

Senate Overview of Standing Committees Assessment of Senate

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Background: At the November 19th meeting of the Norco College Academic Senate the Senate received the summarized results of the standing committees dialog about their role and effectiveness as standing committees of the senate. The current standing committees are as follows:

- Academic Planning Council
- Curriculum
- Assessment
- Program Review
- Student Success
- Library Advisory
- Distance Education
- Faculty Development (to be renamed Professional Development)

Of these committees the senate received summaries of the dialog from APC, Assessment, Student Success, and Library Advisory. Distance Education and Professional Development are newly formed committees and so really would not be able to participate in this process for the academic year 2012-2013 (since the process requires the assessment in the fall term). Therefore of the six remaining committees, 4 reported out and two did not (Curriculum and Program Review).

Summary: Of the committees that reported out only the APC and Assessment Committee actually reported in a way that indicated assessment of either their work or the role and effectiveness as a standing committee of the senate. It is the latter which was the primary purpose of the assessment.

APC noted a need for improved communication between APC and the senate and made several suggestions for how to achieve this end:

- Senate report as an APC agenda item
- Possible APC representative to the senate
- Attendance of Senate President at first APC meeting each semester

In addition to evaluating its relationship to the senate APC also considered its role in planning. They noted the improvement in scheduling processes and improved communication among the departments. However, they also noted that they still needed to examine data on the effectiveness of the revised process.

In terms of the role in ranking faculty hiring requests, it was suggested that the process take place in two meetings, rather than one, with the first meeting devoted to the presentation of rationales for positions from the chairs requesting the hires.

It was also noted that new chairs needed more training and it was suggested that a training could be held for them and/or a mentorship relationship with more experienced chairs could be developed.

Assessment surveyed its members about the effectiveness of the committee. Those who responded generally expressed satisfaction with most functions of the committee, though there did seem to be some concern that the value of assessment for genuine improvement of instructions was not be communicated to the faculty as well as it might be. The committee had not yet had an opportunity to review and discuss the results of the survey and will do so and make recommendations based on that discussion.

Both the student success committee and the library advisory committee made thorough reports of their activities, but did not really look at the question of how they were functioning as standing committees of the senate.

Recommended goals based on this exercise:

1. The instructions for evaluation need to be clearer and the purpose of the process needs to be more clearly communicated to the standing committees by the senate.
 - Revise the instructions
 - Incorporate a survey of the committee as part of the process
2. Two committees appear not to have participated at all.
 - Extend the process into the spring to allow for full participation. Have the curriculum committee and program review committee submit their reports by the third senate meeting of the spring to be discussed at the second.
3. The APC concern about communication between the senate and the APC should be addressed.
 - Recommended that the APC have an agenda item for Senate report
 - Clarify with the APC (and all other committees) that the chairs of standing committees are all members of the senate and should be attending senate meetings. This practice appears to have broken down at some point and the knowledge lost along with it.
 - Have the senate discuss the president's attendance at APC meetings each semester
 - A quick check of agendas from fall 2012 indicates that the senate president did not have APC reporting back to the senate as a standing committee. The practice needs to be re-established.
4. While most committees have made general reports and many committees have had clearly identified goals (Student Success and Library Advisory clearly showed this in their reports, as did Assessment), not all do.
 - The senate should request of committees that they clearly identify their goals for the academic year early in the fall semester.
 - The senate too needs to clearly identify its goals and indicate which of them can be accomplished through the work of its standing committees.