



College of the Siskiyous

The Campus Connection

August 2020

Office of the President

We continue to closely monitor, and adjust accordingly, to local public health indicators regarding COVID-19. On Friday, August 7, 2020, the state finally released the long promised Industry Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education. Fortunately, President Schoonmaker had seen a preview to this guidance – which ultimately was true to form – so there were few surprises found in the document. At the writing of this report all pertinent plans for safe operations on campus are under review to ensure the College meets, or exceeds, all required elements.

Beyond the start of Fall Semester, the President’s Office has been focused on monitoring the legislative agendas for both the state and federal governments. There isn’t much good news coming out of either of these bodies.

The 2020-2021 state budget is cobbled together with a sizeable amount of deferrals, meaning pushing potential fiscal problems down the road into the latter half of the budgetary year when the financial outlook for the state may be clearer. The budget includes a \$662.1M deferral from 2020-2021 to 2021-2022. It also includes a trigger deferral of \$791.1M from Proposition 98 funds. This second deferral would be withdrawn if the state receives federal funding included in the Democratic Stimulus #4 funding package currently stalemated in Congress.

The deferrals look like this:

<p>\$253.2M Defer 12/20-2/21 Release 11/21</p>	<p>\$300M Defer 3/21 Release 10/21</p>	<p>\$300M Defer 4/21 Release 9/21</p>	<p>\$300M Defer 5/21 Release 8/21</p>	<p>\$300M Defer 6/21 Release 7/21</p>
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Additionally, the state has limited cash to distribute, potentially causing a cash flow problem for state agencies, including community colleges. The 2020 Budget Act defers a total of \$1.45B in apportionment funding from 2020-2021. Deferrals were all reduced from the 2020-2021 Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF) Apportionment schedule; however, there is not enough money for this level of deferral during the months specified in statute. In prior recessions, the statute had not designated which month(s) deferrals could occur and they were distributed throughout the year. It is still unclear how this may ultimately impact the state, the community college system, and our local District cash flow.

Community colleges are receiving funds from a COVID-19 Response Block Grant. This \$120M Block Grant involves one-time funding from Proposition 98 and federal funds to support learning loss and COVID-19 response needs. Of these funds, \$54M must be spent by December 30, 2020. The remaining \$66M must be spent by June 30, 2022.

Allowable uses for the Block Grant include:

- Reengagement strategies for students.
- Grants to faculty to develop online, accelerated learning modules.

- Professional development opportunities for faculty and student services professionals to support students impacted by learning loss.
- Addressing other learning barriers such as basic, and mental health, needs.
- Expenditures related to government payroll support programs and unemployment insurance costs related to COVID-19.
- Public Health Expenses.

It is important that we all realize how important federal advocacy is at this juncture in not only our local response to the global pandemic, but also the state’s budgetary needs across the country as we grapple with getting a handle on this healthcare crisis that has significantly impacted our economy. For a District such as ours, the College is the only choice for higher education in the area. Without support to the state from the federal stimulus package, these deferrals will likely set back the College for years to come.

One significant difference in the current stimulus package proposals is how to distribute support for higher education. One plan uses FTE in the calculation, the other uses Headcount. I am sure you realize the use of headcount more accurately reflects for community colleges the number of students we work with and assist due to the tendency for community college students to attend part-time, or less than 100% of the full-time calculation for FTE.

In the CARES Act funding for higher education, community colleges – serving 39% of all students attending higher education – received only 27% of the funding. If FTE is used in the calculation for this next stimulus package, community colleges will only receive 31% of the funding.

As this report to share with you is being written, we are in Day 160 of a state of crisis dealing with the global pandemic. We have spent those days mitigating risk, and developing and implementing stringent environmental health and safety protocols. Health and safety remains our first and top priority as we continue to navigate our way to remaining operational and viable as an educational institution. We have developed a balance in our schedule of classes, with a significantly reduced number of in-person classes, and more hybrid, Zoom, and online course offerings. Housing on-campus is restricted this fall to all single rooms. And the list of changes goes on.

