

**Modesto Junior College  
Academic Senate  
Resolution: SP08-D  
Professional Standards**

**Proposed by:** The Professional Standards Committee

**Whereas:** The college relies primarily on the Academic Senate for faculty involvement in the accreditation process and faculty professional development, and this could reasonably be understood to include professional standards; and

**Whereas:** The Academic Senate does not currently have established professional standards for faculty; and

**Whereas:** The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, in standard IIA.6, states "In every class section students receive a course syllabus that specifies learning objectives consistent with those in the institution's officially approved course outline"; and

**Whereas:** The American Association of University Professors has an established standard of professional ethics.

**Therefore:** **Be it resolved,** that the MJC Academic Senate accepts the document "Professional Standards" as its policy.

**First Reading:** May 13, 2008

**Final Action:** September 11, 2008

**Disposition:** Carried

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**In order to facilitate clarity and uniformity among faculty in regards to best practices for the meeting of professional obligations, the Academic Senate recommends the following:**

1. **Faculty absences/Cancellation of Classes:** Faculty should strive to honor their commitment to contract hours. Absences will undoubtedly occur due to illness of oneself or one's family member, bereavement, matters of personal necessity, professional development obligations, etc. In cases when an absence from duty becomes necessary, faculty should contact their unit managers and the building supervisors relevant to their classes as soon as possible and every effort will be made, under the supervision of the dean, in consultation with the Office of Instruction, to address students' needs; this might involve collecting assignments, distributing information, or providing a substitute.

See:

"Article 11: Leaves of Absence." Faculty Contract Between the Yosemite Community College District and the Yosemite Faculty Association: July 1, 2007 – June 20, 2010.

2. **Finals:** Because the hours scheduled for final exam periods are included in those instructional hours certified to the state for each course, faculty are obligated to hold their classes during finals week. The rescheduling of a final requires authorization by the college President or designee. Members of the faculty are given, however, wide latitude to determine what manner of "finals week" instructional activities are appropriate and consistent with course outlines.
3. **Syllabi:** A syllabus communicates an instructor's goals and expectations about their course to their students. Well-written and effective syllabi communicate these goals and expectations clearly, giving students a greater chance to succeed in their coursework. Accreditation standards require that a syllabus be given to every student, in which the student learning outcomes approved in the official course outline are communicated. Syllabi should also communicate the manner in which the grades will be determined (including the number and weight of assignments and the grading scale).
4. **Roll books:** It is crucial that faculty keep accurate and legible roll books which include a description of how grades for the course are calculated. These roll books should be submitted to the records office at the end of each semester. Students are eligible to challenge the grade awarded in a course for two years after the ending date of the course. Grade books are important documents for petitions for non-attendance, verification of

attendance dates for financial aid purposes, and in correcting any clerical error that may occur in inputting grades into the system.

5. **Grades:** It is vital for our students that grades are recorded in a timely manner. College policy mandates grades must be input within forty-eight hours after the last scheduled final of the semester. Timely recording of grades can be critical for our students for several reasons. Since the college will not release a student's transcripts if any grades are pending, late grades can affect a student's transfer status, athletic eligibility, and release of financial aid from third party lenders. Also, since students are also allowed to enroll in a class while a grade is pending in that class' prerequisite, the later a student finds out they have failed a prerequisite course, the more difficulty it may be to enroll in open sections.
6. **Office Hours:** Instructors are expected to keep regular office hours. The office hour requirement can be found in the YFA contract Article 4.3 and Sideletter 8.
7. **Collegiality:** As colleagues, faculty members have obligations that derive from common membership in a community of scholars. They respect and defend the free inquiry of their associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas, they show due respect for the opinion of others. They acknowledge their academic debts and strive to be objective in their professional judgement of colleagues. They accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution. (*Faculty Handbook p.8, from other sources.*)
8. **Knowledge of our curriculum and ability to counsel students:** faculty are expected to remain abreast of trends and currents in their respective fields. This currency should cover those discipline/field-specific issues particular to students' educational plans and vocational opportunities in addition to classroom instruction and curriculum. Faculty are also expected to ensure that the content of current course outlines of record is reflected in their own course offerings while they should also maintain familiarity with the requirements and details of their department's programs and/or certificates.
9. **Shared Governance/Committee Work:** Faculty are expected to contribute to the college community according to their interests and abilities. For evaluative purposes, this contribution is defined as "active participation in collegial governance and campus life" (*YFA contract Appendix C-1*).

### **Shared Governance Between the Yosemite Community College district and the Academic Senates**

By law (AB 1725) the Board of Trustees is required to "rely primarily" upon the advice and judgment of the Academic Senates in selected areas. "Rely Primarily" means that recommendations will be accepted in most cases. If a recommendation is not approved,

the Board or its designee must promptly communicate in writing its reason to the respective Senate(s).

These areas are:

- A. Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing course within disciplines
- B. Degree and certificated requirements
- C. Grading policies
- D. Faculty role and involvement in accreditation process, including the self-study and annual reports
- E. Faculty professional development.

The Board of Trustees is required to reach “mutual agreement” between the Academic Senates and the Board in selected areas. “Mutual Agreement” means that recommendations shall be prepared by either the Academic Senates or the Board’s designee, and are subsequently ratified by both. If “mutual agreement” cannot be reached, the status quo will be maintained.

These areas are:

- A. Education program development
- B. Student preparation and success
- C. Program review
- D. Institutional planning and budget development
- E. District and college governance structures
- F. Others as may be mutually agreed upon by the Academic Senates and the Board of Trustees.

Principles of best practice by MJC faculty include:

Faculty members should be aware of their rights and responsibilities in shared governance. They should participate in unit-level (academic discipline and division level) deliberations and other efforts on the above issues. Academic Senate and College Council participate in deliberations and render decisions on shared governance issues. In order to exercise their right to shared governance, faculty should maintain clear and timely communication with their Academic Senate representatives, and take part in related unit level discussions.

10. It is understood that, as the spirit of inquiry is essential to the mission of educational institutions, faculty enjoy Individual Academic Freedom in the fulfillment of their job responsibilities. Essentially, this right protects faculty who choose to teach or express opinions that are contrary or unsavory to political groups or authorities from fear of retribution, including job loss.