

Notes from Senate Faculty Round Table Discussions on 9/29/17

PGR Win-Win Agreement Table

1. How has the PGR Win-Win Agreement policy affected the way you teach, grade, or your academic standards?
 - One comment was that the Win-Win agreement and the entire basis behind this contract or document is that it (the agreement) places the entire responsibility of student academic success on the instructor, not the student.
 - One person mentioned that they used their final exam to override any given test score. In addition, this person commented that in the scheme of worrying about PGRs, it is so difficult sometimes to get students to even attend class for a test. In addition, this person stated that as an intervention, he/she emails all students after the first test to let them (*missing info*)
 - Another person mentioned that they are in a STEM field, and he/she has not altered their standards at all to reach an “unrealistic” PGR.
 - Another person admitted that they have lowered their standards a “little bit.” This person mentioned that they now offer extra credit.
 - One person mentioned that public schools claim that students move forward with mastery. English 1301 has dropped its entry score by 27 points, so what has happened to academic standards at the state level? The administration is disregarding where these students really are academically, placement-wise. The person added, “I cannot take full responsibility for anyone’s academic achievement except my own.”
 - Someone else added that administrators should sit in our classes sometimes so that they can visually see firsthand what kind of issues the students face.
 - Faculty could become creative to adjust figures to avoid win-win agreement.
 - PGR and completion rate minimum requirements seem like we are asked to inflate grades.
 - Moreover, the last comment in this session was that many W’s are due to personal circumstances, and San Antonio College needs more data on why students drop. Furthermore, instructors have no control students’ circumstances.
2. What do you see as punitive about the Win-Win agreement?
 - One major question that was asked of everyone many times was: what happens to you if you do not sign the Win-Win agreement? There were all sorts of answers. One was you might not get a summer overload. Others sat and speculated. No one was clear on an answer. Will progressive discipline take place if you do not sign the agreement?
 - The students at San Antonio College are being punished when their grades are being inflated in some classes and there is no genuine learning occurring.
 - Several people stated that going along with the Win-Win agreement is insulting. Some people added that we do not “need” a Win-Win agreement to tell instructors that they have to improve.
 - Another concern was that some people may use the Win-Win document against faculty in some way.
 - Administrators should be able to teach in order to know what is going on in the classrooms across campus.

- Where did the 70% come from? Why is this the benchmark? This question was asked by everyone at both sessions.
 - The fact that talking to the chairperson is not sufficient. An agreement has to be signed and then participate in a meeting with all faculty members.
 - Win-Win agreements cannot be disciplinary. Progressive discipline should be rescinded as antithetical to an academic environment.
3. What fears do you have or actual punishments have you experienced, in regard to win-win agreements?
- One person fears that other people who are not as fair and judicious as their chair will use the Win-Win agreement against them in some way.
 - Another fear is that new faculty and adjunct faculty may feel pressured to achieve the 70% or lose their job.
 - Grade inflation is a fear.
 - One comment made was that Win-Win agreements should not require a signature. If it's not punitive, then why do we have to sign?
 - Another fear is that students will not receive a quality education.
 - Some people fear progressive discipline.
 - One comment made during this session was that San Antonio College is sending a message to students that the curriculum is not really hard. The instructors will pass us so they won't fall short of the 70%. Students are very aware that instructors need to have a certain PGR!
 - Many at the session fear that their employment here is on the line, at jeopardy.
 - Another comment during this session was that resources here at San Antonio College are limited. Supplemental instructors are needed in many high risk courses.
 - The main concern is that this "agreement" will develop into progressive discipline.
 - Is this win-win agreement my first strike?
 - This agreement is perceived a camouflaged discipline.
4. What are your thoughts about having 70% as a standard for the Win-Win agreements?
- It is not feasible to have 70% as a standard for all classes. Some have prerequisites. Some do not.
 - Again, people brought up the fact that 70% is a "magic" percentage and where did it come from?
 - 70% is unrealistic with the fact that we have an open door policy for admission at San Antonio College.
 - People wanted verification as to when you must sign a Win-Win agreement. Is it the very next semester that you get below a 70% PGR in a class or if you get below a 70% PGR over three long semesters? Nothing is clear.
 - 70% is arbitrary.
 - There are so many variables present in the realm of student success. How can someone randomly pick a percentage?
 - Someone stated we have an open door policy with closed door percentages. This puts an undue burden on faculty to perform unrealistic goals without any support just fear of punitive actions.
 - Lastly, someone stated that the benchmark percentage should be based on a statewide average of other community colleges with similar demographics. This would be more realistic.

