

THE NEWSLETTER

OF THE DE ANZA ACADEMIC SENATE

September 2006

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President's Message

Lydia Hearn

Imagine this past summer. For those of you who went on vacation, imagine the excitement or relaxation you felt while lying on the beaches of Hawaii, hiking in the mountains of South America, or learning about the culture and history of Asia.

Or perhaps you stayed home. Imagine the accomplishment you felt completing projects, the respite you felt taking afternoon naps, the enjoyment you felt spending time with your family and friends.

Now imagine this upcoming school year. Rather than starting to feel panicked and already overwhelmed, I want us to think about how to make this school year as exciting, enjoyable, productive, or even peaceful as this past summer. What will it take for you to look forward to and to experience this school year in the same way we do our vacations?

Last September, I encouraged everyone to talk with each other, to share expertise, knowledge and excitement with each other. Over the school year I saw more dialogue between faculty both informally and formally. For example, the Academic Senate and the Office of Instruction presented a teaching and learning conference by De Anza faculty and for De Anza faculty in the Spring

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Vice President's Message

Wayne Chenoweth

My message to you comes from a very different place than where I was last quarter. I now know quite a bit more about what I don't know with regard to the ways we conduct the affairs of our college. Just as surprisingly though, I also now know that we as a faculty possess a huge potential to influence the outcome of our affairs. We only need to take advantage of opportunities intelligently as they arise.

I borrowed a phrase from one of the candidates for the Vice Chancellor of Technology as my goal for the coming year: to effectively market change using persuasion and diplomacy. Honestly, these are tools I have not used extensively in my career to date, but I'm learning fast because I believe that is the way to move ahead. I am optimistic that we have an opportunity to improve faculty academic and professional matters.

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in which over 75 full-time and part-time faculty members attended. Over 10 faculty members presented, representing a variety of disciplines including Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Intercultural Studies, Math, Music, Physical Education, Physics, and Reading. As a means of celebrating our teaching and learning new methods, we hope to continue this annual conference, possibly moving it earlier in the school year to Winter Quarter.

This year, I hope to see a year not only of talking and sharing but of **action**. Many developments have created new opportunities including increased value of shared governance, Strategic Planning, Student Equity, Environmental Sustainability, Civic Engagement, Technology, Measure C, and much more.

The Academic Senate Executive Committee held a retreat with the Senior Staff (President, Vice Presidents of Instruction, Student Services, and Finance and College Services) to review processes and the role of shared governance. This year the Senior Staff will join the Executive Committee quarterly to plan and to coordinate shared governance efforts more effectively. This strengthening of the Academic Senate's role in shared governance can also be seen in the restoration of the Academic Senate's released time, which had experienced reductions during the past few years of budget cuts.

Having participated in the USC Equity for All Project and building on our existing work of promoting student

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PLUS/MINUS

GRADING:

**“Now it begins,
da da da da da,
needles and pins...”**

Beginning this quarter, the Foothill-De Anza Community College District grading system will include the plus and minus symbols. All faculty members are expected to acknowledge these symbols but are not specifically required to award them. Grades that include plus and minus symbols will now appear on students' transcripts. It is expected that, within a term or two, many students will be asking questions about plus and minus (and what it takes to get a plus) at the beginning of the term.

With this in mind, all faculty members are advised to have changes in their grading systems and policies *at the start of the fall 2006 term*. The following are recommended. None of them are particularly difficult or time consuming.

1. Determine what your approach will be to converting your current base-grade-only (i.e. – A, B, C, D, F) system to one that acknowledges the use of the plus and minus symbols.
2. Modify your methods for calculating grades as appropriate to include the use of the plus and minus symbols.
3. Modify your green sheet/syllabus grading policies as appropriate to describe your use of the plus and minus symbols.

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President's Message

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equity, Marion Winters and De Anza's equity team members shared data and other information with the Senate, which prompted further discussion of the need for De Anza to increase efforts in closing the equity gap. The Strategic Planning Initiative (see article in this newsletter) will help in addressing this concern. Also, as the Senate works towards the development of Student Learning Outcomes this upcoming year, foregrounding equity in these efforts will be of vital importance.

Throughout the year, the Senate also focused on the value of Environmental Sustainability. Responding to presentations by Kristin Jensen-Sullivan and Ed Quevedo from De Anza's Environmental Studies department, the Senate committed to increased awareness, advocacy, and practice of environmental sustainability at De Anza. Not only do we hope, as our Mission Statement asserts, to cultivate students who are responsible citizens in their communities and environments, but we are also promoting De Anza to become a role model. With new Measure C initiatives, the campus has committed to constructing environmentally sustainable buildings as well as improving current buildings to reach sustainability standards.

