



ACADEMIC SENATE
for CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

<http://www.asccc.org/legislative-updates>

Legislative Updates

1. INTRODUCTION

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) is the voice of the faculty of California's 113 Community Colleges regarding academic and professional matters. In fulfilling this role, one of the ASCCC's important functions is to represent faculty positions to the governor, the legislature, and other government agencies regarding potential, proposed, or chaptered legislation. The ASCCC accomplishes this function through legislative visits, written communication, cooperation with system partners, and other methods. The intent of this page is to keep faculty statewide informed regarding the ASCCC's positions and activities regarding legislation and legislative actions. Here you will find copies of communications sent by the ASCCC President to legislators, the governor, and others as well as other updates on legislative activity. We hope that this information will help to enable local senates in fulfilling their own roles in representing faculty in their districts and on their campuses.

2. RESOURCES

Legislative Tracker:

To follow current legislation, the ASCCC recommends using the tracker on the FACCC web site.

Additional useful information regarding legislative activity can be found on the governmental relations tab of the website of the Community College League of California

3. WHAT WE DO TO REPRESENT YOU

The ASCCC represents the faculty of California's Community Colleges regarding legislation and legislative issues in various ways.

Several times each year, Academic Senate representatives take part in "legislative days" on which they hold a series of meetings with various legislators or their aids to express faculty perspectives and positions on pending or potential legislation. These activities are typically conducted as joint ventures with the Senate's academic partners, including representatives of the CSU and UC faculty leadership, the Chancellor's Office, the Board of Governors, The Student Senate for California Community Colleges, and other statewide organizations.

A similar activity in which the ASCCC participates may involve advocacy regarding a specific piece of legislation. In this case, ASCCC representatives may form part of a panel with system partners such as the Community College League of California (CCLC), the faculty unions, and others. The panel holds a series of interviews with legislators and legislative aids over the course of a day, delivering a common and consistent message on the bill in question in an attempt to sway the votes in the legislature.

The ASCCC also frequently sends written statements of support or opposition for specific bills to members of the legislature, legislative committees, and the governor. These letters may be the sole work of the ASCCC or may be composed jointly with our university colleagues or with other organizations.

The ASCCC also testifies before bodies such as the Education Committees of the legislature, the Little Hoover Commission, and others. In this role, ASCCC representatives deliver formal statements and answer questions regarding faculty positions and makes arguments in favor of or against specific bills or policy directions.

Finally, ASCCC representatives may work less formally to communicate faculty positions and views to the legislature. In Sacramento, numerous opportunities arise in which faculty leaders may speak individually to legislators or legislative staff at various types of events and meetings. ASCCC representatives take advantage of any opportunity to express faculty views and present faculty positions.

4. HOW ASCCC DIFFERS FROM LOCAL ACADEMIC SENATES

In terms of legislative advocacy and lobbying, the rules governing the ASCCC and local academic senates differ. For the purpose of understanding these rules, lobbying is essentially a subset of advocacy. Advocacy involves active support for a cause, idea or policy and is a general term involving a broad set of activities. Lobbying is an attempt to influence specific legislation and is defined by the IRS as well as various states and localities, often because of the limitations on the ways in which funds can be used for lobbying purposes.

The restrictions and guidelines for local academic senate activities are defined by California Education Code sections 7050-7068. The following excerpt from "Advocacy at the Local Level: What Your Senate Can Do to Stay Informed and Active," published in the November 2103 Senate Rostrum, explains the activities in which local academic senate can and cannot engage:

Ed Code section 7054 (a) states that "No school district or community college district funds, services, supplies, or equipment shall be used for the purpose of urging the support or defeat of any ballot measure or candidate, including, but not limited to, any candidate for election to the governing board of the district." In short, academic senates cannot use any district resources to support or oppose any candidate or ballot measure. This restriction applies not only to district funds but also to materials, email, and even employee time when the employee is scheduled to work. Any discussion of ballot measures or elections among senators therefore should not take place on campus or during academic senate meetings.

However, Ed Code section 7054 (b) adds that "Nothing in this section shall prohibit the use of any of the public resources described in subdivision (a) to provide information to the public about the possible effects of any bond issue or other ballot measure if both of the following conditions are met: (1) The informational activities are otherwise authorized by the Constitution or laws of this state. (2) The information provided constitutes a fair and impartial presentation of relevant facts to aid the electorate in reaching an informed judgment regarding the bond issue or ballot measure." Academic senates may therefore publish information to educate the public regarding the impact of a given ballot measure as long as they do not advocate either for or against the measure.