From: Jill Stearns
Sent: Monday, October 08, 2012 2:54 PM
To: _MJC Everyone at MJC <_MJCEveryoneatMJC@yosemite.edu>
Cc: Joan Smith <smithj@yosemite.edu>
Subject: Memo: Updated participatory college governance structure

MEMO

To: MJC Academic Senate
    MJC Community
    Dr. Joan Smith, Chancellor YCCD

Re: MJC Governance Structure and Participatory Decision-Making

October 8, 2012

Modesto Junior College established a planning agenda item in the 2011 Self Study, reinforced by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges in college recommendation 6, to review and revise the decision-making handbook. Beginning November 2011, a workgroup comprised of faculty, staff, students, and administrators engaged in a comprehensive review of the existing decision-making document, processes, and structure. This review culminated in a draft of a participatory decision-making document that included:

1) definition of good faith effort and expected collegial participation in meetings
2) description of each of the existing college councils and committees
3) proposed change to realign budget and planning from a standing committee of the Academic Senate to a college standing committee.

The proposal from the workgroup provided a clear expectation of collegial engagement and respect for others in council and committee meetings. The expectation of good faith effort in decision-making facilitates engaging all constituent groups in dialogue on college issues. The proposed change to move budget and planning responsibilities to a college wide committee also strengthens the participatory nature of the college governance structure; however, the plan falls short of ensuring opportunity for participatory dialogue centered on each operational area of the college as required by Standards IV.A.1 and IV.A.3.

Using the proposal from the workgroup as the foundation, I presented an alternative participatory decision-making handbook and college governance structure to the Academic Senate and College Council for consideration. The proposal was presented with a college wide call for input and feedback. Two open forums and email were used to gather and implement the suggestions from
individuals and all constituent groups. Multiple versions of the proposal were shared broadly as the
document was revised to incorporate ideas and language that clarified the decision-making process
and governance structure. College Council met weekly to refine the document in an effort to create
a new decision-making handbook and governance structure that could be supported by all
constituent groups. College Council was ultimately successful in developing a proposal, *Engaging All
Voices: MJC Participatory Decision-Making Handbook*, which received approval from Student Senate,
CSEA, YFA, CSAC, and administration. Unfortunately, *MJC Academic Senate* did not approve the
document.

Understanding that college governance structure is a mutually agree matter as delineated in YCCD
Board Policy 4103, I have made a presidential decision to not accept the Academic Senate
recommendation due to the legal and fiscal implications that would result from failure to implement
a governance structure that meets the Standards. Although some have argued that MJC is not on
Probation due to governance structure (college recommendation 6), MJC is on Probation due to
integrated planning (college recommendation 5). Integrated planning requires a participatory
governance structure to support planning efforts and implementation of the plans. The implications
for MJC are sobering. The next level of sanction is Show Cause which requires the development of a
plan for college closure concurrent with additional work to meet the recommendations from the
Commission. The programs and services that MJC provides to students and the community are far
too valuable to allow minority opinion to halt progress toward fully meeting the Standards and the
resultant restoration of fully accredited status without sanction.

Failure to fully meet the Standards will bring serious consequences to Modesto Junior College
including:

1) continued sanction from ACCJC with the possibility of moving to Show Cause
2) loss of grant eligibility and repayment of funds
3) ineligibility for Title IV programs (student federal financial aid)
4) loss of status as a California Community College
5) special program accreditation placed in jeopardy
6) reduction in enrollment leading to exacerbated fiscal crisis.

The collaborative good work of faculty, staff, and administration has led to the finalization of a
decision-making document that will serve as the foundation for a new era of participatory and
transparent decision-making at MJC. Each college governance council and college committee will
have a website where minutes, agendas, and related documents are available to all interested
parties. Meetings of the councils and committees will be open to all interested in attending. Further,
the new college governance council structure increases opportunity through additional faculty, staff,
students, and administrators serving as representatives.

The next step is the appointment of representatives by each constituent group to serve on the
college governance councils. The representative names are to be forwarded to College Council by
November 16, 2012. The administrative chair of each council will determine a first meeting date for
the councils to be held in the fall semester 2012. Each council will refine their purpose (charge),
responsibilities and submit to College Council by March 1, 2013. College Council will engage in a
qualitative review of effectiveness and consider revisions of *Engaging All Voices: MJC Participatory
My deepest thanks to the students, faculty, staff, and administrators for the critical, thoughtful, and informed input in the document revision process; your time and effort are most appreciated.

Respectfully,

JILL STEARNS
President

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