Most, if not all of us, entered the career of teaching because we had a passion for it. But sometimes bureaucracy, budget cuts, lack of resources, and a host of other things get in the way. This year, we have the opportunity to take more control through

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Vice

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Our President, Lydia Hearn, moved us closer to more open and transparent processes last year. I fully support her direction and am excited about what lies ahead for us this coming year. We should all help facilitate communication and participation among the faculty and with administration and the board so all parties are afforded opportunity to review and comment upon recommendations, proposals, etc. I'm hopeful a more effective participatory governance will emerge.

The dog barked, summer passed. I venture we all learned something this summer that will change the way we approach the academic year. I learned to sail. I should have done that years ago, I enjoyed it so much. I'm sure I will come across other similar situations this year -- choices I could make that will open a door to remarkable experiences. I'm also convinced you will come across opportunities that could change your life if you choose to take advantage of them. Let me encourage you to learn new ways to effectively participate in our community. So I say to you, "Trim that jib" and "Get ready to jibe!"

Do you have a response to the Newsletter?
Is there a particular article or type of article you would like to see ?

If so, please contact Paul Setziol at setziolpaul@deanza.edu

For other matters pertaining to Academic Senate or faculty interests in general, contact Lydia Herarn at hearnlydia@deanza.edu

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shared governance; we are in a better financial position (see article) because of growth, one-time monies, and Measure C than we have been in several years; we are planning for increased and better coordinated technology to help our efforts (see article); and the Academic Senate is committed to celebrating our faculty and our work as is evident from this past year's tenure reception *for* faculty and *by* faculty.

Let's continue talking with each other but let's also take action and get involved. Let's do what it takes to look forward to this school year as much as we look forward to our vacations!

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As you have likely observed already, the new grading scale is very similar to that used at CSU and UC campuses.

| | |
|----|-----|
| A+ | 4.0 |
| A | 4.0 |
| A- | 3.7 |
| B+ | 3.3 |
| B | 3.0 |
| B- | 2.7 |
| C+ | 2.3 |
| C | 2.0 |
| D+ | 1.3 |
| D | 1.0 |
| D- | 0.7 |
| F | 0.0 |

[Note the absence of a C- grade and the fact that an A+, though available, has the

same 4.0 grade point multiplier as the A grade.]

If your grade book currently shows plus and minus symbols all the way through final grades, all you need to do is fill in the plus and minus as in the study period last year.

If your grade book currently shows base letter grades only before the final grade, you may want to consider just averaging them and assigning the closest grade in the new scale.

If your grade book currently shows points/numbers for various inputs and total points and you use the "Threshold" system described below, you can keep your current base grade points/numbers and calculate the .3 differential above and below those for the plusses and minuses.

If your grade book currently shows points/numbers for various inputs and total points and you use the "Range" system described below, you may want to consider new points for plusses and minuses and then round up and down to them as appropriate.

The **Threshold** method is a numerical method where, currently, there is a cut off point for the low end of, for example, the B grade below which a student currently is awarded a C or lower grade and you do not round up. If you use this method, you have been maintaining standards by not rounding up and the plusses and minuses should become thresholds of their own in between the base grades.

The **Range** method is used with and without numbers assigned to individual

grade inputs. In this method the base grades serve as markers of achievement within the total distribution of grades above the F grade and students grades have been rounded up and down as appropriate as per there deviation from those markers. In this method, achievements which were rounded up to the nearest base grade are likely to become minuses.

**The De Anza Academic Senate
recommends the following
Convention for the
Meaning of the A+ grade**

An A+ designates significant demonstration of work beyond the scope or level of the class: clear potential for more advanced work in the subject area.

De Anza Technology Transformation

Are you ready for an upgrade? Last year many technology initiatives demanded our attention like the creation of a new campus technology plan, ETS service level agreements, learning management system selection, the possibility of renewing our technology with Measure C funding, and new tech staff for faculty support to name a few.

De Anza Technology Plan

The Technology Task Force (TTF) was charged with the creation of a campus technology plan in the Accreditation Self-Study Report Standard III.C (page 224). "Vice president of Finance and College Services will provide leadership to develop a De Anza College Technology Plan based on the campus Educational Master Plan that provides direction to the district Technology Strategic Plan."