- Keeping in mind that not all programs are the same, could the 70% standard for the win-win agreement be discipline specific?
 - Could we implement a two or three-year cycle instead of basing the student? (*unclear*)
 - If we, as faculty or program, achieved the 70% or better what do we get? Is there any type of recognition for the faculty members that are not in the win-win agreement?
 - Why the target for faculty members is 70% when the chancellor's target is set at 50%?
5. What other strategies would you recommend be used to help faculty continually improve the success of students in their classes?
- Many stated they want administrators to come into their classes to see what they can do to support the faculty.
 - Let us really remediate the students. Maybe offering programs in the summer to bridge the gap in Math, English, and Science.
 - We need more resources: tutors, SI instructors, Labs, etc. One example on cuts: the INRW center. Where will students go to get help? Resources are limited and some students can only come to campus on the weekends or they work all the time. Cost-saving barriers are impeding students from being successful.
 - We are ignoring the A student by focusing on the PGR. We need to think about our best students, as well as those who struggle. All of our students are important.
 - One person stated, as faculty we reflect, analyze, and go forward with our best strategies every day.
 - Better use of employee development day.
 - Faculty members need time in the office to prepare for class, grade assignments/exams.
 - We need to limit meetings to a specific time on Fridays. Could we suggest a schedule for Fridays? Something in which the needs of faculty members are also incorporated. Right now, we have so many meetings and in several locations, we are supposed to attend two meetings at the same time. Could we limit meeting times to 8 to 12 and leave the rest of the day for faculty to work in their office? Or designate one Friday a month for faculty to prepare for class and grade assignments?
 - Lastly, some people also stated that we need to work on more professional development and should have the financial and moral support from the college and its administration.

Faculty Morale Table

What do you believe is the source of low faculty morale?

- District dictates
- Perception of inequality
- We need to have the goal in mind when a new initiative is generated.
- Equity of workload is a problem. Some faculty carry heavy workloads, and others do relatively little.
- Lack of information regarding state and national legislation. Faculty are unaware of the larger forces at work in the background. How many of these initiatives and changes are being pushed by legislation? Which are coming from district? Which are coming from the college?
- There is a serious disconnect between faculty and administration .

- It feels like we are always presented with just one more initiative.
- Adjunct faculty are told to participate in initiatives such as the mentoring program, but they don't have the time or compensation.
- Faculty 180 guidelines have changed since first presented and now are marked against the faculty member.
- We are not a students-first focused college anymore. We are more concerned with PGR. Numbers have taken precedence over academics.
- Elumen deadlines are unreasonable. Elumen and grades due on the same day so soon after the last final exam is very hard to do.
- Administration sends late notices for training requirements; we received a notice to have IT security training due by Friday, yet it was sent on a Thursday.
- Initiative overload. Redundancy of meetings.
- We are not treated like professionals.
- SAC is on the leading edge of initiatives, which means we are on the bleeding edge. We take the brunt of the negatives associated with the initiatives.
- We spend far too much time on measurement. That time should be spent on instruction and evaluation.
- SAC and the district do not address individual problems with individual professors. Instead, we are given blanket policies that negatively affect the faculty who are doing everything well, as they are forced to devote extra time to addressing problems they are not creating.
- The district and faculty administration put all the responsibility for student success on the faculty's backs.
- In the last ten years, the focus has shifted from instruction to a cookie cutter model to force higher PGR and completion rates.
- Requiring 4DX certification tests is preposterous.
- The current culture will make hiring new, qualified faculty difficult. They will not want to work in our administrative culture. Scholars will not accept this.
- Too many decisions are made without faculty input.

What is an example of when you made a unique contribution to the college and you did, or did not, feel appreciated?

- Lack of appreciation (e.g., no faculty of the month award)
- Why do we receive so many pins instead of something more useful?

In what ways could the college leadership demonstrate to you their appreciation?

- More support for the programs
- Due to lack of funds, some students need to buy their own lab supplies, paper towels, cleaning supplies, and/or personal protective equipment.
- Some faculty members are buying supplies
- District services need to be held to a standard just as faculty performance is.
- The chancellor is offered a bonus for achieving 50% of his goals. Faculty should be offered bonuses, not progressive discipline and win-win agreements.
- Faculty should be offered stipends and professional development that is not Covey-oriented.
- Rather than the 40 hour workweek requirement, we should keep the 10 office hour requirement, and each faculty member will decide how to spend that time.

- The professional development courses and activities we are offered should not be Covey-oriented. They should be discipline specific.
- We want faculty autonomy.
- Faculty should be able to evaluate administrators just like students and administrators evaluate faculty.

What suggestions do you have that would help the Faculty Senate advocate for changes that would improve faculty morale?

- Does District really listen to senators?
- Perhaps we can have a regular editorial in The Ranger that presents a faculty view.

In summary, most discussed topics: too much top-down activity. Not enough faculty-driven initiative. Too much administrative coercion.

