

# THE NEWSLETTER

## OF THE DE ANZA ACADEMIC SENATE

April 2007

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### President's Message

Lydia Hearn

What is the difference between asking someone "May I help you?" and "How may I help you?" They may sound the same, but actually the first phrase merely solicits a yes-or-no answer while the second already carries the assumption that help will occur.

Too often we might feel like we do not have the time to help others on campus, particularly when we are rushing off to our own classes or meetings or when we have stacks of papers and tests to grade.

Stopping to give directions to a student might take up one minute of our time, but do we wonder if we really have even that one minute to spare?

Even though there are so many valid reasons why we might be in a hurry, we need to stop and think about what makes De Anza so successful. It may be the strength of our programs, but those programs are only as strong as the employees who help support those programs—including faculty, staff and administrators. While our campus has grown over the years to over 25,000 students, we still need to cultivate "a mom-and-pop" climate in the sense of ensuring that everyone is welcome on campus, students and all staff included.

In response to this need, the "We're All In this Together" (WAIT) campaign came into being. Instead of rushing off, we need to wait and think about how someone else might need our help. The Academic Senate is forming a taskforce to create ways in which we can improve friendliness

on campus. We invite all employees and students to serve on this taskforce as we embark on this effort. While the WAIT campaign, will devise specific action plans, we also hope to embrace this as a concept that informs all our practices.

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### An Overview of Cultural Competence

Culture is an extremely complex sociological phenomenon. It is complex because it is the particular lens through which individuals and groups of people view the world. Culture is fluid, dependent upon the many influences that impact our lives. Given the complexities of culture, how is it possible for one to attain the goal of cultural competence?

We must first understand that competence does not mean mastery. It simply means that we are able to adequately complete a task. Therefore, when we are able to create a teaching and learning environment in which our pedagogical approach is adequately appropriate and responsive to our students and this confluence of factors serves to inspire them to successfully reach their academic goals, we have made major strides towards attaining cultural competence.

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One of the major ways that we're all in this together is with our strategic plan. Early in Spring Quarter, the strategic plan will be presented to the various shared governance groups for review. A Town Hall meeting is scheduled for April 16th from 1-2:15. Teams consisting of classified professional staff, faculty, and administrators crafted the plan based on the commitments to action from all areas of campus, on presentations made by divisions to the Instructional Planning and Budget Team, and on input from campus-wide meetings. A main theme that emerged across all four Institutional Initiatives—Outreach to Underserved Populations, Individualized Attention for Retention, Cultural Competency , and Community Collaborations—was the need for better integration of programs and services. In other words, we need to be all in this together more effectively. While the proposed strategic plan is exciting in itself, again, its strength lies in the strength of the people engaged in it. Let's all work to make this strategic plan a living, breathing reality rather than a shelf document.

Recent concerns that the Academic Senate is addressing show our commitment to the idea that we're all in this together. We are in the midst of voting on the formation of a Bond Measure Review subcommittee in which faculty play a more significant role in the design and implementation of Measure C projects and also review any concerns that arose in Measure E processes. We have formed a joint ad-hoc committee with the Foothill Academic Senate and the Faculty Association for the three groups to work together on changes to the tenure review instrument and academic freedom.

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Initially we must realize that as educators our own backgrounds influence how we live our lives as well as how we teach. We bring our perspectives into the teaching and learning environment. We interpret our experiences and often those of others, through our individual lenses. In order to move towards cultural competence we must acknowledge and understand who we are culturally and how this influences our behaviors within our classrooms. Gloria Ladson-Billings, in her article *Teaching and Cultural Competence*, (Rethinking Schools, Vol. 15, No. 4 – Summer 2001) states that: “Teachers who are prepared to help students become culturally competent are themselves culturally competent.”

Next, we must be committed to assisting our students in becoming culturally competent. As we teach, we can provide them with experiences and opportunities which allow them to discover how culture influences how they learn, what they learn, and its application to their lives. Discipline specific strategies related to these discoveries strengthen our students' connection to the content, knowledge, and skills we want them to learn. As well, this knowledge empowers our students to connect successfully with the institutional culture of De Anza and higher education in general. We create meaningful and relevant learning experiences when we provide these kinds of learning experiences and opportunities for our students.