While the accreditation study assumes our campus plan would provide direction to the district plan, the TTF in fact employed the district technology plan as a starting point for the De Anza Technology plan. Perhaps future efforts will reverse this trend and follow the accreditation study process where college plans inform district strategic plans. The current DA tech plan however, took as a starting point those places in the district plan listed as the responsibility of the campus and added to this plan as needed. The Task Force first focused on understanding the relationship between what services ETS provides to De Anza and what it does not. Last spring the district Educational Technology Services group (ETS) presented a detailed list of what they provide in their service level agreement documents. The DA tech plan will address both the ETS relationship and those areas not covered by ETS. By clarifying this relationship, we hope our current processes will become more transparent and accessible to all. The goal is to create the best working tech plan possible that will help us to optimize our resources, provide direction for forming new tech initiatives, and for prioritizing and funding existing plans. We should end up with a tool that enhances our ability to manage our limited resources.

Catalyst

Last spring, the TTF was charged with choosing one learning management system – a timely task since we would have new versions ahead for our current systems, WebCT and ETUDES. The goal was to choose a single system because we only have resources to support one. The Tech Task Force formed a committee which chose the open source program, Moodle, as the best system to carry us into the next

century. Our Moodle implementation will be called Catalyst.

While both WebCT and ETUDES will be licensed through the end of June 2007, about 50 De Anza instructors who currently use them will migrate their courses to Catalyst over the coming year with help from our new Faculty Coordinator and Instructional Designer. Some have already taken training from the @ONE project or San Francisco State University over the summer. A successful test of Catalyst was conducted during summer session, with instructors teaching CIS 2, EWRT 1A and JOUR 2. To request your development account, a new course shell, or to learn about training events, go to the De Anza College Catalyst Development System <http://catalystdev.deanza.edu>.

Faculty who want to teach new online courses or use Catalyst in a hybrid format for their classes will be helped on a first come, first served basis. Only if there are too many requests to accommodate will the Distance Learning Center need to resort to a priority system of selection. As its name implies, Catalyst is a tool that will accelerate our use of technology to improve instruction. Eventually, it will also automate grading and record keeping as well as present a consistent face to our students. It can also be used to help campus groups communicate better when used as a collaborative tool.

New Tech Staff

Fortunately, we have two new positions in place to help with instructional technology training and support, positions sorely needed since we lost these functions in budget cuts three years ago.

The new Distance Learning Center Academic Coordinator, Willie Pritchard will report to Christina Espinosa-Pieb, Dean, Academic Services. The Academic

Coordinator (Willie) will take the lead in supporting faculty teaching hybrid and distance learning classes and work together with the Distance Learning Coordinator to further develop the distance learning program at De Anza. He will also serve on the Curriculum Committee, design and deliver training for mediated learning, assist faculty in the migration of courses and advocate for technology on behalf of faculty.

Our new Instructional Designer, Mary Parke will report to Linda Elvin, Acting Coordinator, Distance & Extended Learning. The Instructional Designer (Mary) will support faculty in designing and developing new courses and revising courses currently being offered. She will assist faculty in the migrating courses from ETUDES and WebCT to Catalyst, De Anza's new course management system and work with Willie on the development and design of training for mediated learning. Mary will also be working to improve and enhance the Distance Learning Center's web resources for both faculty and students.

These two new positions will help us get up to speed with Catalyst and other technology mediated instruction. As you may have heard, we also have a new Vice Chancellor of Technology, Dr. Fred Sherman who will be joining our district on October 1 full time. Dr. Sherman comes to us from Butte College where he was their Chief Technology Officer. He also has experience at Barstow Community College and as coordinator for many of the Statewide Community Colleges grants. He is a recognized leader in technology issues both within the California Community College System and on national committees.

Coming this fall – Electronic Curriculum Management System (ECMS) and

De Anza Portal

Sometime this fall, Christina Espinosa-Pieb and Anu Khanna will be announcing the rollout of the (ECMS) subsystem #6 aka: Course Outline Creation and Management. Right now, the Curriculum Committee members are beta testing and training. Other subsystems now in place and directly related to ECMS development include The Web-Based searchable course schedule, searchable catalog, Footnote System, and the printed schedule and catalog. The Curriculum Committee Approval Process subsystem is still under development. The goals of the completed or core Electronic Curriculum Management System are:

- A standardized course outline template
- A step-by-step online interactive creation procedure
- A standardized and accountable approval process
- To make the creation and revision process of course outlines more efficient, allowing greater opportunity to expand and enhance the curriculum of De Anza College in a shorter period of time

Beginning this fall you will also have a new, easier way to get to the various types of information you need in the form of a portal. The De Anza portal is like a one-stop-shop for your district data needs. For example, after you login to locations from the portal, e.g., your MeetingMaker account or the district's reports page to get your pay stub, the portal remembers your logon info from then on and you never have to do it again! Just login to the portal and everything else is instantly available from there.