For those who have spent these past 160 days working on campus as essential employees to maintain the operation of the College, we have lived through all the changes, modifications, and increased use of stricter protocols. We have adapted to this new work environment. We have remained safe and healthy – and our two employees who tested positive in June have long since recovered without any community spread of the virus on campus. The campus is safer than any other place in the county traveled and frequented to – whether shopping for necessities or conducting personal business outside my home. We have had students on campus, including Upward Bound high school students in June. Those of us on campus know it will be an adjustment for any of our colleagues as you return. It will take a little getting used to, but it is not too hard. Too complex. Too difficult. Just a difference to which you will need to adjust.

Quote of the Month:

“Aerodynamically, the bumble bee should not be able to fly, but the bumble bee does not know that – so it goes on flying anyway.”

- Mary Kay Ash, Founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, Inc.



Public Relations & Foundation: As we near the start of a new semester, promotion of fall classes begins to ramp up; we are beginning to see more people on site for campus tours; beautification projects are nearing completion; and excitement for a new year can be felt all over! Just in case you missed them, here are some of the recent articles / feature stories that were published by our local media:

- COS Alum Will Be Eagles New Track and Field Coach and Assistant Football Coach
<https://www.siskiyoudaily.com/news/20200805/cos-alum-will-be-eagles-new-track-and-field-assistant-football-coach>
- Notice of College of the Siskiyous Request for Qualifications and Proposals for Architectural Services
<https://www.siskiyoudaily.com/news/20200730/notice-college-of-siskiyous-request-for-qualifications-and-proposals-for-architectural-services>
- College of the Siskiyous Lands Grant for New Fine Arts Complex
<https://www.ridgecrestca.com/news/20200728/college-of-siskiyous-lands-grant-for-new-fine-arts-complex>
- College of the Siskiyous President Reviews Reopening Plan During Covid-19 Pandemic
<https://www.taftmidwaydriller.com/news/20200727/college-of-siskiyous-president-reviews-reopening-plan-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- Former Mizzou Star Frazier Returns to Junco as Coach
<https://www.boonvilledailynews.com/sports/20200725/former-mizzou-star-frazier-returns-to-junco-as-coach>

August/September Activities & Events: Event dates, times, and locations based on information available at the time of publication and are subject to change.

- August 20 – Mandatory Flex Day
- August 21 – Mandatory Flex Day for Faculty Only
- August 24 – Fall Semester Begins
- September 7 – Labor Day Holiday (Campus Closed / No Classes)
- September 9 – Theater Department Fall Production Auditions for William Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, 3pm (Zoom)
- September 10 – Theater Department Fall Production Auditions “Call Backs,” 3pm (Zoom)
- September 11 – Last Day to Drop Without Posting ‘W’ on Record

Administrative Services

Administrative Services welcomes Dr. Doug Haugen to our department. Doug’s responsibilities now also include working with Food Services and we look forward to his leadership and partnership within that area.

Congratulations to Beverly Muelrath and Andrew Matheson on their new positions as HR Analyst III’s in the Human Resources department. These positions are now designated as generalist positions to allow cross-training within the department and enhanced customer service.

In August, staff members will be attending a four-hour budget workshop planned by the Chancellor’s Office in order to provide more information and guidance on state funding; timing of that funding; and what to expect not only in the current fiscal year, but planning for the next three years. As a reminder our final budget is typically brought to the Board of Trustees in September; however, this process has

now been pushed out until October so the State can get a better indication of where the general fund revenue is going to land. This delay is the result of the July 15th tax return extension, which is three months later than the historical due date of April 15th. As information becomes available we will continue to share updates with the campus.

