



Faculty Flex Requirement and Professional Development Proposal 3/7/22

The Porterville College Academic Senate proposes the following changes from the current practices for fulfilling faculty professional development 'Flex' contract requirements, in keeping with our role in making recommendations for 'policies for faculty professional development activities' as part of California Code of Regulations Title 5 §53200 and a '10+1' area under the Academic Senate. These recommendations, consistent with practices found on other California Community College campuses, we see as better enabling our faculty to ensure their own ongoing professional development needs are being met, individually and collectively.

We recommend that the current practice of meeting the faculty Flex requirement, which consists of three days of programming and sessions planned jointly by the Vice-President of Instruction and the Academic Senate President, with two days in fall and one day in spring, be changed as described below.

As the Flex requirement consists of 18 hours of faculty professional development, we propose the following:

That the time traditionally spent prior to the start of each semester with the entire college (Faculty, Classified, Administration) be designated the 'Opening Day Convocation' and be planned by the Office of the President rather than by the Academic Senate President and Vice-President of Instruction. The College President may collegially consult with the Academic Senate President on the content and use of time. Attendance at this event each semester will count as fulfilling however many hours are scheduled for the event (2 hours in fall and 2 hours in spring, for example, would result in 4 hours of flex credit). No portion of this event should consist of specifically *faculty* professional development, and any workshop or training component should be for the entire college, with agreement of the Professional Development Committee, the Academic Senate President, and CSEA representative. All full-time faculty are expected to participate in the Convocation along with their Classified and Administrative colleagues.

That the remaining flex hour obligations minus the hours of these events be fulfilled through faculty professional development activities organized or approved by a new Faculty Professional Development subcommittee that will be a standing committee of the Academic Senate.

Academic Senate Faculty Professional Development subcommittee

Members of the Academic Senate Faculty Professional Development subcommittee, appointed by the Academic Senate President in coordination with Division Chairs, will be responsible for planning, arranging, and facilitating faculty workshops and trainings sufficient to fulfill the Flex requirements each year. Faculty in this group should come from a variety of disciplines and divisions, sufficient to reflect the diverse needs of faculty. The faculty may elect to include or consult with other college staff with relevant expertise as needed in order to fulfill their responsibilities.

In addition to overseeing campus-led faculty professional development opportunities, the Academic Senate Faculty Professional Development subcommittee will be responsible for regularly reviewing and approving requests for Flex credit by faculty for external professional development activities. Faculty will need to have

submitted requests and received approval prior to events and also have approval of their area administrator. Faculty will need to submit proof of attendance and a reflection report to the committee after the event as well. The subcommittee will clear retain records of faculty requests, approvals, and Flex credit given.

The Academic Senate Faculty Professional Development subcommittee will be led by a faculty Chair, appointed annually by the Academic Senate President, who would call and lead meetings and set the meeting agenda, as well as report to the Academic Senate, and ensure the subcommittee tasks are completed. This position as proposed should be supported with release time or a stipend, to be determined in negotiation with the College President and as resources are available.

Although faculty professional development activities are recommended to be organized during the week prior to the start of classes each semester (i.e. 'Flex Week'), they may also take place at any time as needed during the semester, as determined by the Academic Senate Faculty Professional Development subcommittee.

Proposing and Developing Flex Activities

Any PC faculty member is eligible to propose and lead a professional development Flex event (workshop, seminar, etc.), with explicit advance approval of the Academic Senate Faculty Professional Development subcommittee. New proposals should be submitted in writing in the term prior to the proposed offering. Such events may be offered once, or periodically, depending on their nature and the need or interest among the faculty. The Academic Senate Faculty Professional Development subcommittee will meet and determine if the proposed event meets the requirements for Flex activities (see below), and is appropriate for the faculty. Faculty submitting proposals will then be notified of the acceptance or rejection of the proposal. Organizers will then meet with the committee to determine scheduling, requirements, and other logistics of planning. Organizers are responsible for the accurate recording and reporting of attendance and participation, and submitting it in a timely manner to the Academic Senate Faculty Professional Development subcommittee. Flex credit shall not be given without appropriate documentation, as determined by the Academic Senate Faculty Professional Development subcommittee.

Time invested by PC faculty in preparing and leading professional development activities should be recognized by a professional development stipend (as available), flex credit, or a combination of both. Flex credit for organizing and leading the activity should be given at a ratio of 2:1 – 2 hours flex credit for each hour of activity – in recognition of the additional time invested outside of the event time. Approval for professional development stipends from Administration must precede the events and will occur on a timeline established in coordination with the Office of Instruction.

