
The MJC Academic Senate passed first readings of several resolutions at our October 3rd meeting, including [Resolution F19-A: Teaching the Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated](#) proposed by Senators **Theresa Rojas, Aishah Saleh, Noah Wilson** and **Andrew Kranzman**. The resolution reminds us that incarcerated individuals who participate in correctional education programs are *43 percent less likely to return to jail and 58 percent more likely to find post-release employment* than those who do not participate in such programs ([US Secretary of Education 11/16/16](#)).

The resolution also points out that the state of California's new funding formula encourages the development of educational programs for incarcerated students by allowing incarcerated student FTES counts to be included in a college's base-funding calculations. For these and other reasons, the resolution passed a first read unanimously and is set for a second read at our next meeting.

Danica Bravo, Project Rebound Coordinator at CSU Stanislaus, **Glen Stovall**, Project Rebound Coordinator at MJC and Dean **Ashley Griffith** have played a crucial role in informing the Senate's position on this issue as the three of them invited faculty to a campus-wide workshop the first week of October and then attended our last senate meeting to present on educational programming and services for the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated. The Academic Senate thanks them for these efforts and their time.

As shared at the last board meeting, the MJC Academic Senate is also forming a faculty steering committee to help plan for a [May 2020 Faculty Retreat](#) that will focus on innovations and best practices in teaching, including learning across disciplinary boundaries by encouraging community-based, experiential and affective learning practices in the college classroom.

In a similar vein, tomorrow the second of four mealtime faculty workshops will be held at MJC to model discussion and inquiry-based learning and features the sharing of best-practices related to using primary source materials and conversational teaching methods. We will engage readings like Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," Einstein's essay on "Science and Religion" and Virginia Woolf's "The Love of Reading." As always, trustees are welcome to attend and stay for lunch. We meet in the Library Annex basement on MJC's east campus.

One of the overarching goals of these professional development opportunities is to create a culture of innovation at the college and to help students develop the essential social and critical thinking skills that employers in our region seek but do not always find in the labor force. One example of a company which places great importance on the kind of skills that project and discussion-based learning teach is [Enterprise Rental Car](#), one of the biggest employers of college graduates in the nation. Enterprise, for one, doesn't pay too much attention to where prospective trainees went to college, what they studied, or their grades.

The company does care, however, about what are called "soft" or "essential" skills. According to Marie Artim, Enterprise's Vice President of Talent Acquisition, what matters are critical thinking skills, communication and problem-solving abilities. In this way, Artim says, "college graduates have demonstrated cognitive ability...the ability to learn, and to take on more responsibility, and to lead or manage others."

Teaching to the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated and encouraging faculty professional development that includes a healthy balance of project and discussion based learning are just two of the initiatives in the MJC Academic Senate this semester. At the next meeting, I will share more about senators' recent move towards forming a taskforce to explore alternative models for the current [Academic Calendar](#), including course compression and intercession possibilities.

Until then, thank you for the opportunity to share with you a bit about our work in the senate this semester.