

Academic Senate President's Report
Wednesday, 5 March 2025 / John A Stover III, PhD

Welcome to our “one and done” Academic Senate meeting for March. But don’t fret! We are meeting three times in April to make up for the March drought. Note that April 2nd, 16th, AND 30th are planned Academic Senate Meetings. In addition, our last meeting of the semester is May 7th, so we’ll end with two Senate meetings “in a row.” This means we have four meetings left this semester after March. Didn’t we just get started? Regardless, here’s some planning items for your preview...

- First, I encourage everyone to attend the next Board of Trustees meeting on March 11th where Karolina Nazario will be providing an update on Dual Enrollment. This will be an excellent preview for AS reports on April 2nd and May 7th.
- The Curriculum Review Committee will visit us on April 16th with updates to the Curriculum Writer's Handbook. They are updating specific sections (*e.g. Unit Value Changes and Noncredit Mirrored Courses*), cleaning up all sections to increase clarity, and transitioning the handbook content to web-based pages. Kudos to Co-Chair Ann Foster for shepherding this important work.
- Guided Pathways will have a report on May 7th, and I’m also reaching out for other Academic Senate [AS] consultation and subcommittee reports.
- The Online Teaching Certification Workgroup will bring us a progress report by April 2nd and final report by April 16th or 30th.
- The Bylaws / Constitution Workgroup will report out before May 7th, with input discussions on April 2nd and 16th.
- And the “shared governance world tour” of the [Action Steps being developed](#) in support of our [Mission, Vision, and Values](#) will “conclude” with the Senate at our April 2nd (and if needed April 16th) meetings and in preparation for delivery to the Board by June.

We have a lot of work to do, and I’m looking forward to our ongoing discussions.

In other news, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) is providing ongoing professional development on the topic of non-credit pathways. This weekend [Saturday, March 1st] around 10 of us attended the one-day [ASCCC 2025 Noncredit North Regional Meeting](#) at San Francisco City College. As a newbie, the first session was particularly helpful in that, for the first time, I understood how, in their words, creating “...*accessible pathways to employment and higher education, serving diverse student needs while helping institutions maintain enrollment amid demographic changes*” can include “*innovative approaches for supporting diverse student populations, addressing basic needs barriers, and implementing best practices in curriculum development, support services, and program pathways*” ([see programs notes in](#) *General Session 1: Noncredit 101 and General Session 3:*

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Noncredit Student Support). The Psychology and Sociology Departments have already decolonized our curriculum, and if your department has not already done the same, I highly recommend the activity, and encourage you to reach out to us in Behavioral Sciences if we can be of peer support. In the meantime, decolonizing the curriculum is a step in the right direction. But it is not enough. We also have to decolonize the institution.

To be blunt, students want to take our credit classes but not all of them have the language skills to do so. As I understand it, 2,000 people in the county want and need English for Multilingual Student [EMLS] courses, and many of them want to go on to study for associate degrees and transfer to four year institutions. These students need, first and foremost, language skills to do so. Their pathway to credit courses begins in noncredit. We can do so much more as faculty to partner our credit and noncredit programs in support of student preparation and success. [We can center our mission, vision, and values as “an accessible, open, barrier-free” institution that delivers “exceptional teaching and learning...integrated with comprehensive student support services” across our noncredit and credit programs.](#) There are so many people here at the college with expertise in these areas, and going forward I will be inviting them to partner with us here so that we can, together, support all Sonoma County students' educational goals.

In AS related news and in accordance with [our bylaws \(Article VIII: Election Code \[specifically Sections 2, 4, and 6\]\)](#) we're holding elections as follows this semester:

Senator Elections* AND Senate President / President-Elect:

- Nominations: Monday March 3rd thru Friday, March 28th
- Elections: Monday, April 7th thru Friday, April 11th

At-Large Senator(s) (if needed)

- Nominations: Monday, April 14th thru Friday, April 25th
- Elections: Monday, April 28th thru Friday, May 2nd

Executive Committee Officers**

- Nominations: Monday, April 21st thru Friday, May 2nd
- Elections (Senators only): May 7th (in meeting)

* = [you can double check here](#) to see if you are up for re-election this semester

** = please note that if at-large elections are not needed, the nomination period for executive officers will move up by one week (April 14th thru 25th)

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Next, I want to provide some important procedural reminders for how we conduct Senate business. First, please remember to communicate out to your constituents regularly. Some of you are already doing this – big shout out to Senator Morre who regularly communicates with the Math faculty in Area Nine – and kudos to those of you who coordinate your note taking – shout out to Senators in Areas Eight and Ten, and our Associate Senators in Areas Twelve and Thirteen who regularly share these responsibilities. I appreciate how engaged so many of you are in making sure we are action oriented, and it's important to make space for conversation when topics are complicated. With that said, please also remember it's generally not considered "best practice" to introduce a motion in the opening of an Action or Discussion Item. If, however, we start a conversation and nobody says anything (*count to 20 first!*) then maybe there is no conversation to be had, and early action is warranted. I ask that you use your best judgement and listen to your peers.

Also, a friendly reminder how important it is to review all meeting materials before you come to the Senate meeting. Just as we expect students to complete the required reading before it's due in class, your preparation ahead of time means that Discussion and Action Items can be focused, engaged, and substantive from the start. Thank you for always preparing ahead of time.

I appreciate you all and am grateful to be in service and in community. Let's get to work.