Bookstore: The Bookstore has textbooks and course materials in stock for the upcoming fall 2020 semester. The Bookstore’s Online Store (<http://siskiyouscollegebookstore.com/selecttermdept>) is ready to receive fall semester textbook orders. Students can now rent textbooks and use book vouchers through the Bookstore’s Online Store. When checking out, customers can choose to pick their textbook order up at the Weed Campus, Yreka Campus, or have their order shipped. Directions on how to place an order online are available on the Bookstore webpage (<http://www.siskiyous.edu/bookstore/>). If you prefer to use an eBook, the Bookstore has eBook options available for the fall semester (<https://siskiyous.redshelf.com/>).

Facilities: At the July Board of Trustees meeting, the District received approval to move forward with the State Funded Theatre-Arts Building Renovation and Expansion Project. We have identified membership for a workgroup called the Performing and Fine Arts Project Committee. The group convened for the first time August 11 to hear an overview of the project, timeline, and the role each member will play over the next couple of years until project completion. The District anticipates completion of the following activities relating to the RFQ at the times noted below.

- 1st AdvertisementWednesday, July 22, 2020
- 2nd AdvertisementWednesday, July 29, 2020
- Mandatory Pre-Proposal Virtual Conference.....9:30am, Friday July 31, 2020
- Non-Mandatory Pre-bid Job Walk.....August 4 and August 5, 2020
- Latest Date to SubmitRFQ Questions4pm, Monday, August 7, 2020
- Latest Date of District’s Response to Questions4pm, Monday, August 10, 2020
- Deadline for Submittal of RFQ Responses4pm, Monday, August 17, 2020
- Virtual InterviewsWednesday, August 26, 2020
- Board Action to Award Architectural ServicesMonday, August 31, 2020

Fiscal Services: The Tentative Budget has been posted into Banner. To make adjustments, fill out a Budget Change Request form, have it signed by the appropriate approvers, and submit it to Jeannine in the Business Office. It will be posted to the Tentative Budget and the Final Budget. **A reminder about Budgets - Even though we have a signed state budget, it still hinges on the passage of the federal government’s stimulus package. With the approval of the tentative budget, the Board has given authorization for the District to spend as of July 1, 2020. We request all areas limit spending during these first few months to essential purchases only.** We will continue to follow the activity at the State level over the next several months as we work towards a final budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, to be approved in October.

The Business Office is in the process of closing out FY 2019-2020. Please make sure all invoices are approved and submitted for payment. All open purchase orders for 2019-2020 should now be closed. For assistance with 2019-2020 budget changes, please contact Jeannine in the Business Office.

Please submit any blanket purchase orders for 2020-2021. Blanket PO’s are for monthly, quarterly or annual contracts and regular fixed expenses like rent, utilities, phone, insurance, memberships and

office supplies and may be created for the entire 2020-2021 fiscal year. If you have any questions about blanket PO's, please see Courtney. Please make sure that you get all your approvals before turning the PO's into the Business Office.

Some housekeeping...

- All PO's must be approved by Darlene Melby before submitting to the Business Office.
- Please follow the procedures for payment vouchers. The routing has not changed with the shelter in place orders. Email approvals are acceptable, just remember to attach it to the PV. Everyone is doing a great job!
- Don't like waiting for your paycheck? Sign up for direct deposit. Direct deposit forms will be included with your paycheck, fill it out and scan it to Kelly in Human Resources.

Food Services: Changes are in the works driven by the reduction in the number of students on campus. Lodge meal plan holders will be assigned a meal reservation time to help alleviate the need to stand in line. Online ordering is also in the planning phase. Tasty menu options created by Cindy Martel, Director of Food Services, will be consistent across both service areas to support quick service and reducing the amount of time spent standing in line. Students and staff will experience a new one-way traffic flow through the food service areas.

