



# ACADEMIC SENATE

The primary voice of the faculty in academic and professional matters at Santa Rosa Junior College.

## MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2026, 3:15 p.m. Santa Rosa:  
Senate Chambers, Doyle Library 145  
Petaluma: Room 690  
Richard Call Bldg.  
ZOOM ID: 958 4627 3808

**PRESENT** M. Anderman, A. Atilgan Relyea, S. Avasthi, L. Branen-Ahumada, J. Bush, J. Davis, K. Fortunati, K. Frindell Teuscher, G. Garcia, V. Hamilton (Petaluma), T. Jacobson, J. Kremer, D. Lemmer, L. D. Lukas, S. McGregor-Gordon, T. Melvin, G. Morre, J. Nieto, M. Ohkubo, M. Papa, N. Perrone, N. Persons, S. Rosen (Petaluma), T. Ruiz (Petaluma), E. Schmidt, I. Tircuit

**ABSENT** L. Aspinall (proxy J. Bush)

**GUESTS** L. Beach, K. Starke

**CALL TO ORDER** The meeting was called to order by President Stover at 3:15 p.m.

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT** The land acknowledgement statement was read by Senator J. Bush.  
*We acknowledge that we gather at Santa Rosa Junior College on the territorial traditional land of the Pomo People in Santa Rosa and the Coast Miwok People in Petaluma, past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.*

## OPEN FORUM

1. **S. Montellano Diaz**, counselor and Transfer Center Director, requested faculty support and participation in the “Transfer Bound: Discover Your Transfer Major” event. She explained the event builds on a prior video initiative by offering a live, coordinated opportunity for students to engage with faculty and student services, explore transfer majors and pathways, and learn about the new Cal GETC framework. The event is scheduled for April 16<sup>th</sup> from 12–2 p.m. in the Santa Rosa Campus Quad, and faculty are eligible to receive flex credit for participating.
2. **J. Kremer** addressed AB 1111 and the Common Course Numbering initiative, expressing concern that the Chancellor’s Office implementation goes beyond the law by imposing standardized course templates. It was noted that this approach limits faculty governance, has not resolved transfer articulation issues, and has created confusion. Kremer urged the Senate to pursue a resolution calling for a pause in the initiative and a return to the original intent of AB 1111.
3. **M. Hale** reaffirmed the importance of the previously passed resolution supporting flexible attendance and participation policies for students. He encouraged faculty to apply universal design and accommodations to provide flexibility for students experiencing fear or disruption related to immigration enforcement activity, citing recent community rumors as an example of the impact on students and families. Flexibility was emphasized as an expression of empathy and equity and highlighted local community responses and advocacy related to these concerns.
4. **D. Kingwill** expressed concerns from the non-credit EMLS department regarding the implementation of the new Bear Cub student email system. Challenges were described related to limited advance notice, lack of faculty training, restricted access to student support services, and difficulties faced by students—many of whom are new to U.S. education systems or rely on smartphones—in accessing their email and course information. It was noted that instructors spent significant instructional time assisting students with the transition and expressed hope for solutions for the problems brought forward.
5. **D. Lemmer** informed the Academic Senate of the passing of longtime Senator, department chair, and faculty member Cliff Norton, who died at home after a prolonged illness. He noted Norton’s decades of service and

mentorship and shared that a celebration of life would be held, with details available through a published obituary or by contacting the speaker.

[The full text of all available open forum statements can be viewed here.](#)

**JUST CAUSE FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION** None.

**MINUTES** [Minutes of December 3, 2025](#)

A Senator listed several suggested changes to the minutes, and President Stover announced the minutes would come back next meeting for potential approval once the suggestions were considered.

**ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA** None.

## **REPORTS**

1. [President's Report](#) J. Stover

The President's report included a welcome back after break, and introduction of new full-time Administrative Assistant II, Karen Lamb, and updates on procedural and governance matters. President Stover previewed discussion topics on the agenda and addressed concerns regarding the possible expansion of faculty forums to non-Santa Rosa sites other than Petaluma. Answers are being sought the questions raised at the end of Fall 2025 regarding AB 1705, and ended with calls for collaboration, faculty participation on committees, and continued efforts to improve processes and engagement across the District (see link).

2. [Petaluma Faculty Forum Report](#) A.C. Panella and M. Martin

- Petaluma Faculty Forum (PFF) report presented by A.C. Panella.
  - Four major focus areas were reviewed from the previous semester:
    - **Faculty engagement and community building:** Guided conversations and faculty observation opportunities to share teaching practices.
    - **Thematic learning community:** Integration of “borders” theme across classes, involving faculty, student services, and administration.
    - **Student success and co-curricular learning:** Initiatives include Imagination Boxes in the library, student research conference, and the “We the Future: Joy as Resistance” Social Justice Conference.
    - **Shared governance and communication:** Regular updates on initiatives like the AI Task Force and Senate activities.
  - Plans for the upcoming semester include an earlier retreat to strengthen thematic learning experiences and preparation for the keynote at the We the Future conference.

## **INFORMATION**

1. [Digital Accessibility \(PDF link\) – Let's do this together \(pptx\)](#) L. Beach and K. Starke

- The presentation outlined upcoming federal and state accessibility regulations requiring fully accessible digital content, emphasizing that accessibility is a shared, institution-wide responsibility rather than the role of a single department.
- Digital accessibility applies to all content in Canvas and other platforms, regardless of course modality, with a shift toward designing materials to be accessible from the start rather than relying on individual accommodations.
- Faculty were informed of built-in accessibility tools in common technologies and the alignment of accessibility efforts with institutional mission, equity, and student success goals.
- Roles were clarified among District partners: Information Technology for public-facing content; Distance Education for digital course materials; Disability Resources for accommodations; and Human Resources for employee accessibility.

