

Santa Monica College Student Affairs Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date & Time: Wednesday, October 25th, 2023
Location: SSC 222
Chairs: Beatriz Magallon (Chair), Esau Tovar (Vice Chair)
Attendees: Beatriz Magallon, Esau Tovar, Thomas Bui, Nancy Cardenas, Press Nicolov, Sharyn Obsatz, James Thing, Esmeralda Hernandez (Student Rep) and Donna Davis-King (virtual)
Guests: Alicia Villalpando (Interested Party)
Excused/Absent: Matt Musselman, Justin Liu (Student Rep)

I. Call to Order: 12:06 PM

II. Public Comments:

After welcoming the Committee, Bea opened the floor to public comments. In relation to a conflict in the Middle East, Sharyn spoke about a Student Inter-Club Council (I.C.C.) incident that resulted in a group of 12 student clubs voting to prevent the creation of the “Students Supporting Israel” club. Bea explained that under AR 5424 “Formation of Student Clubs”, new student clubs only need a F-T Faculty advisor and 6 student members. Esau further stated that he believed that the students who were present at the I.C.C. meeting may have forgotten the policy and that this club should not have been prevented from forming. Sharyn reiterated that she and other Jewish SMC professors were shocked by this incident. Bea thanked Sharyn for bringing this situation to the attention of the committee and stated that the Committee would resume the conversation once Thomas arrived so that he could give further comment on the matter.

Esau informed Donna Davis-King that given Brown Act limitations on remote participation as a full committee member—with voting rights—her participation in the Committee today would be limited. Bea expressed that Thomas had mentioned 10 meetings could be virtual and Esau stated that number had to do with Board meetings. Esau added that in this case for Donna, the difference would be in not being able to make a motion or vote on regulations. Bea stressed that both she and other committee members most definitely welcome and value Donna Davis-King and Alicia Villapando’s remote participation and that we would not want to lose their voices due to policy. She expressed the meeting would resume as usual since we did have quorum.

III. Approval of Minutes:

a. Motion to approve the Minutes for October 11th, 2023: Press moved, Esau seconded, (8) Yes, (0) No, (0) Abstain. Unanimous at 12:15 pm.

IV. Updates and Old Business:

a. Updates on AR 4100.10, AR 4100.7

Bea took AR 4100.10 “Updating Diplomas, Transcripts & Other Records Based on Gender or Name Changes” to the Executive Committee for a first read; it received no comments. Likewise, AR 4100.7 “Official Transcripts and Test Scores” was passed. The two ARs will now move forward for signatures. Bea stated that she was not able to present the other five Academic Regulations due to time constraints during last meeting on October 17th, but that she would present them to Exec. on Tuesday, October 31st.

Bea then briefly brought up AR 5140 “Center for Students with Disabilities” and asked Esau about its status. Esau stated he is still waiting on further word from Legal Council regarding moving forward with the Academic Regulation.

V. New Business:

a. AR 4232 Pass and No Pass Grading

- i. Bea informed the Committee that she brought AR 4232 forward because the Pass/No Pass (P/NP) deadline has changed from 30% to the last day of instruction. With this change now in practice, Bea believed that the AR needed to be updated to reflect this new reality. Bea also recommended lifting the P/NP 14-unit limit for SMC students and noted that this is not a Title 5 requirement and that other colleges do not have this limit. Bea noted, however, that it is in a student’s best interest to take classes for a grade if they are planning to transfer, especially if the class is related to their major. Bea suggested adding a disclaimer for students to acknowledge that essentially states that opting to take a class as P/NP can negatively impact their ability to transfer to other universities, as not all universities accept P/NP classes beyond a certain unit amount.
- ii. Esau explained that he felt uncomfortable with the proposed change, stating that he wanted to hear from the Counseling Department. In addition to this, Esau felt that the 14-unit limit on P/NP classes has protected students who are transferring to the UC system as the P/NP decision is irreversible. As such, Esau does not want to automate the process to request an unlimited number of units as Pass/No Pass and stated that students can petition to go beyond the 14-unit limit which forces students to strongly consider their decision. Alicia stated that it is a contentious issue in the Counseling Department given that not all students are transferring or are not going into the UC or Cal State system. Esau reiterated that the lifting of the 14-units P/NP rule should not be left up to the Student Affairs Committee, alone.
- iii. Both Bea and Esau agreed that the P/NP issue can be alleviated by simply adding additional information in the Academic Regulation stating that a petition is needed to exceed the 14-unit P/NP limit would lead to transparency. The Committee settled on the following language:

“The purpose of this policy is to permit students the opportunity to explore courses without fear of penalty of a low grade and/or to preserve their grade point average (gpa).” Continuing with alterations in the AR, the Committee added the following:

“Students are advised to meet with a counselor to discuss the implications on financial aid, athletic eligibility, veteran’s benefits eligibility, program participation and transfer admission. Students should check with transfer institutions Pass/No Pass unit limitations before opting for this grading option.” Continuing, “2. Once enrolled, a student may take graded courses on a Pass/No Pass basis

in up to 14 transferable units. Students can select this grading option on their student portal (corsair) by the stated deadline (last day of instruction as published by the District). 3. Students who choose to exceed the 14-unit limitation may submit a Pass/No Pass Petition to Admissions and Records by the stated deadline (last day of instruction as published by the District). 4. Students who possess a Baccalaureate or higher degree from an institutionally accredited institution may take an unlimited number of units on a Pass/No Pass basis.”

iv. After further deliberation and discussion, the Committee voted on AR 4232.

Motion to approve AR 4232 James Thing moved, Esau Tovar seconded, (8) Yes, (0) No, (0) Abstain. Unanimous at 1:38 pm.

b. AR 4100.5 Transfer Credits from Transfer Institutions

Bea brought up AR 4100.5 to the Committee and briefly outlined the issues that were present in the AR. Although there was some consensus on the changes that were needed, a decision could not be swiftly reached as to language added on transcript notations that are not on other regulations and so the Committee decided to pause the work on AR 4100.5 to focus on discussing the I.C.C. incident now that Thomas Bui was present.

Student Club Issue Follow-Up

Thomas Bui stated that the situation, while deeply unfortunate and wrong, reflected the tumultuous reality of the world and that the situation came about due to the student’s raw, unchecked emotions regarding the situation in the Middle East and that this was, hopefully, a learning opportunity for many students. More than this, Thomas assured the Committee that this was an extremely rare occurrence which was not likely to happen again. In response to Sharyn and Donna’s suggestions to amend AR 5424, Thomas confirmed that no amendments were needed to the AR because the proper protocols were not followed in the moment by the leading members of the Council due to the high tensions and the desire to keep the peace. Sharyn once again stated that this was a concerning development and the Committee thanked her for her willingness to bring this concern to the Student Affairs Committee and that the issue was resolved.

VI. Announcements:

Bea reminded the Committee that the next Student Affairs Committee meeting date would be on November 1st and reminded everyone how important it was to have quorum. She asked if anyone was not going to be present to please let her know.

VII. Adjournment: 2:02 PM

For all documents, visit: <http://www.smc.edu/ACG/AcademicSenate/Committees/Pages/Student-Affairs.aspx>

Respectfully Submitted by Jackson Edwards