Lodging: On campus room occupancy has been modified to single rooms only. This decision allows for safe physical distancing and self-isolation if necessary. The Lodge Resident Advisor Team moved in August 10 and will be led by a COS graduate, Gina McClean, for the fall term. Lodge staff have been using technology as much as possible to communicate with students as they prepare to move in beginning August 17. Examples include: 'Zipwhip' for texting, 'DocuSign' for e-signature (transitioning to Adobe sign) cell phones, Microsoft teams, and our own Weblinks staff of Anne-Marie and Michael to assist with online communications. To support physical and social distancing of residents and their family while moving in, the Lodge residents have been assigned a two hour time block. Only one family will be per wing will be permitted at a time.

Technology Services:

- In our continuing efforts to extend Single Sign-On (SSO) capability, we will be migrating the authentication of the Banner and Canvas applications to Azure on the morning of Friday, August 14. From that date forward, users will need to sign-on to mySiskiyous with their complete username, including the @siskiyous.edu suffix (i.e. username@siskiyous.edu). This change will provide true SSO for the Banner and Canvas applications and will make the college's systems more resilient to system disruption. It will also create additional opportunities for improving account management.
- Technology Services continues to make progress in expanding the College's video conference capability. On the Yreka Campus, Zoom equipment is being installed in Room 5. On the Weed Campus, installation of Zoom equipment in DLC8 and McCloud 112 has been completed and installation in McCloud 103 and Science 110 will be completed before the beginning of the fall semester.

Student Services

Student Services staff have been busy planning for a fall semester that includes a "new normal," along with the usual 'start-of-fall' events. Plexi-glass has been installed in all Student Services areas which

includes: Counseling & Advising, DSPS, Admissions & Records/Financial Aid, and the Vice President of Student Services office area. We will encourage students to make use of the many virtual venues offering student support (Zoom, email, telephone, CANVAS, etc.) but will offer “in person” services as much as possible given guidelines for safe distancing and gathering. For example:

- Admissions & Records/Financial Aid will request students schedule an appointment to come to the window.
- Should a student just drop-in, our Kiosk staff and TRIO Program, will guide them through a process and assist with facilitating a same-day appointment, if possible.
- A staff member will text or Zoom the office and ask if A&R/FAO staff are available.
- The student will then be able to go to that office, once someone is available (no standing in lines at the Student Center). This will allow us to control the number of people, and space, of the Student Center.

For more information about our scheduling options or how to arrive on campus, view our videos on the Basecamp HQ website. The videos will be posted prior to the start of the semester. Please remember to 1) wear a face covering, 2) keep your six-foot distance and 3) wash your hands/use hand sanitizer!

CARES Act Funding Update – As of this writing, 138 students have been awarded over \$165,000 in CARES act funding. Good job CARES Act team! If you know of a student who has endured a hardship due to COVID 19, please encourage them to fill out and submit an application for funding.

https://na2.documents.adobe.com/public/esignWidget?wid=CBFCIBAA3AAABLbqZhBaP3qS1cV5OAoidgaqN2XJByJeRLie-OCQ_v0f7QlHi-1FpIB-UC6O6NeOqPt_KCM*

Student Services is excited to roll out the new STAR (Siskiyou Transfer Access Retention) Program. This Program assists out-of-state students to attend College of the Siskiyous at a discounted rate rather than pay out-of-state or non-resident tuition. Students are limited to a maximum of six units per term and 30 units (lifetime) on the program. Students must be working toward California Residency and a degree or certificate. Special ‘shout out’ to Athletic Director Charlie Roche! This new program was his ‘brainchild’ and we are so pleased to have been able to work closely with him on this and other initiatives over the summer.

Finally, another ‘shout out’ to all of the Student Services Team. You’ve been great! Thank you for rolling with the punches and for your outstanding work during an extraordinary time. You rock!

