



GOVERNANCE AND THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

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I. INTRODUCTION

The governance system in the Sonoma County Junior College District is derived from three sources:

- A. It is organized around a standing committee system and professional academic traditions that reach deep into the history of the District
- B. It is based on State and Federal legislative directives and the California Education Codes.
- C. It includes a tradition of welcoming appropriate professional innovation to local governance permissible within the Education Codes. The Sonoma County Junior College District does not limit its governance traditions exclusively to those procedures mandated by State and Federal agencies.

It is structured to allow for participatory governance, which are the collective responsibility of the four constituent groups (faculty, administration, classified staff and students) and the Board of Trustees.

II. GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

- A. The governance roles of the Board of Trustees and their designee, the Superintendent/President, are set in California Education Code and Statutes and enhanced with historical traditions and innovations permissible within these codes. The Board, or its designee, is directed to maintain, operate, and govern the District in accordance with the laws of the State and to establish rules and regulations for the governance and operation of the District.
- B. The Board of Trustees shall establish procedures that ensure:
  - 1. Faculty, staff and students are given the opportunity to express their opinions and participate effectively in District and College governance at the campus level; and,
  - 2. The right of the Academic Senate to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards. [Ed. Code 70902, Section 7].
- C. Through participatory governance, the Board of Trustees and their designee, the Superintendent/President, receive advice and recommendations from the faculty, administrators, classified staff, and students
- D. Suggestions and recommendations within participatory governance are provided through the College committee system, collegial consultation with faculty, and the drafting or revising of written policy and procedures.
- E. Whenever policies or procedures recorded in the District Policy Manual do not suffice to regulate campus activity, past practice shall prevail while the governance procedures outlined here are activated to seek new understanding and/or policy.

### III. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

- A. Board consultation with the faculty.
  - 1. Faculty participate in the governance of the College through the Academic Senate or through the faculty bargaining agents. The rights and responsibilities of bargaining agents are described in the contracts between the District and the recognized faculty bargaining units.
- B. Academic Senate Rights and Responsibilities
  - 1. The rights and responsibilities of the Academic Senate to participate in the governance of the College are enumerated in California State Education Code and in Title 5 Regulations. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - a. Through collegial consultation, provide the Board of Trustees with the advice and judgment of the faculty on professional and academic matters, including:
      - 1. Curriculum
      - 2. Degree and certificate requirements
      - 3. Grading policies
      - 4. Educational program development
      - 5. Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success
      - 6. Faculty roles in District and College governance
      - 7. Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes
      - 8. Policies for faculty development activities
      - 9. Process for program review
      - 10. Processes for institutional planning and budget development
      - 11. Any other academic or professional matter designated through mutual agreement (Title 5, Sections 53200 and 53203).
    - b. Through joint agreement with the Board of Trustees, development of District and College hiring criteria, policies and procedures for faculty (Education Code 87360).
    - c. Through joint agreement with the Board, development of District and College policies and procedures regarding equivalencies to minimum qualifications (Education Code 87357; reassignment of administrators - Education Code 87458; and, exceptions to the minimum degree requirements for tenure - Education Code 87359).
    - d. Through consultation with the bargaining agent(s) and Academic Senate regarding faculty evaluation procedures and policies, and concerning faculty service areas and competency requirements (Education Code 87663, 87743.1, and 87743.2).
    - e. Appointment of faculty to serve on College or District committees, task forces or other groups dealing with academic and professional matters.
- C. Implementation of Academic Senate Rights and Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees or its designee will consult collegially with the Academic Senate when adopting policies and procedures on academic and professional matters (Title 5, Section 53200). Academic and professional matters defined by Title 5 regulations are the 11 areas listed in Section III.B.1.a above.

- 1. "Consult collegially" means that the Board of Trustees shall develop policies on academic and professional matters through either or both of the following methods, at its discretion:
  - a. Relying primarily on the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate; or,
  - b. Reaching mutual agreement with the Academic Senate by written resolution, regulation, or policy. (Title 5, Section 53200,d)
- 2. Five of the areas specified by Title 5, Section 53200 are areas in which the Board of Trustees has agreed with the Academic Senate, to rely primarily on the advice or judgment of the Academic Senate. These five areas are:
  - a. Curriculum
  - b. Degree and certificate requirements;
  - c. Grading policies;