Perceptions of Faculty Senate

1. What do you believe is the primary role of the Faculty Senate?

- The FS mission is stated in the bylaws and you aren't doing that.
- You should do what the mission statement states
- Not communicated to the faculty
- FS should be representing the faculty. Make sure faculty is given the responsibility for the curricular/curriculum. Now everything is coming top down, and the Senate has not represented the faculty view.
- To represent the faculty and not the administration. If adversarial, the FS must take the side of the faculty.
- The faculty voice has even been ignored in the Senate (the Senate has been the broom and rug to sweep and hide away faculty concerns)
- We don't have our voice being recognized (and getting this voice recognized is our role)

2. What could be done to improve your perception of Faculty Senate?

- Have the FS do something.
- Voice concerns to the district and the public; live the purpose and mission statement
- We have done nothing for adjuncts or staff
- The Ranger says something—where is the statement from the Faculty Senate?
- We are afraid to say something.
- The round table is a good start.
- See the information in its whole and not just the cleansed and edited version
--give all the raw material, not the cleansed version
- We need open communication and if there is fear of coercion that is an administrative problem

3. What is the best way for Faculty Senate to communicate what they are doing with the faculty at large?

- Letters –letter to the Chancellor, Letter to the Editor, Ranger, College President
- Voice of the Senate column in the Ranger (an idea!)
- FS shouldn't be afraid to be confrontational; should be able to state our view(s).
- Fear exists in the Senate to communicate; hence, the filtered views
- Need mechanism whereby Senate communication can't be censored by administration
- No punitive actions against faculty for communicating between faculty.

4. In what areas do you think Faculty Senate is doing a good job of representing faculty? In what areas is the Senate doing a poor job of representing the faculty?

- None
- The Faculty Senate has not done enough to help us remain an independent college.
- Poor job with compensation
 - adjuncts not represented
 - disproportionate raises for administrators
 - more remuneration for our performance
- Frustrated that what I say is ignored, anger builds up
- FS needs to stand up for faculty passion.
- Going to FS meeting, no idea what is going on, backroom deals with district and it comes down from above.

Other issues and topics that emerged at our table

- District has silenced us (faculty, Faculty Senate)
- Nobody telling the public about the reverse diploma sham; nothing ethical in the reported growth in graduation rates. (Advisors paid to do this reverse diploma work—not advising!)
- We need the entire notes from the Charrettes
 - resentful that a paid consultant tabulated the table results from Faculty Development Charrette.
- Charrettes are a sham, structured to reach a foregone conclusion.
- Problems with Marketable Skills—why aren't we voicing concerns about reducing down to marketable skills
- Coercion—Presidents feel coerced by Chancellor. Presidents running scarred. Overall organizational structure should be revised.
- District is designed to support the sister colleges, not designed to control them, dictate to them.
- Where did the decision come from to change the passing scores on the TSI for entering Freshman Composition.
- Hostile work environment
- Get rid of 4DX
- Multiple instructors when they complete their advanced degree are leaving
- Too much “Boom—Do it!” top down stuff.

Other issues

1. One topic on the survey was whether or not there had been much change in the rate of **dropping students before and after census date**. Do you have any concerns about this? If so, what are they?

- Smart Start – Cumbersome and Problematic process
 - Instructors can make mistakes. Don't make the drops punitive
 - Time consuming to correct
 - Faculty may choose to not drop the student because it will affect their PGR or Retention negatively.
 - Dropping Before Census- What is the point of having the policy if the student can get back in the course?
- New Drop System
 - Confusing and not user friendly- searching for Banner ID, for example.
 - Advisors seems to be doing the final drops
 - Drop down menu still does not include “real life” reasons for dropping, such as work problems. It is incomplete.
 - There is the feeling that faculty will be punished due to some of the drop down reasons listed. System is geared to lay the fault on the faculty.

2. Another topic on the survey was the **four day class schedule**. Do you have any concerns about this? If so...

- Being on campus on Fridays- some faculty feel they can grade at home.
- Meeting Fatigue (either Feast or Famine)
 - No time to catch up or work on courses
 - Meetings are important but not all are effective.
 - Redundancy of meetings
 - Students are not coming to campus (labs, tutoring, advising...)
 - Have meetings from 8am-12pm to leave time in the day to work on courses.
 - Schedule and plan meetings in advance and more thoughtfully, so faculty and departments can plan accordingly.
 - The first two Fridays of the Fall semester were a challenge. So many meetings when faculties were still working on courses.

3. What **other concerns** do you have that you would like to bring to the attention of the Faculty Senate?

- IT issues- Availability of resources is difficult and confusing; problems with GPS make it difficult to mentor; Phone calls unanswered from IT...
- Early Alerts button issues caused problems, you reach out for assistance, no callbacks or solutions and then the faculty is blamed and made to feel incompetent.
 - We are spending too much time covering our tracks instead of spending quality time with students.

- Peer evaluators need to evaluate on what is observed in the classroom, not “ what I would like to have seen” or “ I wish you had a different activity”
 - We accept a variety of learning styles but should also accept a variety of teaching styles.
- Faculty 180
 - Confusion as to who can be on the committee, mixed messages.
 - Should Evaluators be chosen from within your own division/department or can any faculty member be your evaluator?
 - Evaluation: Guidelines are still unclear?
 - Grading is inconsistent. Some committee members feel they were graded too harshly.
 - Evaluators should be able to look at CANVAS courses.