about ATD and felt they would like further information as to its progress and implementation. Chair will request attendance by members for a future meeting as an Agenda item.

Having no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Christine R Miller