You will especially like the "My Classes" tab that presents your rosters for each class -- past, present, and future. You can even download an Excel file that includes email addresses to your desktop! In the future, the plan is to offer faculty-specific applications such as online grade submittal, early alert

notification system, and integration with our new Catalyst system.

One feature I have been experimenting with is the ability to add Really Simple Syndication (RSS) news feeds to your "My Page" tab. For example, for those of you with Manila websites, any news item you post there automatically becomes a news feed that can be easily subscribed to on your customized portal page. Look for an upcoming article on how to automatically post the Academic Senate news items to your customized portal page. This feature of Manila and the portal will make it very easy to keep in touch with all your committee work.

Once we have the identity management technology in place that ETS is now working on, we can enable the student version of the portal. When the network becomes open to wireless computing, this combination of technologies along with our consistent online learning environment will significantly enhance our students' experience. Soon, they will be able to access all their De Anza resources and online course information through one login from any place on campus. Now that's 21st century!

Measure C status

This fall De Anza will begin to order technology related equipment with the first draw of Measure C funds in the amount of \$ 7,567,370. New or replacement equipment includes desktop computers, printers, multi media rooms equipment and some AV/low tech items. We desperately need this equipment to replace outdated and dying hardware. Desktop computers are now scheduled to be replaced on a 4 year cycle.

There you have it. You are now upgraded and ready for a fantaaaastic fall with the latest and greatest technology at your side.

The Associates Degree: In Trouble Again or Association by Degree

Paul Setziol

Some students value it a little, some a lot. Some faculty give a hoot, others wouldn't holler if the associates degree went away. Some colleges care so much about the degree that they award them automatically and don't even bother to tell the student. What to some colleges is a science oriented degree title is entirely a vocationally oriented degree to another.

So began the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Educational Policy Committee deliberations on a position paper regarding the associates degree. It soon became apparent what the hot ingredient was and why the time was right to reassess the degree, its meaning, and its value. At a statewide meeting, approximately 50 people attending a breakout session were asked how many of them were from colleges recently implementing a "Transfer AA". More than half raised their hands. When a follow up question probed how many of those colleges decided to implement this new degree based on careful deliberation, educational philosophy discussions, or anything else seriously germane to the content of the degree, ZERO hands went up. It turned out that all those who answered the first question said that they did it to increase the number of degrees under the influence of something called Partnership for Excellence dollars.

And then the discussion got really interesting (my special way of saying that I got incensed). Some colleges had a Transfer AA which was a combining of their General Education with some or all of UC and or

CSU transfer requirements. This, like De Anza's was a bit of a sham when it came to satisfying Title 5 requirements but at least those colleges could say that, to a certain extent, the degree was theirs. The other colleges sold the farm completely, and, by the way, may have hurt the community college movement in a very profound way. These colleges said that any student satisfying transfer requirements and accumulating a total of 60 semester units (it not mattering how many units were accomplished at that particular college) automatically got the degree. Some of these degrees were "silent", i.e. once the requirement was satisfied, it just got added as a line on the student's transcript – PERIOD.

I hope you're catching on but, just in case you are not entirely paying attention, I will, shall we say, confirm your thoughts about the negative ramifications of this development. If a college faculty allows an outside institution to completely determine its degrees, it has completely surrendered its right to be considered a professional faculty, a community of scholars who, individually and collectively, have something to profess. Those faculty should not be surprised if and when the work they do is organized more like piecemeal for CSU or UC. Am I an alarmist? Perhaps but what is your take on CSU's feeling entitled to determine the maximum number of units our students may complete prior to transfer?

Speaking of transfer, it turns out that there is sometimes such a confusion between having a degree and transfer that even very smart people in discussion find it impossible to think of the one without the other... unless they get saved by the presence of someone from a vocational program, someone who knows that, in the world of work at least, an Associates Degree really does mean and amount to something by itself.

So now we're back at the beginning. Should we have a degree?