

MVCC Senate Faculty Caucus
Tuesday, February 23, 2016 Minutes
2:00pm :: PH300

Present: C. Miller (chair), J. Bauman, C. Bolton, J. Brown, L. Charbonneau, A. Doughtie, A. Haines-Stephan, G. Melendez, A. Radlowski, N. Rosero, R. Santos, T. Thomas, M. Treis

Opening & Minutes

The meeting was called to order, and the minutes of the Jan. 26th meeting were approved.

Chair Remarks

Christine Miller announced that President VanWagoner had intended to be present to discuss the budget, but he was out of town for ATD, and would speak at the next Faculty Caucus.

Micro-credentials and Badges

At the Strategic Horizon Network Conference, new and different forms of credentials were discussed as an emerging trend in education. These new forms are called a number of things, such as micro-credentials or badges, and the naming of these credentials are not consistent from one college to another. Some examples include the following:

- Empire College defines badges within each course, not as a mini-degree
- Suny Stony Brook and Stanford have similar badge programs for postgraduates
- Would they be called micro-credentials, nanodegrees, badges, or something else?

The question was posed: Would it be appropriate to form a self-directed design team to discuss the value of having micro-credentials at MVCC, and if so, what such micro-credentials might look like?

T. Thomas commented that he has already been looking at micro-credentials as part of Hawk Vision and as a smaller group. He, C. Pulquero, and J. Lowman have done some introductory research and are working on putting together a white paper. Microcredentials came originally from Silicone Valley, and were requested by Google when they found their employees weren't adequately prepared for the job.

There were many questions about micro-credentials, and much time was spent attempting to define them, and how we could envision them working at MV. Some examples included:

- Our main audience would likely be those who have a job and need a little bit of education to improve. Could we then look at them as a "minor certificate"? If so, what would be a minimum number of credit hours?
- If the micro-credentials are employment driven, is there a need in our area? Could ATD be used to help contact area businesses? There was a comment that the Strategic Planning Committee may have already done this.
- Suppose a graphic designer wants to update their skills. They don't need a degree or full course load, but just a few courses.
- A badge is not a replacement for a degree; just a different option for learning.
- Currently we have a certificate in Carpentry and Masonry. However, the certificate is redundant for a mason looking for carpentry skills, for example. Therefore, that student would benefit from being able to earn a Carpentry Badge, rather than having to work towards the full certificate.

There were also some questions and concerns regarding long-term effects or implications of micro-credentials. For example:

- Who is finding these credentials to be useful? Have there been any longer-term studies?
- The world is changing. Is this an opportunity to evolve? We don't want this trend to leave us behind, and faculty need to be included in the conversation.
- Is this just a SUNY-driven fad?
- Is this a viable alternate way of measuring success? How will this impact the way "completion" is measured?
- Over 90% of our students tell us that their goal is degree/transfer/job. Would they be interested in micro-credentials?
- In the Carpentry/Masonry example, the mason who just takes the carpentry module currently shows up as not having completed, even though they did achieve their goal. So badges could help define completion better, which would serve the Chancellor's idea of more graduates and higher completion rates.
- If a student comes to us with a credential from another school, how will it be treated? Is it similar to "life experience"?
- Would our students get financial aid for it? What kind of credit would this be worth?
- Would we be luring students in with a "credential" that has no meaning in the real world?

Weather Delay

On Tuesday, Feb 16th, the college had a delayed opening due to weather. However, there was confusion surrounding the delayed start because the college opened at 10:00, and it was unclear whether classes that began before 10:00 and ran longer than 10:00 would be cancelled or begin at 10:00. Particularly troublesome were labs (for example, a five-hour lab starting at 8:00 could still have run from 10:00-1:00). Ideally the delay would align with the starting time of a class period, but it seems that classes and labs do not all start at the same time on Tues/Thurs.

Disabilities Form

There was a new disabilities form brought to Christine's attention that seemed problematic. However, when she spoke with Tamara Mariotti, Tamara commented in an email that the form will no longer be used. Tamara was unable to make it to the Caucus meeting, but indicated that those with questions should feel free to email her.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10pm by general consensus.

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Radlowski