

DAS President's Report to the Board of Trustees for January 18, 2011
Karolyn van Putten

Thank you, Mr. President. Good evening trustees, chancellor, district administrative center staff, college presidents, colleagues and members of the public.

On the threshold of the second half of academic year 2010-11, as you are well aware, the economic realities of the state of California are practically forcing Peraltans to fully face and resolve a variety of major, systemic challenges. For faculty, perhaps chief among these challenges is the essential core of what we do: offering sound, sustainable programs of study that prepare students for transferring to 4-year colleges and universities, and to earn degrees and certificates that lead to meaningful and life-supportive careers.

Until now, when required to make budget cuts that inevitably reduce the number of courses and sections being offered, we have not taken a systematic, methodical approach that assures program integrity and viability. As a result, some of the reductions we've made have had ripple effects that leave students struggling to complete their education plans, that decimate disciplines at one or another college, and that do not take into consideration "the long view" of how we want to be as an educational institution. For much of the past year, faculty members of the Academic Senate have been sounding an alarm about this bean-counting approach to short-term decision-making, worrying about the effects of these decisions on, and over, the long term.

Near the end of last semester, the group of advisory faculty that meets monthly with the chancellor proposed the formation of a task-based work group that would be charged with making recommendations to the chancellor on ways to consolidate program offerings across the district in the face of additional impending budget cuts. As you just heard him report, the chancellor accepted our proposal; the ad hoc group began meeting this morning and will meet weekly for the next 5 to 6 weeks to grapple with this daunting task of taking a district-wide approach to program viability and integrity. While our charge is making recommendations directly to the chancellor, these recommendations will also flow to the planning and budgeting shared governance bodies, and those bodies will be able to endorse the ad hoc group's recommendations or to make their own for the chancellor's consideration.

Throughout the district, other constituencies are discussing and planning for various scenarios; however, the ad hoc group is unique in two important ways. One, the ad hoc group is predominantly composed of faculty, from both the Peralta Federation of Teachers and the Academic Senate. Secondly, this ad hoc

group is specifically tasked with analyzing program data, with the intended outcome of recommending adjustments in how, whether and where programs are offered as sections are being reduced. As faculty, curriculum and educational program development (or its converse) are two of the areas within our purview and while the weight of these responsibilities is heavy, we take it quite seriously. No other constituency is as well or better suited to this than faculty. We expect to keep you informed of our progress over the next 6 weeks.

Finally, it is my honor and privilege to inform you of an article I wrote that was published in the December issue of the Senate Rostrum, a quarterly publication of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC), entitled "What We Know (About) What We Need." This article is an outgrowth of the work of the ASCCC Educational Policies Committee (of which I am a member), addressing a resolution passed at the spring 2010 plenary directing the Senate to report on changes in "traditional" student makeup in light of recent cuts to community colleges, CSU and UC budgets. I will send you an electronic copy of the December issue and welcome any thoughts you'd like to share in response to this topic.

That concludes my report for tonight. Thank you.