



**Academic Senate**  
for California Community Colleges

LEADERSHIP. EMPOWERMENT. VOICE.

# EROSION OF SENATE AUTHORITY OVER CURRICULUM?

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**Curriculum Institute, Riverside, 2018**

# Today we will discuss

- Ed Code and Title 5 on Senate and Curriculum Committee purview
- Influences and factors that stress established processes
- Recommendations and strategies

“Curriculum is the heart of the mission of every college.”

“Through their local senates and curriculum committees, California community college **faculty are entrusted** not only with the professional responsibility for developing high quality curriculum but also with the professional responsibility for establishing local curriculum approval processes and ensuring that local curriculum approval processes allow curriculum to be approved in a timely manner.”

*-Ensuring Effective Curriculum Approval Processes: A Guide for Local Senates, adopted spring 2016*

# Ed Code and Title 5 on Senate Purview

**California Education Code §70902(b)(7):** The governing board of each district shall establish procedures to ensure . . . the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards.

**Title 5 §53200 lists the following as “academic and professional matters” or “10+1”:**

- curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines;
- degree and certificate requirements;
- grading policies;
- educational program development;
- standards or policies regarding student preparation and success;

# Ed Code and Title 5 on Curriculum Committee

- **Title 5 §55002 includes:** The college and/or district curriculum committee recommending the course shall be established by the mutual agreement of the college and/or district administration and the academic senate. The committee shall be either a committee of the academic senate or a committee that includes faculty and is otherwise comprised in a way that is mutually agreeable to the college and/or district administration and the academic senate.
- How do your senate and curriculum committee interact?

# Relationship between Senate & Curriculum Committee

The **Curriculum Committee** and the **Curriculum Approval Process** are two different things:

- Separate rules and procedures for the committee and the curriculum development/approval process
- Changes to the curriculum committee composition must be mutually agreed upon by both the senate and the administration
- Per Title 5, the senate must be involved in the approval process of curriculum
- There should be a direct link between the curriculum committee and the senate.

# Scenario 1

- At Sunshine College, there is a newly elected trustee who is a retired faculty member. She believes she has expertise as a former faculty member and this is an asset to the board. As a result, she has begun to ask very detailed questions about curriculum including requesting additional information related to particular courses and degrees. This has caused the curriculum chair and curriculum specialist to spend additional time preparing justifications related to the recommendations of the curriculum committee and the academic senate.
- As a local curriculum chair, what is your responsibility to the board regarding these matters?
- What strategies could be used in this scenario?

# Scenario 2

- Lemonade College has seriously declining enrollment. One way to increase enrollment is to seek out new populations of students. The administration has decided that they will increase offerings in adult education and CTE noncredit coursework. The college does not have not have full-time faculty to develop the noncredit courses so the dean hires part-time faculty in the discipline area to write the curriculum. The faculty member works on the courses but the curriculum paperwork is incomplete and the dean asks the department chair in the credit area to complete it. The curriculum chair talks to the department chair and learns that the department was not involved in the decision to create noncredit courses. The department chair believes the faculty member is being forced to write the curriculum without consultation and that the curriculum committee will simply become a rubberstamp for approving the courses since the administration is so determined to increase enrollment.
- What strategies could be used in this scenario?



# Scenario 3

- Raisin Valley College has hired a new CIO who comes to the college from Florida. He is dismayed at the speed at which curriculum and senate decisions are made. He is receiving pressure from the governing board and the college CEO to move the guided pathways implementation forward and create meta-majors. Based on his experiences in the Florida system he proposes to the CEO eight meta-majors and creates a plan to reorganize the academic departments to fit with the eight meta-majors: Arts, Humanities, Communication and Design; Business; Education; Health Sciences; Industry/Manufacturing and Construction; Public Safety; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Social and Behavioral Sciences and Human Services. Faculty in several programs, including the Culinary Arts program, learn of this reorganization and see that their programs are not included in the proposal, leading them to believe that the CIO plans to discontinue their program.
- What strategies could be used in this scenario?

# Scenario 4

- An instructional dean at Starburst College is assigned the administrative responsibility for guided pathways implementation. The dean also serves on the curriculum committee. He believes that the curriculum committee needs to start evaluating all courses and programs based on whether or not they fit one of the “four pillars” of guided pathways. He also states that during technical review, he will revise the proposed courses objectives to “fit” with the language of one of the “pillars.” Members of the technical review committee are concerned about this level of involvement and alteration of the proposed courses. They believe that evaluating courses and programs on the “four pillars” is a significant deviation of the established curriculum review process and propose that this alteration to the process go through the senate for approval.
- What strategies could be used in this scenario?

# Challenges and Opportunities

- What are some influences and factors that stress established processes?
- What kinds of challenges are you facing as a curriculum chair?
- What types of opportunities are there?

# Recommendations

- Ensure that local senate purview over curriculum and the connection between the local senate and the curriculum committee are well-understood and documented.
- Encourage local senates to regularly review their curriculum approval processes to determine if any improvements are needed and implement any necessary changes.
- Provide professional development at the appropriate level for faculty, administrators, students, and staff, with more detailed training provided to those most closely involved with the local curriculum process.
- Advocate for sufficient resources to support the work of the college curriculum team, including reassigned time or additional compensation, and for the provision of ongoing funding and access to professional development opportunities.

# Questions?



# Thank You!

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