Report from Academic Senate Syllabus Task Force

List members

Proposal #1: adoption of attached syllabi guidelines

Rationale: Our committee recommends the attached syllabus guidelines in order to:

- Ensure students receive a syllabus with the information they need
- Provide guidance on essential syllabus content for new instructors
- Provide suggestions to all faculty for valuable additional syllabi elements
- Ensure syllabi include information relevant for articulation
- Meet accreditation requirement that SLOs be publicly accessible
- Encourage syllabi that are student friendly

Current evaluation forms refer to distribution of a syllabus, but without any college-wide guidance on what the syllabus should consist of. New instructors may or may not be given guidance on constructing their syllabi, depending on their department and division. Our proposed guidelines are written in two parts, one section of content that we recommend should be on all syllabi, and a second section of optional content that faculty may or may not wish to include. This is in recognition of the desire of some faculty to keep their syllabi concise while others may prefer a more comprehensive syllabus. An example of a syllabus with only the minimum recommended content has been provided.

Faculty, both new and experienced, may not have thought about their syllabi from the student perspective, in terms of what content may be helpful to the student. As faculty review the optional content listed on page two of the guidelines, they may find some that they wish to add to their current syllabi. Of course, faculty are always free to add any other content they find appropriate to their course. More comprehensive examples have also been provided.

Faculty who prefer a traditional syllabus may, of course, continue to do so. But our task force is asking faculty to consider a more student-friendly tone to their syllabi, if that is deemed appropriate. Again, examples have been provided.

Mt. San Antonio College Syllabus Guidelines

A syllabus will be distributed on the first day of class, ideally, or by the last day to add, at the latest, including:

Course Identification
- College name
- Term and year
- Course number, title, reference number (CRN)
- Class days / time and location
- Instructor name

Course Information
- Course description
- Measurable objectives
- Student learning outcomes or the link to the SLO website, http://www.mtsac.edu/instruction/outcomes/sloinfo.html
- Course prerequisites

Course Materials
- Textbook(s) title, author, edition
- Required materials and supplies.

Course Resources :
- Office location and office hours (can say, "by appointment" for adjunct faculty)
- Phone/voice mail and Mt. SAC e-mail.
- Class website (if applicable)
- If announcements and changes to the syllabus are made exclusively through electronic means, students should be informed what type of communication will be used (e.g. email or portal announcement).

Calendar/Schedule :
- Tentative Calendar/Schedule, recommended to be weekly or daily
  o Exam dates, including final exam, and major assignment due dates
  o Field trip dates as applicable
  o Reading assignments, may include other assignments
  o Holidays

Grading Policies and Methods :
- Assessment methods
- Grading rationale
  o Definition of ABCDF (or credit/no credit)
  o Points and/or percent for each exam, assignment and affecting policies.
  o Specific requirements to pass the course such as final exam or field trips.
- Behaviors that adversely affect the grade, including attendance if applicable

DSPS Statement :
- Accommodating Students with Disabilities Statement

Course Rules and Policies :
- Academic Integrity policy (include at least a reference to academic misconduct policy in the catalogue).
  o Other classroom rules and/or behavior Policies, if applicable, such as acceptable electronic devices in class, labs, or during exams

Additional traditional syllabus content to consider:

- Additional attendance policies.
- Registration and withdrawal policies.
- Late work and make up assignments/exams policies.
- Extra credit policies.
- Availability of campus resources to support your class.
- How instructor will communicate with students
- Credit hours
- Instructor personal website
- Instructor specific detailed course description
- Instructor specific objectives
- Instructor preferred means of communication
- Textbook ISBN, acceptable versions
- Quizzes, homework due dates
- Digital media policy (recordings, pictures, etc.)

Non-traditional, student-friendly content to consider:
- Suggested practices on how to succeed in class
- Suggestions on how to make effective use of office hours
- Guidance on formation of study groups
- Instructor's teaching methods and/or teaching philosophy
- Instructor biographical information including personal interests
- Use of clip-art, photos or graphics
- A student-friendly format, such as a newsletter format

Distance learning syllabi should also include:

- How to access the course (e.g. login instructions)
- System requirements including software requirements
- Who to contact for IT issues
- How student "contact hours" will be assessed in the course
- How class information will be communicated (e.g. portal announcements vs. class website vs. email)