“What we've got to do is keep hope alive. Because without it we'll sink.” - John Lennon

August Multicultural Observances

(n.d.). Retrieved August 5, 2020, from <https://www.google.com/search?q=2020+diversity+holidays>

- August 1: Lammas, a festival to mark the annual wheat harvest. Also Lughnasadh, a Gaelic festival marking the beginning of the harvest season
- August 3: Raksha Bandhan, a Hindu holiday commemorating the kinship between a brother and sister.
- August 6: Transfiguration of the Lord (Feast of the Transfiguration) to observe the transfiguration of Jesus.
- August 10: Krishna Janmashtami, a Hindu celebration of Lord Vishnu’s incarnation Krishna.

- August 13- 15: Obon (Ulambana), a Buddhist festival and Japanese custom for honoring the spirits of ancestors.
- August 14: Fast in Honor of Holy Mother of Jesus.
- August 15: Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary, the day commemorates the bodily taking up of the Virgin Mary into heaven. Also Dormition of the Theotokos, the "falling asleep," or death, of Mary the Theotokos ("Mother of God").
- August 16-August 23: Paryushana Parva, a Jain festival.
- August 19: Hijri New Year, the beginning of the new Islamic calendar year.
- August 21: Ganesh Chaturthi, a Hindu holiday for the elephant-headed Hindu god.
- August 23: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition and the anniversary of the uprising in Santo Domingo.
- August 26: Women's Equality Day, which commemorates the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that gave women the right to vote.
- August 28-29: Ashura, an Islamic holiday commemorating the day Noah left the ark and Allah saved Moses from the Egyptians.

Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS): Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) enthusiastically shares the news of two additional pages on the DSPS website, Student Resources and Instructor Resources. The student resources page includes quick access to guides for student success including a learning style assessment, study skills and positive affirmations for positive psychology. The Instructor Resources page includes information on high occurrence disabilities such as learning disabilities and Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), and guidance on teaching strategies and universal design for learning. Take a moment to check out the user-friendly information and some of your questions will be answered! Special thank you to Weblinks staff members, Anne-Marie Kuhlemann and Michael Reetz for their guidance, creativity, and technical support.

Enrollment Services: Enrollment Services presented three workshops for new and continuing students via Zoom. Both were successful and covered the following topics: Financial Aid Overview and How to get California Residency? Be on the lookout for a repeat performance in the next couple of weeks.

Enrollment Services is working towards improved distance services for students both in person and at a distance. During the fall semester there will be little need for a student to have to come to the Weed Campus in order to complete transactions. Students will be able to meet with a Financial Aid or Admission and Records Specialist via zoom and be able to sign most forms with an Electronic Signature.

We are proud to announce that our Transcript Evaluator, Ashley Sadler, was accepted to a graduate program in Literary Studies at Durham University in Yorkshire, England. Although, she will be greatly missed we are excited for her on this next step of her Journey.

EOPS/CARE/CalWORKs: EOPS is accepting applications for the fall semester! If you know of any students who need help with textbooks for the fall semester, have them fill out the Universal Application on the EOPS webpage <http://www.siskiyous.edu/eopscare/>. Eligibility is being processed daily and we would like to help as many students as possible to be successful at COS!

EOPS held its first Zoom orientation for returning EOPS students and it was well attended and went off without a hitch. The students who attended and completed requirements all received a \$400 book voucher that has been added to their Bookstore account. More Zoom orientations have been planned

for August and reminder emails are being sent along with COS Connect messages. The EOPS Orientation schedule is also posted on the EOPS/CARE website.

CARE staff have been working with returning students and Siskiyou County Human Services to determine eligibility for the fall semester.

CalWORKs staff have been in contact with Siskiyou County Human Services about potential CalWORKs students for the fall semester and will reach out to those students as soon as eligibility documents are received.

TRIO Center: We are excited to announce that beginning fall 2020 most TRIO services will be formatted for a Canvas course. Students will be able to participate in lesson plans and workshops anytime from anywhere; “its digital jazz man.”

