

## **#2 DRAFT**

### **Faculty Leadership at Gavilan College: Filling the Shared Governance Gap**

**Methodology:** faculty interviews, Academic Senate discussion, literature search on campus engagement of faculty. Contact Leah Halper, lhalper@garlic.com

#### **I. Premises:**

A. Gavilan College cannot and should not function without full, active, vocal faculty participation.

B. A leadership gap originates in a participation gap--more and more faculty find it difficult to become involved in activities that were routinely well attended in the past--including but not limited to graduation, social events, TLC trainings, and union events such as informational meetings on benefits. Those who do not feel engaged are less likely to invest time in becoming leaders.

C. For some identical and some divergent reasons, full-time and part-time faculty at Gavilan College experience barriers to full, active, and vocal participation and leadership in shared governance. It is in everyone's interest to dissolve these barriers.

D. Fewer hires of FT faculty in recent years (and probably in the near future) will have a major impact down the line, as few or no new full-time faculty will be "in the pipeline" to be mentored or trained for future leadership

E. Given economic and cultural shifts that result in heavy and continuing employment of part time faculty, it is advisable to create a culture which is "load-blind" in terms of weighing faculty qualifications for most leadership positions, though full-time or part-time status (not to mention other logistical factors) can and will affect who actually accepts a given position at a given time.

F. Some barriers to participation may be locally addressed, but many are systemic at the state or federal levels.

G. Barriers should be addressed expeditiously if the college and community are to avoid a leadership crisis, and to benefit from faculty expertise in a wide variety of areas.

H. The participation of other sectors at Gavilan--students, classified staff, and community members--is likewise critical and of concern, but will not be central to this report.

#### **II. Current and potential results of a Leadership Gap**

1. Important work for the College (accreditation, strategic planning, IEC, committees, department chairs, Expenditure Reduction Task Force), the Academic Senate, and the Union may go forward with empty faculty seats.

2. Alternatively, faculty seats may be filled by faculty who are not engaged participants, not prepared, not comfortable or able to communicate to constituents, or not confident about speaking up in a given arena.
3. Important initiatives in which faculty are not widely or actively involved (or about which faculty do not feel informed) fail to get faculty support upon implementation, sometimes leading to delays while initiatives are re-discussed or changed, and often leading to frustration all around
4. A small group of mostly full-time faculty are active on many committees, a reality that leads to burnout and may limit innovation.
5. There generally is no mechanism for mentoring and replacement or "timing out" on leadership roles.
6. When a vacancy occurs, the urgency to fill it leads to a "cover your bases" mentality, which means that behind-the-scenes recruitment often precedes a formal hiring, election, or appointment process. This leads to the appearance or reality that positions are not filled by selection or election of the best candidate from a viable pool.
7. Some believe that a few faculty do everything and take the "best" assignments. Others believe that most faculty do nothing and refuse to step up. Faculty morale is adversely affected in both cases.

### **III. Specific Barriers--All Faculty**

- a. Mechanisms for recognition of faculty who make outstanding contributions are limited.
- b. The block schedule inherently eliminates a significant percentage of potential participants from any given meeting.
- c. The block schedule and off-sites mean that many faculty who used to see and interact with one another and with others on campus now can go months without such interaction.
- d. Even long-time faculty are not fully informed of college events and initiatives; there is no regular communication to the faculty on Big Picture developments, especially as they relate to instruction.
- e. Faculty at different stages of their careers, and who work at Gavilan for a variety of motivations, have widely varied personal and professional barriers to involvement.

#### **A. Specific Barriers--Full Time Faculty**

- aa. Increasing "accountability" due to state and national changes in funding keeps many faculty (especially in categorical programs) busy with SLO, PLO, reporting, and documentation work.
- bb. A deluge of new state requirements and procedures leads to "innovation fatigue," which can lead to apathy, resentment and withdrawal.
- cc. Curriculum requirements, usually handled by FT faculty, are becoming more exacting and more frequent.
- dd. Long-time faculty leaders burn out, step back, and/or retire without having mentored replacements.
- ee. New FT faculty may or may not be assigned faculty mentors, who may or may not provide guidance and support for college involvement
- ff. Some work previously done by classified staff has been affected by classified staff attrition, leading to fill-the-gap efforts by faculty (for example, DRC)

### **B. Specific Barriers--Part Time Faculty**

- aaa. Costs of being involved are not reimbursed by the college--the meeting rate is almost never granted for part time participants, and part time faculty who come from off campus on a non-teaching day are not offered mileage reimbursements.
- bbb. Departments which try to use department funds for such reimbursements must do considerable paperwork and are sometimes told they cannot use department funds this way.
- ccc. Many part time faculty understandably choose compensated work elsewhere, or uncompensated time with family or other interests.
- ddd. Until a strong rehire system is in place, some PT faculty cannot commit to a college they do not feel is committed to them.
- eee. Part time faculty often live far from campus, limiting their on-campus presence to two days a week.
- fff. Some part-time faculty hurry after class to another part-time job elsewhere.
- ggg. Some part time faculty do not know of opportunities to contribute, and perceive that there are no benefits or rewards for doing so.
- hhh. Some PT faculty are not well connected to FT faculty in their departments who could invite or bring them into campus life.

iii. Some PT faculty do not feel valued and do not therefore wish to contribute.

jjj. PT orientation does not introduce new faculty to FTimers, provide mentors, nor does it stress involvement and how to achieve it.

#### **IV. Recommendations:**

1. The college should prioritize hiring FT faculty replacements and continuing with a five-year plan for new FT faculty as soon as is financially feasible.
2. The Faculty must become interested, informed, and involved in shaping policy and implementing new requirements at the local, state and federal levels.
3. The union, Academic Senate, and Administration of the college should collaborate in designing training and mentoring programs for all faculty, inside and outside the classroom
4. Mentors should be trained, incentivized, and recognized.
5. Meetings should be paid for PT faculty; minimally, mileage should be provided from the appropriate department or committee budget so PT faculty coming to campus just for a meeting do not lose money.
6. A college hour that is carefully implemented, with clear guidance on appropriate activities, set meetings of key groups, and someone who schedules one-time events and activities, is desirable in terms of boosting participation and a sense of belonging and investment in Gavilan College among faculty.
7. Weekly or twice-monthly newsletter from the Office of Instruction should outline current activities and discussions of interest to faculty.
8. All key meetings should allow a distance-participation option available to any member or stakeholder with an internet connection.
9. When appropriate, meetings or parts of meetings that are information-heavy rather than participation heavy, should be recorded for posting online so people can "attend" at their convenience.
10. Every faculty leadership position should have a replacement-and-mentoring component built in; duration of terms should be clear where appropriate.
11. The Academic Senate ask an ad hoc group to gather and publicize Best Practices for departmental involvement of PT faculty (including communications, scheduling, evaluations, etc).

12. Orientation for all new faculty should stress engagement, participation, and leadership opportunities, and should involve more returning faculty in related activities.

13. Faculty and administrators should make no distinctions between qualified FT and PT faculty on the basis of load status in hiring or appointments for leadership positions.

14. Questions about participation outside the classroom should be part of all faculty hiring processes, though part time faculty who are "freeway fliers" should not have a lack of experience or time held against them.

15. Similar efforts should be undertaken regarding student and classified staff participation.