- Panorama (a Canvas-integrated tool) was highlighted as the primary system for evaluating and improving accessibility, offering automated checks, guidance for fixes, and alternative formats for students.
- Current data showed an overall accessibility score of 69% in Canvas, with PDFs identified as the most significant accessibility challenge.
- Support plans include regular workshops, PDA sessions, department-level consultations, hands-on assistance for complex files, and tools to identify or remove unused Canvas materials.
- Faculty were asked to participate by attending trainings, using Panorama to address accessibility issues, captioning videos appropriately, and cleaning up outdated digital content.
- Staffing capacity was described as limited but supported through collaborative efforts between faculty and support teams.

2. **Identifying ZTC – OER in the Schedule (handout PDF link)** J. Stover on behalf of M.C. Oxford

- A Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC)/OER update was presented, with definitions and compliance requirements outlined.
- ZTC courses allow students to complete classes without purchasing textbooks or required instructional materials, as required by SB 1359.
- The college received \$520,000 in grant funding and has established a ZTC pathway in art history, with additional pathways in development.
- Course material costs must be reported for each section; reporting will expand from a yes/no indicator to multiple cost categories with Banner.
- Current ZTC reporting is about 12% and acknowledged as underreported due to inconsistent processes.
- Changes after Proof 1 must be routed through department chairs to the scheduling office.
- A low-cost designation (\$50 or less) will be included in Banner [as per previous Senate recommendation](#).
- Faculty currently report ZTC and cost information through department chairs.
- Textbook costs exclude general supplies; courses with consumable materials may still qualify as ZTC, with costs disclosed at registration.

## BREAK

## CONSENT

1. **Resolution to Remove and Add Signatories on the Academic Senate Bank Accounts.** The consent item passed unanimously with 28 yes votes.

**ACTION**      ***AP7120A: Addressing Final Concerns*** *On pause while support materials are under development*

## DISCUSSION

1. **Correcting the Bylaws.** Does the Academic Senate wish to approve a correction to the Bylaws as based on [consent item four \(see agenda here\)](#) as passed on [7 May 2025 \(see minutes here\)](#) entitled [Adoption of Faculty Professional Development Senate Subcommittee Revitalization Recommendations](#)? (5 min) [Support document available here](#) and any approved change would be made in adherence with our Bylaws, ARTICLE IX: CHANGES TO BYLAWS ([go to end of document online here](#)).

President Stover outlined the need to amend the Bylaws to align with a May 2025-approved consent item establishing the Faculty Professional Development Subcommittee. The Bylaws currently list a different committee composition and would need to remove one at-large Senator to match the approved structure.

Senator Persons made a motion to move this Discussion item, “Correcting the Bylaws” to Action for the next meeting. Seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 28 yes votes.

2. **Establishing an Honors Program at Santa Rosa Junior College.** Following up on the Information item from 3 December 2025 (see agenda here), shall the Academic Senate recommend the establishment of a local Honor's Program as drawing inspiration from **Saddleback Honor's Program Overview** and the **Honors Program Local Information Sheet?**

Discussion on the item included:

- The proposed model was described as a voluntary, opt-in program for students.
- It was noted the program differed from expectations and highlighted reported improvements in student success associated with similar programs.
- A personal experience was shared with a comparable honors/transfer program, describing its role in academic preparation and successful transfer to a four-year university.
- Concerns were acknowledged regarding resource allocation and implementing a new program during potential budget constraints.
- The discussion emphasized that such programs may support a diverse range of students, including those who may not initially appear academically successful.

Senator Perrone moved to make this item an Action item at the next meeting. Seconded. Motion passed unanimously with 28 yes votes.

3. **Expanding the Petaluma Faculty Forum (PFF) to Shone Farm, Windsor, and or Roseland Campuses.** Does the Academic Senate wish to expand the provision of PFF to other non-Santa Rosa district sites in support of the same privileges offered to PFF as listed below (and online in the Bylaws, Article III, Section 6)?

B. Duties:

- 1. To promote the professional interests of the faculty of the Sonoma County Junior College District and to participate in the collegial governance of the college as it specifically concerns the Petaluma Campus.
- 2. To promote communication and mutual understanding among the faculty on the Petaluma campus, to strengthen communication between the Petaluma and Santa Rosa campuses, and to facilitate and maintain communication between the PFF and the Academic Senate of the college.
- 3. To promote the development and maintenance of teaching excellence within the framework of academic freedom and professional responsibilities and ethics, especially as this pertains to the Petaluma campus.

- Expanding faculty forums to non-Santa Rosa sites (Shone Farm, Windsor/Public Safety Training Center, Roseland) was discussed using the Petaluma Faculty Forum (PFF) model if faculty at the sites are interested.
- PFF Academic Senate Bylaws were cited (above) as a framework for adaptation to other sites.
- Senators supported expansion to increase faculty participation, communication, and representation from non-Santa Rosa sites, and provide professional community, collaboration, professional development, and a way to bring site-specific issues to the Senate.
- New forums would be separate subcommittees, not under PFF, and participation would not alter contractual campus assignments.
- Meeting times and structures should remain flexible to reflect each site's needs.
- Bylaws could be revised to clarify multiple faculty forums' purpose and responsibilities.

Senator Persons made a motion to move this Discussion item to the Action agenda for next meeting. Seconded. The motion passed unanimously with 28 yes votes.

**ADJOURNMENT** 5:00 p.m.

[\*\*LINK TO ZOOM RECORDING\*\*](#)

[\*\*LINK TO MEETING TRANSCRIPT\*\*](#)