Last and most importantly, achieving cultural competence, requires us, as faculty, to learn about our students' cultures. We should develop strategies within the teaching and learning

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We have made progress on reinstituting an Instructional Testing service, which will assist students to succeed and provide needed help to faculty. Instructional Testing is expected to return beginning the sixth week of Spring Quarter. Not only will the service help all faculty but adjunct faculty in particular, who might find it difficult to administer make-up exams when having to travel between many campuses. Indeed, part-time faculty concerns have been a main focus of the Academic Senate as we have worked on securing part-time faculty office space for the future thanks to the efforts of Beth Bresnan, Chris Storer, Susan Rines, and Mary Ellen Goodwin. We want to hear of any other concerns that part-time faculty might have, and we have two wonderful at-large part-time representatives as senators. Mary Ellen Goodwin has been a long-standing senator representing part-time faculty, and we recently appointed Will Paicius as another at-large senator.

As we finish up this school year and look forward to the upcoming school year, we will see many changes particularly in the areas of technology and budget. The District is looking to secure a new Educational Information System and wide faculty input is encouraged. We are pursuing future possibilities in public domain materials as well. In terms of budget, everyone might be able to breathe a small sigh of relief as B budgets were augmented across divisions by 20%. Also, Measure C projects were adjusted to reflect change in parking projections. Thus, we are able to allocate the saved monies to augment other projects such as the

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environment that provide us with insight into the cultures of our students and their realities. We must learn to value our students for the varied knowledge, skills and experiences they bring to the teaching and learning environment. This is the foundation upon which new learning will occur.

Ultimately, we must be willing to commit to learning pedagogical approaches that are appropriate for the diversity of cultures that our students embody within our classrooms. We need to recognize that cultural difference within the teaching and learning environment is an asset and provides us with a broad variety of perspectives from which we can draw in the process of facilitating understanding, knowledge and skills within our particular disciplines.

Cultural competence requires that we engage in self-reflection in order to understand our own cultural contexts, histories, attitudes and beliefs. Next we must learn ways to “effectively manage the dynamics of difference” which requires us to develop cultural knowledge. Additionally, we must learn to work within the contexts of our students experiences, beyond the boundaries of our campus (family and community). Last, we must become advocates for institutional change demonstrating an educational environment in which equity is foundational and our pedagogy reflects our understanding of difference.

Cultural competence is attainable. With resourcefulness, creativity and institutional support we can achieve our goal!

Dr. Marion Y. Winters  
Director, Office of Diversity  
Instructor, IIS and Women's Studies

Multicultural Center, renovation of the ATC, conversion of the old Bookstore, and environmental sustainability efforts.

As we form the WAIT taskforce and begin our campaign of “We’re All In this Together,” let’s already begin to embrace the philosophy even before we see concrete action plans. In the midst of over 20 meetings a week, I will commit to stopping and waiting the next time I see someone who needs my help. Even if I don’t think it is my job, it is my job.

## PART TIME FACULTY REPORT

Mary Ellen Goodwin

### Senate Representation for De Anza Part Time Faculty Increases

Central purposes of an Academic Senate are to work with the college faculty and administration to ensure shared governance, to enhance the professionalism of all faculty, and to protect academic freedom. Over the past year, the De Anza Academic Senate has taken two significant steps to strengthen its support of part time faculty to ensure that their concerns are represented in academic affairs and shared governance procedures.

Last Spring, in an all-campus election, a second seat for a part time faculty Senator on the Executive Committee was approved. Further, it was approved that each of the two part time faculty Senators would receive a quarterly stipend for their service. Even though part time faculty can serve as Division representatives, having Senators that are specifically dedicated to representing part time faculty is critical to professional equity.

The current part-time faculty members of the Senate are Mary Ellen Goodwin, who has served as a part time faculty Senator

for close to six years and Will Paicius, who will be joining the Senate in the Spring.

### Part Time Faculty Office Space Becomes a Reality

Historically, community college part time faculty have often sacrificed holding office hours due to the lack of office space, and combined with the lack of commitment by college administrators to provide such space, students are the ones who have been harmed the most.

At its Fall 2001 Session, recognizing that students deserve equitable opportunities for contact with their instructors regardless of their full time or part time status, the State Academic Senate for California Community Colleges adopted a resolution in support of office hours and facilities for part time faculty. Some six years later, President Brian Murphy has pledged his support for office space for De Anza part time faculty. Beginning in the Fall Quarter, when the modules currently located near Parking Lot A are relocated to Parking Lot C, near the tennis courts, one of the units will be outfitted as office space for part time faculty until a permanent home in the basement of the old Bookstore is ready for occupancy.

Designated office space for De Anza part time faculty is long overdue; however, it is gratifying to know that the ongoing lobbying of many individuals is finally paying off. The Senate and the part time faculty extend their appreciation to President Murphy for recognizing the value of student-instructor contact and for taking the steps necessary to guarantee the expectations of students to have access to their instructors outside of class.

Everybody benefits---as it should be.

