Two Speeches, Educational Advisory Council (EAC), on the ACCEPT Task Force Recommendations (Addressing the Culture, Climate, and Experience of Part-Timers), December 9, 2015

Shirlee Geiger:

Hi, I’m Shirlee Geiger, and I know that attention to commas is so important in deciding how to vote, and . . . attention to detail. I just want to stand up and remind everybody that community colleges are under incredible pressure [to] step up to the plate these days. We have the Completion Agenda; we are asked to adopt evidence-based educational practices; we have new demographics that we are trying to respond to; the challenges of the instructor in today’s classroom are different than five years, ten years, twenty years when we began the process of adjunctification of the higher ed workforce. It is a different set of challenges that we are facing today. This college has had an incredible track record of inviting people into the process: for example, with the Learning Assessment Council, and with the Completion Investment Council, we have had marvelous leadership, in my particular opinion.

But at this point this body is considering an act that is not just legalistic but it has enormous symbolic importance. We have just settled the contract with funding for professional development, and with funding for part-time faculty to come and be involved in the life of the community. It is this body, the place in which faculty and academic professionals have a movement in the governance of the institution. . . .is on your plate at this point. Are you going to say a loud and enthusiastic, “Yes, dammit, we need to include our majority faculty in the process by which we meet these new challenges?” Or not?

This has been pushed off for a long time. There are part-time faculty that are paying attention to the decision that you are going to make. To a large extent it is up to you right now to decide whether you are going to include the part-time faculty in the changes that are needed in order to meet the increased needs of our students here at PCC. Thanks.

Beth Haworth-Kaufka

I get frustrated because PCC has all these amazing faculty, staff, administration. We’ve got amazing people here, and we are not a national model for many things we should be a national model for. This document references lots of other institutions who are doing it way better than we are. I want to know why we’re not one of those that other institutions view as a model. . . . So there’s that, I think it’s a shame that we are not farther ahead than we are.

I also want to piggy-back on what Shirlee was saying. . . . I love our details here. I love you guys for how detail-oriented you are, because I am not that person and I should be. But details only matter in certain contexts. This does not have to be perfect. What needs to be perfect is computer coding - we don’t code something right, it doesn’t work. Engineering for a bridge needs to be perfect. This does not need to be perfect. I don’t think anyone is going to look back if things fail in the future, and go, “You know what? It was that one word in Recommendation Number Two that screwed it all up.”

So I think it’s a really good document. And if we tinker with it any more, we waste time and this is urgent. We’ve got other things to do.