- d. Standards or policies regarding student success; and,
  - e. Faculty roles and involvement in the accreditation process.
3. For the other areas specified by Title 5, Section 53200, the Board of Trustees have agreed to reach mutual written agreement with the Academic Senate on the processes and procedures by which the Academic Senate offers its advice and judgment.
    - a. Educational program development;
    - b. Faculty roles in District or College Governance;
    - c. Policies for faculty development activities;
    - d. Processes for program review;
    - e. Processes for institutional planning and budget development; and,
    - f. Any other academic or professional matter designated through mutual agreement.
  4. In the areas in which the Board has elected to rely primarily on the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate (See Section C, 2 above), the recommendations of the Academic Senate will normally be accepted. Only in exceptional circumstances and for compelling reasons will the recommendations not be accepted. If a recommendation is not accepted, the Board or its designees, upon request of the Academic Senate, shall promptly communicate their reasons in writing to the Academic Senate [Title 5, Section 53203,d,1].
  5. In the areas in which the Board has elected to rely on mutual written agreement with the Academic Senate (See Section 3 above), if agreement has not been reached, then existing policy shall remain in effect [Title 5, Section 53203,d,2].
  6. The Academic Senate provides its advice and judgment to the Board in many ways. These methods include the use of Academic Senate resolutions, bilateral agreements with the Board, its own Academic Senate committees, ad hoc task forces, Academic Senate consultation committees, and the College-wide committee system.
  7. The Academic Senate will ensure that students and staff effectively participate in the processes through which it develops its recommendations to the Board as provided in Title 5, Sections 51023.5 and 51023.7.
  8. The Superintendent/President serves as the representative of the Board of Trustees in Academic Senate consultation with the Board.
  9. Written agreements achieved in the 11 Academic Senate consultation areas named in III.B.a shall result, whenever possible, in the creation and maintenance of formal written policies and procedures.
  10. In cases where Academic Senate Consultation Committee discussions or other forms of consultation do not lead to consensus between the faculty and administrative representatives on the committee, the faculty may present its opinions to the Board either through the Superintendent/President or through direct communication with the Board at its regular meetings.
  11. Nothing in this section shall be construed to impinge upon or to detract from any negotiation agreements between the recognized faculty bargaining unit and the Board of Trustees.

D. Board Consultation With Classified Staff

It is a specific requirement of the California Education Code [Title 5, Section 51023.5], that participatory governance shall occur between the Board of Trustees (or its designated representative, the Superintendent/President) and the classified staff. The Board of Trustees shall:

1. Maintain appropriate definitions and categories for individuals and groups within classified service that share in participatory governance and consult with councils, committees, or their representatives.
2. Classified staff shall be provided with opportunities to participate in the development of policies, procedures, and recommendations that will have a significant effect on staff. Such matters shall be reasonably determined by the Board of Trustees in consultation with staff in our governance structure.

3. Except in unforeseeable, emergency situations, the Board of Trustees shall not take action on matters significantly affecting the classified staff as a whole until consultation within this governance system has taken place. The opinions of classified staff representatives shall be given every reasonable consideration.
4. Nothing in this section shall be construed to impinge upon or to detract from any negotiated agreements between the classified staff recognized bargaining unit and the Board of Trustees.

E. Board Consultation With Students

It is a specific requirement of the California Education Code [Title 5, Section 51023.7] that participatory governance shall occur between the Board of Trustees (or its designated representative, the Superintendent/President) and students. The Board of Trustees shall:

1. Provide students with opportunities to participate in the development of policies, procedures, and recommendation that will have a significant effect on students. These topics shall include:
  - a. Grading policies;
  - b. Code of student conduct;
  - c. Academic disciplinary policies;
  - d. Curriculum development;
  - e. Courses or programs which should be initiated or discontinued;
  - f. Processes for institutional planning and budget development;
  - g. Standards and policies regarding student preparation and success;
  - h. Student services planning and development;
  - i. Student fees within the authority of the District to adopt; and,
  - j. Any other District or College policy, procedure, or related matter that the Board of Trustees determines will have significant effect on students.
2. Except in unforeseeable, emergency situations, the Board of Trustees shall not take action on matters significantly affecting students as a whole until consultation within this governance system has taken place. The opinions of student representatives shall be given every reasonable consideration. This also pertains to policies and procedures regarding the hiring and evaluation of faculty, administration, and staff.
3. Nothing in this section shall be construed to impinge upon the due process or delegated rights of faculty, nor detract from any negotiations or negotiated agreements between collective bargaining agents and the Board of Trustees.