Documentation

Organizers of Flex events are responsible for documenting faculty attendance, and are required to include a component that enables participants to comment and reflect on the value of the event for their professional development at the conclusion of the event. Such faculty reflection reports will be necessary to demonstrate the relationship of the event to the faculty's area and assignment, similar to outcomes assessments. Both attendance and a report will be required for faculty participants to receive Flex credit for the event. All records of Flex participation maintained by the Academic Senate Professional Development subcommittee may be requested at any time by the Office of Instruction to ensure progress of faculty toward meeting Flex requirements. The Office of Instruction may also contact faculty to remind them of this requirement. Individual faculty may verify their Flex progress by contacting the Academic Senate Professional Development subcommittee Chair.

Availability of Flex Activities

It will be the responsibility of the Academic Senate Professional Development subcommittee to ensure that sufficient opportunities are provided for faculty in order to meet their Flex requirement, including opportunities for faculty with different scheduling needs. It will be the responsibility of faculty to communicate with the Academic Senate Professional Development subcommittee to ensure that scheduling is available under their scheduling limitations. These faculty professional development opportunities should be sufficiently available to meet the requirement at least during the week prior to the start of each semester.

Should it appear that faculty are unable to fulfill their Flex requirements due to a lack of provided opportunities, the Academic Senate President is authorized to consult with the Office of Instruction to consider alternatives to ensure the requirement can reasonably be met.

Diversity in Flex Activity Requirement

To ensure that all faculty obtain professional development in a variety of areas, the required remaining Flex obligation hours (after subtracting the time of Convocation each semester) may *not* be fulfilled by a single event (such as a professional conference), *and* must include a mixture of activities each of which can be demonstrated to meet at least one of the areas indicated below (adapted with modification from Bakersfield College's Academic Senate):

1. Improvement of Teaching
2. Maintenance of Current Academic and Technical Skills and Knowledge
3. In-Service Training for Vocational Education and Employment Preparation Programs
4. Retraining to Meet Changing Institutional Needs
5. Intersegmental Exchange Programs
6. Development of Innovations in Instructional and Administrative Techniques and Programs
7. Computer and Technological Proficiency
8. Courses and Training Implementing Affirmative Action and Upward Mobility Programs
9. Academic Senate, Faculty Union, and Other Faculty Roles in Shared Governance
10. Other Activities Determined to Be Related to Educational and Professional Development—please specify

Flex activities within a single year should come from not less than two of the above areas. Requests for Flex credit must include a Flex Credit Request Form, indicate which area the activity is requested for, and provide a brief justification. Determinations of eligibility of events to meet the Flex requirement that are rejected by the Academic Senate Professional Development subcommittee may be appealed to the Academic Senate President, who has the authority to uphold the decision or allow a vote of the full Academic Senate with a majority vote overturning the decision. Requests made by a faculty who is a member of the Academic Senate Professional Development subcommittee itself, or a member of the Senate, require their recusal from voting.

Other Campus Workshops and Trainings

Campus workshops and Trainings that are not organized by the Academic Senate Professional Development subcommittee may be applied for Flex credit if they are approved in advance by the subcommittee, and meet one of the ten categories above. Proof of attendance at the event and a reflection report submitted after the event remain a requirement to receive Flex credit.

Campus Activities Ineligible for Flex Credit

Regular campus committees and division meetings will not be accepted for Flex credit.

External Activities to Meet Flex Requirements

Faculty engaged in professional and work-related activities that can be seen as fulfilling any of the ten categories outlined above as professional development *and* that have been approved by the Office of Instruction for individual faculty participation may receive Flex credit by submitting copies of the materials already submitted as proof of participation to the Office of Instruction, as well as the required Flex Credit Request form and Post-event Assessment and Reflection form.

No single external event or activity (such as an all-day or multi-day conference) may be used to fulfill all annual Flex requirements, and no single event or activity may receive more than eight flex credit hours.

Recordkeeping and Privacy Requirement

All records of faculty participation in professional development committee activities held by the Academic Senate Faculty Professional Development subcommittee will be furnished by request at any time to the Office of Instruction or Human Resources, with the prior notification of the Academic Senate President. Records of individual faculty members Flex activities and annual progress should not be shared or discussed by the subcommittee with other faculty members not on the subcommittee other than the Academic Senate President.

Convocation Requirement

All faculty are expected to attend both Convocation events each year. Faculty who are absent from Convocation may still, however, complete the required 18 hours with other approved Flex events but are still required to report their absence and complete the absence process with their area supervisor and Human Resources.

Failure to Complete Flex Requirement

Faculty who fail to complete all of the required 18 hours within two weeks of the end of an academic year will be required to submit an absence form to their administrator for the missing hours, prior to the end of the academic year.

Proposal approved by the Academic Senate on March 11th, 2022