

Academic Senate Report



Highlights

- Resolution supporting Equity Minded Communication passed at the March 20 Senate meeting. The Academic Senate encourages all constituency groups and leadership to adopt and practice.
- Academic Senate President attended Communication workshop sponsored by AFT. Great training on Myers Briggs personality, conflict resolution communication style and an emphasis on cultural influences on communication styles. Excellent training that can help everyone. Grossmont College Communication faculty member, Victoria Curran, was one of the presenters.
- Academic Senate passed a vote on the Academic Rank list for faculty.
- Academic Senate President attended the Guided Pathways conference. Focus was on teaching and learning. Participated in team discussions centered on identifying actionable strategies to implement at the college. One goal is to come back to basics and define what equity means at our college. Also looked at disaggregated data for top enrolled courses.
- Academic Senate President attended local Area D meeting to review resolutions being presented that will go on to the statewide senate conference in April for a vote.
- Looking forward to a district-wide meeting with Dr. Neault to discuss concerns related to the installation of security cameras on our campuses. Concerns are directly related to the potential negative impact on students of color.
- Attended Classified Senate meeting on March 17 to seek support for Student of Note ceremony. Grateful to the numerous classified professionals who volunteered to help. Also grateful to Michele Martens for her leadership and delicious pastries.

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Academic Senate President's Message



My parents were born in Mexico. My father completed the third grade and my mother the sixth grade. My father began crossing the border when he was only 12 years old. Any money he made, he would send home to his family. He would get caught by the Border Patrol and get sent back to Mexico. On occasion, he would be placed in a big freight plane and flown down to Central America.. He would then find his way back to the border. When he was in his 20's, he was put in an immigration encampment and fed oatmeal three times a day. He lost over 30 lbs.

After many years of working hard, an employer sponsored my father and he became a permanent resident. He later married my mother and brought her to the U.S. My mother raised 7 children while my father worked a low paying job for most of his life. He worked 6-7 days a week. When we woke up in the morning he was already gone to work. When we went to bed at night, he was still working. We occasionally saw him on Sundays.

Why am I sharing my story? Why is this important? Every student has story and their story matters. After what my parents went through to give me a better life, I owed them. I still owe them. I will forever owe them and thank them. I will always be the voice for the student who comes to college to succeed, but end up doubting themselves when they do not feel supported or validated. This educational system was not created for students like me to succeed, yet Latinos account for over 40% of the population in California and 38% of the students at Grossmont College. Are our students aware that we are a Hispanic Serving Institution? Who has the responsibility? Where is the policy change? Where is the accountability? What are we doing as a community?

I am part of the less than 1% of Latinos with a doctorate degree. I am not an example of success. I am an example of perseverance - and this is in my indigenous blood.

-Dr. Pearl Lopez

“Whiteness is not only present in predominantly white institutions; it is just as evident in minority-serving institutions like ours, because we, even with our very best intentions, have been socialized into an academic culture that was borne out of the experience of white males. Even though higher education is no longer for whites and males only, their imprint lives on in our traditions as well as our definitions of collegiality, merit, and fit.”

- From Equity Talk to Equity Walk

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Program Highlight Justice Scholars

The Justice Scholars program (for formerly incarcerated students) started in Spring 2020, when COVID-19 hit and caused a complete shutdown. While other programs began losing students, the Justice Scholars began with just 1 student from Las Colinas. Every semester since then, the program has continued to grow to now 58 students. The program currently has a faculty member assigned at 50% contract.

The Justice Scholars program was created with community and belonging in mind. Many of our formerly incarcerated students do not see themselves as college material and often deal with stigma and doors closing on them. Students are assisted every step of the way holistically and connected with the proper resources to make sure their needs are met. They are offered a peer mentor from the Justice Scholars program, the opportunity to develop their leadership skills in the Fighting Recidivism through Empowerment and Education (FREE) Club and are supported with workshops that help them become independent once again. Workshops are related to expungement, job applications, careers, university attendance and so on.

Justice Scholars is going on its 3rd graduating class this Spring 2023. They graduated 3 students in Spring 2021, 5 students in Spring 2022 and 5 students will be graduating this Spring 2023. 100% of the graduates have transferred to 4-year universities. All graduates are honored at a graduation ceremony. A full-time counselor/coordinator position was recently approved. This faculty member will be able to strengthen the relationship with the Las Colinas Pathways to Success Program.



Yohany Corona-Batalona
Justice Scholars Counselor/Coordinator



Las Colinas
Class of Fall 2018