

Resolution on Collaboration

For Consideration on April 7, 2020

Whereas, the changing conditions brought about by the current health crisis/global pandemic were unexpected and have demonstrated a lack of preparedness by even our most trusted institutions in the Bay Area, the state of California, and the nation; and

Whereas, administrators, both at the Peralta colleges and the district office are working diligently in the face of this pandemic, primarily through improvisation due to the fact that current policies for situations such as these were as vague as they were hypothetical when written; and

Whereas, most affected by the institutional changes are students and faculty, struggling to adjust to changing modalities of education and the complete absence of dedicated Distance Education funding from the district to support campuses in its delivery, thus highlighting that appears to most as a lack of basic comprehension of the critical educational moment for our students, one that that would be at the very least mitigated by regular faculty consultation on matters such as these; and

Whereas, edicts emanating from a relatively tiny group of administrators at the district office as to changes in schedules, pedagogical modalities, and grading— to name but a few— have been met with confusion and consternation by faculty who expect that participatory governance and partnership with the district are rights that are endemic to all faculty who are entrusted with the education of young adults and our community writ large; and

Whereas, omissions and errors in initial communiques with faculty and staff have led to numerous corrections and updates, further confusing both faculty and staff as to their role and responsibilities, as we all grapple with conditions that very well may constitute a “new normal”¹; and

Whereas, the latest missive from the district office to Peralta faculty (*Faculty: Where are you? Student Survey Results Say they Haven't Heard from Instructors [sic]*) was sent without any attachment to the student survey referenced in the email message, and is either intentionally misleading or a demonstrable misapprehension of how to conduct data analysis; and

¹ “Correction: Faculty: Academic Update 3.18.20”; “CORRECTION: Spring Break Moved to March 16-21, 2020”; “CORRECTION: Classes Begin April 6”; Faculty: EW Grade UPDATE--Impacts the grade you can assign”

Whereas, faculty bear the brunt of the decisions made at the district level, communicating to students each time that a new directive comes from the district office, confusing not only faculty, but also our students, no doubt compounding their struggle, as they are already tasked with learning in the context of this crisis; and

Whereas, faculty stakeholders, including the Laney College Faculty Senate and our faculty union, have been patiently waiting for the opportunity to truly contribute to the problem-solving and alterations to our educational and pedagogical processes that are indeed necessary to reduce the increase of COVID-19 cases in the Bay Area, as we move towards the end of this semester and plan for another; therefore, be it

Resolved, the Laney College Faculty Senate urges the Peralta district administration and whatever leadership teams exist to work closely with representatives from faculty organizations that have a legal right to input and negotiation as to changes in curriculum and learning conditions, in a joint effort to cut down on errors and confusion that has thus far characterized their actions despite their most sincere and diligent and earnest efforts; and be it

Further Resolved, that the Laney College Faculty Senate reminds the Peralta district administration that in the context of these emergency conditions, participatory governance and consultation with faculty would enable the district to make wiser decisions as to how best facilitate student success in our classrooms, counseling offices, and libraries.

Approved unanimously on April 7, 2020