

Open Dialogue Session

May 29, 2013

3:00-4:00 (IT 211)

Attendees:

- Dr. Gail Zwart – Co-chair ISPC, Associate Professor, Business Administration
- Mr. Mark Lewis – Associate Professor, Speech Communication
- Dr. Lyn Greene – Assistant Professor, Political Science
- Dr. Deborah Tompsett-Makin – Professor, Political Science
- Ms. Vivian Harris – Assistant Professor, Library Services
- Dr. Arend Flick – Professor, English
- Dr. Jim Thomas – Associate Professor Construction Technology
- Dr. Debbie DiThomas – Vice President, Student Services
- Mr. George Walters – Project Director, NSF National Center, Supply Chain Technology Education
- Dr. Paul Parnell, President, Norco College
- Dr. Carol Farrar – Dean of Instruction
- Dr. Greg Aycock – Dean, Institutional Effectiveness
- Ms. Celia Brockenbrough – Professor, Library Services
- Dr. Diane Dieckmeyer – Vice President, Academic Affairs
- Ruth Smith – Administrative Assistant (Recorder)

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an opportunity to all constituencies to provide feedback on strategic planning, program review, resource allocation or other topics. The meeting is without an agenda meeting and any open conversations are welcome.

Motivating Faculty to Get Involved

The first topic focused on strategies to get faculty involved in various shared governance activities including strategic planning committees. One suggestion was to create environments that bond existing faculty (i.e. offering food or creating meetings that include all faculty). The cancellation of former monthly faculty has significantly cut down on faculty interaction on a regular basis. At the time, it made sense since there were too many meetings requiring faculty time. The solution is not necessarily reinstating the monthly faculty meeting, but a quarterly meeting was suggested as a possibility. Another way to increase faculty involvement in shared governance is by informing new faculty of the participation requirement from the beginning of their employment. Another strategy for increasing faculty involvement is by inviting counselors to sit on committees where faculty representation is scant. The dialogue then turned toward reasons/solutions for this lack of involvement. Some of the lack in committee involvement has to do with inconsistency of meeting times. Keeping all department meetings on the same day and time was suggested. The most consistently open hour is college hour, but this was supposed to be reserved for faculty to participate in student events. A solution for time conflicts is through the creation of a master calendar by the A Team that will help to identify space to schedule all meetings while protecting open time for student events. Regarding faculty time commitments, flex hours were also discussed, including the increase to 24 hours per academic year, and the elimination of a mandatory flex day.

The Norco Culture

The next subject of dialogue was the Norco culture and sense of community; and whether Norco values are changing and therefore need to be defined and protected. Norco's culture is supportive, respectful, values learning as a fun activity, and is student-centered. These values manifest through behaviors such as—Norco faculty not sniping at each other on e-mail; frequent 'thank-yous'; and meetings remaining collegial and respectful, even when there is disagreement. In order to share and perpetuate the Norco culture it was suggested that employees with more years at Norco model the values by example and through a good work ethic.

Strategic Planning Process

The next subject for open dialogue was the strategic planning process and timeline. Since the process is transparent and involves many steps for approval, people who want to take items through the process must make sure that they begin in a timely manner and not attempt to rush through at the last minute before faculty leave for a break. One goal guiding the creation of the process was to make it as simple as possible while allowing all audiences to review and weigh in. Although the process may not be able to accommodate "rush jobs" as easily, several items that have gone through all the committees which resulted in solid decisions that received full college input. The question was raised whether Norco would have its own BAM model and if it Norco would have more autonomy in the hiring of its own faculty. Norco College will receive its first individual budget to hire in the very near future.

Facilities/Campus

The final subject of the open dialogue session was concerning facilities and campus areas that are being neglected. Keeping the campus clean and well maintained is important because it directly influences the level of respect of students for Norco College. This issue is important enough that the President indicated that any concerns in this area should go directly to his office. Making sure the campus continues to look good is also part of the Norco College culture.