- **Student Support Services** – Staff continue to process \$450 grant aid awards for 2019-2020 students and are happily accepting applications for the fall. Within the next two weeks our processes for our lending library will be posted.
- **Upward Bound** – the Virtual Summer Program will end August 13; big thanks to all COS staff and community members that supported our students during the Pandemic. Our families were so appreciative of having activities and the opportunity to socialize safely this summer. We are still in the midst of recruiting 8th grade students and are excitedly awaiting the fall term.

Academic Affairs

Submitted by Val Roberts, Interim Dean of Liberal Arts and Student Success:

Association of California Community College Administrators (ACCCA) 2020-21 Great Deans Program - Mark Klever and Val Roberts were both selected, with Dr. Char Perlas’ encouragement to submit an application, for participation in the ACCCA Great Deans Program. Mark and Val began the Program on July 16. The group meets weekly for four weeks for a series of trainings/presentations. Topics include: Leading Through and Out of Crisis, Employee Relations and Performance Management in Our “New Normal,” What Every Dean Needs to Know About Budgeting in Our Current Environment, and Goal Setting. Once training has concluded, they will be able to attend and participate in upcoming regional meetings to be held later this fall and early next spring.

Alliance for Innovation and Transformation (AFIT) Summer Institute - Another exciting professional development opportunity Val Roberts was selected to participate in was the AFIT Summer Institute. A team of COS folks joined several other educational Institutions and organizations on July 30 and 31 for two full and information packed days. The Institute included general sessions, breakout sessions, and “team time” during which our COS team revisited topics of interest. One of those topics was “decision fatigue”...particularly fitting! A few of the takeaways for Val included: “think like Clive Davis” (forward thinking, despite discomfort), importance of a growth mindset, “holistic leaders bring clarity and generate energy/excitement”, and the 8 Pillars of Trust (Horsager). This Institute provided useful and thought provoking information through their Learning Partners (Microsoft, Howard Community College, US Air Force Academy, and Center for The Future of Work). It was well worth the time commitment.

Work Experience - Our new Work Experience Coordinator, Tanja Ramming, has really hit the ground running! She is streamlining the process for students, has students signed up for summer and fall, the webpage has been updated, and she is working on our District Work Experience Plan to be submitted to the Chancellor's Office.

Study Hall - Carly Zeller, Charlie Roche, and Val Roberts have been working on the plan for Athletic "study hall" for fall. The approach will be hybrid: online instruction coupled with small group Zoom check-ins. The goal is to build and maintain connections with the students, provide them with useful tools and strategies for college success, and support them in their learning.

Submitted by Mark Klever, Dean of Career and Technical Education:

FIRE Academy – The 41st Fire Academy began August 3 with 17 students enrolled and beginning their journey to become fire fighters. Although we have had and will continue to overcome our current challenges, this is an exciting time for this group of individuals and their commitment to join our academy. Please join the CTE Department in welcoming all of them to the College of the Siskiyous.

POST Academy - In the first week of August, 27 POST Cadets completed Academy 004. This group has endured, persevered and survived not only a two month delay due to COVID-19; but the grueling, rigorous and stressful expectations of our POST Academy. Congratulations to each and every cadet, the instructors and everyone who supports this Academy. As we know, it takes an incredible effort on everyone's behalf to accomplish such an honorable goal. Many of our Cadets will step directly into the line of duty once their work at College of the Siskiyous is completed.

Submitted by Dr. Char Perlas, Vice President of Academic Affairs:

Introducing Interim Director of Nursing Rhonda Brown - Rhonda Brown will serve in the position of Interim Director of Nursing. She has been a faculty member teaching in all nursing programs for the past six years. Rhonda has taught psychiatric and community health across the LVN and RN Programs. Additionally, she has taught certified nurse assistant and home health aide certificate program courses. Rhonda has also served as Assistant Director of the ADN program for two years. In her role as Assistant Director, she was a community liaison with the clinical partners for student clinical placements. We are very fortunate to have Interim Director Brown serve in this capacity.

