

IT'S NEW! IT'S TRUE!
The State Academic Senate Part Time Caucus.

Stacey Burks

Part Time Faculty are finally getting the recognition from the California State Academic Senate that has been lacking for so many years. When the State Senate created an avenue for the formation of Caucuses under their umbrella, Part Time activists jumped on the opportunity to form what is now known as The Part Time Faculty Caucus.

The purpose of this caucus, and why we formed it, is “to discuss and promote awareness of the academic and professional matters of over 45,000 part-time, non-tenured faculty within the California Community College system. There are a great many issues that pertain to part-time faculty in a particular manner that is different from the tenured faculty issues. As a caucus, we intend to be very active and represent these concerns, issues and needs of current part-time faculty.”

You can access our purpose statement as well as our current membership list by going to: <http://www.asccc.org/part-time-faculty-caucus>

It took about six months, start to finish, to get our Caucus approved. The guidelines and bylaws for forming a Caucus are below**, but suffice it to say that David Milroy and I used every avenue available to recruit interested faculty: the El Chorro list serve, direct phoning, direct emailing of friends and PT colleagues around the state, including Deborah Dahl-Shanks, Kathy Holland, Cornelia Alsheimer, John Sullivan, Colleen Harvel, Joe Chirra, Donna Frankel, John Govsky, Marsha Rutter, Armando Mendez and Julie Withers. Interestingly, this turned out to be the easy part! What seemed to take forever was getting the State Senate's final approval for our Caucus. David Milroy sent the State Academic President, Jane Patton, our request for approval, complete with the names of all interested parties and the District's they worked for. After President Patton acknowledged receipt of our request, we waited anxiously to hear whether we would be approved. We had hoped to get approval before the State Senate's November Fall Plenary, but it never came. It was only during this Plenary that it

was learned that we'd been approved—and that it had just been approved the day before the Plenary started. When it was announced, members of the State Executive Board wondered if there were representatives from our Caucus present at the Fall Plenary. As one attendee noted “How could it be expected that we would be there when the Senate had only just approved the PT Caucus the day before”?

However, since learning that we were now an official caucus, the initial team has been working on creating Bylaws. It is our hope that during the Spring Plenary, being held at the Westin at the San Francisco Airport, April 15, we will be able to discuss and ultimately vote to approve them. While our Bylaws still need to be approved, our committee has agreed that “any part-time, non-tenure track faculty member currently employed or retired from a California Community College and who agrees to subscribe to the purpose of the caucus and abide by the provisions of these Bylaws shall be eligible for Active Membership in the Part-time Faculty Caucus,” and hence, be eligible to vote. The Caucus meetings will be free and if you can attend, you will automatically be eligible to vote!

We also plan to hold nominations for the following officer's positions: Two Co-Chair persons (North/South), a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Communication's officer.

Those interested in running for an office, according to our bylaws when approved in the Spring, “shall be an active member of the caucus who is currently serving or has served as an academic senator.”

In the meantime, I am honored to be serving as the interim-Chair.

The members of the new PT Caucus truly hope that you are as excited as we are about this new voice for part-time faculty and even more so, we REALLY hope that you and your colleagues will be able to make our first ever Part Time Faculty Caucus meeting in San Francisco on Friday evening April 15. The specific time and room number will be announced later. Please contact me at **seburks@sunset.net** in order to be added to the Senate PT Caucus email list.

**Senate Bylaws for forming a Caucus:

Process for Recognition of a Caucus

1. Individuals interested in forming a caucus will identify at least ten members from at least four different colleges and at least two districts with common goals and/or interests.
2. At any time during the year, the interested members of the proposed caucus may send a letter to the Academic Senate president to request caucus status. This letter shall include the caucus' name, statement of purpose, and list of members.
3. After the caucus proposal is reviewed by the Executive Committee, the Academic Senate president will forward to the requester official notification that the caucus is recognized as an Academic Senate caucus.
4. Once the caucus is recognized and official, it will elect a caucus chair annually at the first meeting of the caucus and submit regular meeting minutes to the Academic Senate Office.
5. Each May, the caucus chair will inform the President of the caucus' intent to remain active and provide a current list of membership.
6. If a caucus fails to alert the Academic Senate President of the desire to stay active, the caucus shall be deemed inactive and a new letter of intent will need to be submitted to reactivate the caucus. The intent is to have caucuses that are active and represent current faculty in California community colleges.