



DVC FORUM



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RATIONALLY RESTRUCTURING THE COLLEGE

Keith Mikolavich, English Instructor and Faculty
Senate Vice-President

The ACCJC letter of February 1, 2010 indicating that DVC was removed from Show Cause and placed on probation observed that the college has made serious progress on Recommendation 1: Decision Making Roles and Recommendation 2: College-Wide Planning. The letter noted that DVC “has made significant efforts in satisfying this recommendation but has yet to fully implement, test and evaluate the new governance structure and the quality of decision-making that results from it.” While acknowledging “there is now a commitment in the newly designed governance system to actively contribute to the college’s planning agenda through new processes and dialogue,” “a great deal of work remains to be done.”

What is that great deal of work? Here’s what I think that work is:

1. In creating and implementing a new governance structure, we’re essentially creating a new culture at DVC. A culture in its early stages is particularly vulnerable, so we have to ask how we can best nurture it.
2. How can we best nurture this new culture? I’m not quite sure, but I do know that we have to be careful not to map the old DVC onto the new one. We have to see its new possibilities and limitations and not turn to cynicism whenever we find ourselves disappointed with a decision. It means we need to be vigilant as well, make sure that we are, in fact,

developing new processes and that these new processes are being followed.

3. The heart of that new culture, it seems to me, is the Integration Council, which brings together all areas of the campus to dialogue about student success and make recommendations about critical needs and priorities based on program reviews.
4. This new culture is being tested by the crucible of the worst budget crisis in the history of our college. While the President will ultimately make the big budget cut decisions, we have to determine the extent to which we can positively influence a rational outcome.
5. One big unresolved question is the extent to which the Integration Council will be influencing the budget cuts this year given that the inaugural process of the prioritization of program reviews is happening simultaneously while decisions about budget cuts are being made.
6. Whatever the extent of that influence, the college will still expect the President to make the cuts rationally and rationally explain the basis of the cuts.
7. Because the cuts run so deep—approximately \$5.2 million of \$70 million budget—they will essentially result in a serious restructuring of our college. That restructuring should be rational. What does it mean to rationally restructure the college? I’m not sure how to answer this question either—in fact, I’m hoping we get that discussion going as a college, in and outside the Integration Council, right away—but I can share my initial thinking on what rational cuts might look like.

Rational restructuring:

- Is based on supporting critical needs/priorities across campus that directly address maintaining student access and improving student success;
- Identifies and commits to essential support staff that enables labs and tutoring centers and any

other essential services to continue their critical work;

- Eliminates duplications and other forms of wasted resources; and
 - Is driven by a clearly articulated policy.
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COULD WE TURN GEORGE'S RANT INTO A RAVE?

Bruce Reeves, English Instructor

George Turner's lamentation about grade inflation is factually correct, of course. But it's not new: back in the late '70's, when I was a quasi-administrator in the Acalanes High School District, I had access to district-wide grade distribution figures, and graphed the steady rise of A's and B's until they far outweighed C's, D's, and F's. Of course, the Acalanes District, which includes Orinda, Moraga, Lafayette, and Walnut Creek, is the west's Lake Wobegon, where *all* the children are above average.

But George's accusation that "[you DVC faculty are] unfamiliar with excellence within [yourself] and so [you] cannot recognize it in others!" is indeed, as George acknowledges, a rant. Yet we continue to send students out into a competitive world which, for the most part, consists of other students who also have been marked as excellent when many should have been marked as average. The same is true at all community colleges, public colleges and universities, and private colleges. So, in a real sense, all those students are competing on a level playing field. News of mass career failures of our students has yet to be reported.

At Princeton three years ago, A's accounted for 47% of undergraduates' grades. Last year, in a lonely attempt to deflate grades, the Princeton percentage dropped to 41%. Average grade given at UCB in 1960 was 2.51; in 2006 it was 3.27. ><http://gradeinflation.com/Ucberkeley.html>< In 1966, 22% of all grades given to Harvard undergraduates were A's. That grew to 46% in 1996, a study found [http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2007-03-27-princeton-grades_N.htm]. The background story at that website is not encouraging to those of us who still seek some kind of delineation of sheep and goats.

If you Google "Grade Inflation Gone Wild" you'll hit an article in the Christian Science Monitor from May of this year which states: "At elite Brown University,

two-thirds of all letter grades given are now A's." It would appear that the problem might even be pandemic. The US is not alone: "Grade inflation in Chinese universities is out of control, by western standards. In a famous Chinese university within the north Shanghai university ghetto, Chinese professors, associate professor, lecturers and other staff are required to assign 40% of their students an 'A' grade; 30% must receive a 'B' grade and 30% are required to receive a 'C' grade. A grade of 'D' should be used very sparingly because it would tend to discourage a student and a grade of 'F' should only be used when a student's tuition remains unpaid." [<http://www.google.com/search?q=grade+inflation%2C+china&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a>]

Who in academe will step forward to bring order to our world? If Princeton can dare to take the lead among the Ivy's to bring some semblance of order to evaluation, could DVC take the lead among community colleges? Or are we too spent from the administrative insanity of the last decade, the accreditation woes, the funding cuts, and the grade scandal. Is leading out of the question?

And if not, would George help do it?

PILGRIMAGE TO CORNWALL AND THE WEST OF ENGLAND

James Rawls, History Instructor, Semi-retired

Ready to make some long-term travel plans? Retired history instructor Jim Rawls will be leading a fully-escorted, small-group tour to Cornwall and the West of England in May 2011. Known as the English Riviera, Cornwall boasts not only the country's mildest climate but also some of its richest history. Our tentative itinerary includes visits to Plymouth, Exeter, Avesbury, Penzance, St Ives, and Land's End. In the spirit of the pilgrimages of old, our pace will be leisurely with plenty of time for contemplation along the way. Registration is through the American Council for International Studies (ACIS) and will be limited to 30 participants. Contact Jim Rawls at jrawls@dvc.edu or 707.938.1981.

CONGRATULATIONS

The DVC Faculty Senate would like to announce Nancy Zink as the 2010 DVC Faculty Lecturer. Nancy has been teaching English at DVC for twenty-two years. She has served on numerous committees and in several reassigned positions throughout the years. Nancy will lecture on how to have the best possible experience at DVC. There will be two presentations of her lecture in April, one during the day and one in the evening followed by a reception. Details will be available soon. Join us in congratulating Nancy on this distinguished honor and plan to come hear her words of wisdom. Encourage your colleagues, students and friends to do the same.

PUBLISHERS NOTE The Forum is a biweekly publication of the Diablo Valley College Faculty Senate. Its pages are open to any faculty member, manager, classified staff member, or student who wishes to communicate something of concern and interest to the campus community.

DVC FACULTY SENATE VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

The DVC Faculty Senate Voluntary Fund has traditionally help support the Annual Faculty Lecture, the Faculty Senate Dinner Theater, the DVC Retirement Dinner, scholarships and other events as approved by the Faculty Senate Council. The Faculty Senate Legal Defense Fund has been paying on the debts incurred in the lawsuit over Division Deans. You can help by donating through a payroll deduction or a quarterly, annual, or lump sum donation. You can use the form below to submit your pledge of support. Thank you!

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