

The MJC Academic Senate had its first semester meeting on September 5th. We began with a reaffirmation of the importance of collaboration among faculty to craft grassroots resolutions which address academic and professional matters and seek to improve teaching and learning while bolstering student success.

Senators suggested forming workgroups to foster various projects--including service learning and civic engagement opportunities for the campus, celebrating and recognizing not only students who receive degrees but also students awarded certificates, encouraging textbook and learning materials innovation to help students cope with rising educational costs while still offering relevant and up-to-date disciplinary knowledge, and supporting student access to food, clothing and childcare. Moreover, the Senate expressed interest in working with administrators and community leaders to explore the development of a new outreach program to teach the formerly incarcerated students and the ability to offer on-site classes in juvenile detention facilities in our service area.

Faculty also remain actively engaged in the Guided Pathways Initiative. After summer trainings for discipline area experts and counselors, faculty are now finalizing Coursework Roadmaps and Program Profiles in order to provide guidance to students, particularly undeclared majors, in an effort to reduce unit accumulation, promote program completion and emphasize labor market information so students can make informed decisions about their futures.

The Academic Senate is also forming a faculty steering committee to help plan for a retreat set for next May that will focus on innovations and best practices in teaching and learning.

Finally, together with administrative leaders and classified professionals, the Academic Senate is working on the final proposal for a professional development learning center, identifying its guiding principles and designing the project with long-term sustainability in mind. Currently, we are set to survey all college employees about the kinds of professional development needed to continually improve in our job performance.

One of the key components of future professional development opportunities on campus is gravitating towards the foundation of an Institute for Applied Creativity and Community Transformation (ACCT) which will support teaching and learning at MJC, across disciplinary boundaries, by encouraging community-based, experiential and affective learning practices in the undergraduate college classroom. Recent scholastic and neuroscientific research have only reconfirmed that in order for students to develop higher-learning skills, they need more time for conversation, project assignments, invention education and other forms of applied creativity in order to master a skill, knowledge system or performance indicator.

An action-base college curriculum which emphasizes learning by doing helps our students complete their certificate and degree programs in a timely fashion and helps MJC interact in profound ways with our community as the institute aims to seek cooperative solutions to local problems. The emphasis of the proposed ACCT Institute, therefore, is on contextualized action--learning by doing, interdisciplinary collaboration and the instructional skills, learning models and innovations which narrow equity gaps, help overcome educational barriers and motivate students to succeed through self-agency.

Handout

- The [MJC Vision Goals](#) were referenced throughout the Senate's initial planning and prioritization meeting.
- The [Institute for Applied Creativity and Community Transformation \(ACCT\) Executive Summary](#) gives general guiding principles of one effort to foster new professional development opportunities on campus for faculty, classified professionals and administrative leadership.