IV. THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

A. Committee and Council Types

1. Governance committees and councils are those committees within the Sonoma County Junior College District that have more than one constituent group (faculty, classified staff, students, and/or administrators) in their membership.
2. A list of specific committee and council names as well as methods for defining, creating, regulating, or dissolving these groups will be drafted and maintained as procedures for this policy by the College Council.
3. Standing committees or councils that address subject matter requiring specific consultation with the Academic Senate (see 11 topics listed in Section III) shall also be known as "Academic Senate Consultation Committees." The names of standing committees that also serve as Senate Consultation Committees shall be maintained in the procedures attached to this policy.

B. Constituent Group Committees

Individual constituent groups (faculty, classified staff, students, or administrators) may establish their own committees, councils, advisory committees, etc. (e.g., the Academic Affairs Council). These committees will be defined by the appropriate charters, by-laws, or instructions of each group.

C. Committee Chairs

1. All information regarding committee chairs shall be recorded in the formal description of the committee on the District website (e.g., eligibility to serve, election, or appointment process). When no specific designation exists, any member from any constituent group may serve as chair and shall be elected by the current committee membership.
  2. Faculty will chair or co-chair those committees that reflect the 11 topics set aside by Title 5, Section 53200 (see Section III of this policy). These committees will be known by their traditional names (e.g., the Curriculum Review Committee) but they shall bear the dual name of "Academic Senate Consultation Committee."
  3. Faculty and administrative co-chairs of Academic Senate Consultation Committees have a unique responsibility for liaison between the Academic Senate and the Superintendent/President as Academic Senate Consultation Committees are a setting where the primary opinion and advice of the faculty can be provided to the Board in the 11 areas outlined in Title 5, Section 53200.
- D. Appointments and Responsibilities of Committee and Council Members

1. FACULTY

Faculty committee members assigned to general faculty seats are selected in a process designed and administered by the Academic Senate. The faculty collective bargaining unit maintains a process for assigning their representation to committees where designated. As the committee system provides faculty with a primary opportunity for participatory governance, as well as to give recommendations in the development of policies and procedures in the 11 designated topics of Title 5, Section 53200, committee members are expected to liaison with their associations on appropriate matters developed and discussed within committee or council groups.

2. STUDENTS

Student members of committees are selected in a process designed and administered by the Associated Students' President and the Associated Students' Senate. The committee system provides students with a primary opportunity for participatory governance in the development of policies and procedures with significant effect on students. Committee members are expected to liaison with their association on appropriate matters developed and discussed within committee or council groups.

3. CLASSIFIED STAFF

Classified staff members of committees are appointed by the local chapter of the recognized collective bargaining unit. The committee system provides classified staff with a primary opportunity for participatory governance in the development of policies and procedures with significant effect on staff. Committee members are expected to liaison with their association on appropriate matters developed and discussed within committee or council groups.

4. ADMINISTRATORS

Administrative members of committees are appointed by the Superintendent/President and are expected to serve as liaison to that office and the Management Team as needed.

E. Committee Housekeeping

1. The description and membership information on Standing Committees and President's Advisory Committees on our District website represents the formal record of our College's committee system. Any request for change in committee names, functions, composition, meeting times, chair information and the like,

shall be forwarded in writing to the College Council. College Council will review, approve, and forward all clerical or informational changes to the website. New committees, as well as changes regarding member composition, authority of the committee, or other substantial alterations, shall be reviewed by the Board of Trustees in the same manner as District procedures.

2. The Office of the Superintendent/President maintains the District Policy Manual and will request periodic review of those sections of policy and/or procedures associated with the committee system. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs maintains the annual roster of current membership on College committees and committee chairs on the District website. Each constituent group is responsible for forwarding member names to Academic Affairs by the end of the spring semester or no later than the first week of each academic year.
  3. Standing committees, councils, and Academic Senate consultation committees shall forward copies of their agendas and minutes, including attendance, to the administrative member of the committee responsible for placing these documents on the District Web site or to the Office of Academic Affairs. Standing Councils shall also publish agendas and minutes on the District Web site.
- F. Clerical Assistance for District-Wide Committee Work
1. District administrative offices will provide clerical assistance for the District-wide committee system, most typically by the offices of administrative members of the committee.