Submitted by Rhonda Brown, Interim Director of Nursing:

Welcome Aboard to our Newly Hired Simulation Lab Technician Brian Schlieter - Brian is a Siskiyous alum with an Associate of Science degree in Computer Science. He is presently pursuing his baccalaureate degree in Computer Science. Brian has been living and working in Arizona with his family and is now happily returning home to Siskiyou County. We are pleased to have him join our Nursing team. We look forward to his enthusiasm and expansive technology experience to help further enhance our lab and our student nurses' learning experience.

Fall 2020 LVN Program - We are planning and coordinating the plan(s) and contingency plan(s) for this upcoming fall semester in the COVID-19 climate. This is a challenging commitment for this cohort of LVN students. The uncertainty of the virus behavior and its impact on our community and healthcare system is an ever-evolving challenge. Our dedicated colleagues and Nursing Director are resilient, highly creative, and prepared to accept the challenges ahead. The College and Nursing Program are appreciative of our clinical partners who are very supportive in our mission to prepare excellent Siskiyous nursing graduates.

Submitted by Suzie Clark, Director of Noncredit, Community and Contract Education:

Bachelor's Through Online & Local Degrees (BOLD) Pilot - Siskiyous will be launching a BOLD pilot program this fall. Through enrollment in COL 600, University students who are taking courses online, will be able to take advantage of Siskiyous support services. BOLD is a partnership with Shasta College through the Lumina Foundation. As BOLD expands, we will be able to assist our current Siskiyous students in transferring to an online program at one of our partner universities. Our BOLD students will have the ability to continue utilizing Siskiyous services and receive support as they complete their 4-year, online Bachelorette programs. COL 600 is a free, noncredit course!



Is your 4-year University online for Fall 2020? Enrolling in COL 600 will allow you to use College of the Siskiyous student resources and obtain the support needed to succeed! COL 600 is a **FREE, noncredit, online course** focused on strengthening your skills so that you ace your University courses!

QUESTIONS? EMAIL SUZIE CLARK: LCLARK6@SISKIYOU.SU

Academic Senate

A day in the summer life...

Many people wonder what it is like for a teacher to be “off-contract.” This term refers to the time each year that a teacher is not employed by an institution. In most cases, this occurs during the summer. Teachers often opt to have money withheld from their checks for 10 months, so that the balance can be distributed during the two months that they don’t have a job. And yet, as I’ve discovered in my new role as Academic Senate President, whether employed or not, faculty are working tirelessly for our students and community.

As a career teacher in music and performance myself, “summer vacation” was always a laughable phrase. Between flying all over the country to participate in conferences and camps, searching for the perfect songs for the following year’s ensembles, updating curriculum, recruiting, and networking, I would wake up in mid-August thinking: “wasn’t I supposed to take a break this year?” And yet, my opportunities to interact and engage with educators in other disciplines was always limited. Well, what an enlightening summer this has been. In the two months that I have served as Academic Senate President, I have had the opportunity to engage with COS faculty across all disciplines. The common theme in all of our conversations has been the deep care and concern we have for our

students' learning and well-being. Pedagogy, methodology, curriculum, equity, and social justice consume hours of "zoom gatherings," meetings, and social distance hangs.

Clearly, accommodating the intricacies of teaching during a Pandemic has consumed much of our time. Attendance at workshops and trainings that focus on meaningful and effective remote instruction, as well as the already rigorous requirements in order for a COS instructor to teach online has positioned us to serve our students as learners, and more importantly, human beings who are navigating unknown terrain. In most cases, with far less life experience than the rest of us.

So as we head into the fall semester, my shirt buttons are busting with pride. I cannot think of a body of individuals that I'd rather represent, and I cannot think of a group of people with whom I'd rather be associated, than the faculty at the College of the Siskiyous.

With gratitude,

Ron Slabbinck
Academic Senate President