

EARLY FALL 2026 ACADEMIC SENATE NEWSLETTER



President's Update

After a retreat style discussion and multiple drafts and discussions over our first three regular meetings, the Academic Senate has decided to focus on two goals for this academic year.

Goal 1: You can follow that link to read the goals in their entirety, but I would like to highlight how the first goal seeks to promote exploration and discussion about the relationship between access, learning, and human connection at the college. As we pursue this goal, we plan to spend time learning about different modalities in order to encourage faculty-wide discussions of how these modalities can promote access while also enhancing learning, human connection, and important institutional goals like our core competencies. Where possible, we hope to formulate Academic Senate recommendations to support departmental, discipline, and faculty leadership on key curriculum choices related to not only the modalities and term lengths we offer but also how we prepare students for success in those modalities and help faculty develop the specific skills they need to teach effectively in these modalities.

Goal 2: Our second goal focuses on facilitating a campus-wide discussion of the relationship between Artificial Intelligence, Teaching, and Learning. For this second goal, the Senate hopes to coordinate a response to the Chancellor's AI Frameworks memo as a way of ensuring faculty leadership in this area. I invite you to check out the most current version of our [AI Frameworks Response Coordination Plan](#) – which is always evolving through conversations with our senate subcommittee and faculty representatives on governance committees and departments / disciplines.

In short, we have a defined mission, and we are trying to revisit the two key components of that mission and track our progress toward our goals each time we meet. Please reach out to me anytime to share your thoughts and ideas on these goals and our work with them: jimsullivan@miracosta.edu / 951-505-2232

Featured Event: Indigenous Peoples' Day Symposium, Water Is Life

On Friday, October 9th, MiraCosta College celebrated its annual Indigenous Peoples' Day Symposium (Water is Life), hosted by Zulema Díaz and Israel Pastrana (pictured), with the intention of centering the resiliency of tribal members and social advocates to restore the sacred relationship between native communities and water. Thanks to the generous contributions from the Hattoff Grant, the Office of IDEA, and the Letters Department, this event brought together many facets of our campus community including students and students with children, administrators, faculty, and staff. For attendees, it was an opportunity to gather, and to listen attentively to stories about local and statewide initiatives designed to safeguard the rights of tribal members along the coast of northern and Baja California to have access to the ocean and the Klamath River to fish, for ceremonial and recreational purposes, and to uphold tribal stewardship.



Water is Life Event 10/9/2026
Event Organizers Zulema Díaz and
Israel Pastrana

Guest speakers exposed the social ills caused by European colonization and displacement, and shared opportunities for audience members to get involved to help expand efforts to use Indigenous knowledge for environmental restoration and community connection to local water systems.

The Indigenous People's Day Symposium began with a welcoming and presentation on the importance of archiving family heirlooms by MiraCosta College student, Tyler Beck, a member of the Diné tribal nation from Whitecone, Arizona. Yurok Tribal member, fisherwoman, attorney, and author, Amy Bowers Cordalis (pictured on the next page with faculty member Violeta Sánchez), spoke about advancing Indigenous sovereignty through protection of cultural and natural resources, including the undamming of the Klamath River and restoring the natural habitat of the salmon population. Marc Chávez, founder of Native Like Water and Inter-Tribal Youth, spoke about the benefits of Surf Therapy and re-integrating Native American and Indigenous youth to Ocean recreation.

(featured article continues on next page)

Featured Event: Indigenous Peoples' Day Symposium, Water Is Life (continued)

A film screening of the documentary, *Haagua*, showcased ancestral voices from the past and prayers for the future. Surfing emerges not merely as a sport but as a rediscovery of cultural practices and a revival of an original way of life which connects Indigenous youth to ocean recreation, conservation and wellness. The film screening was followed by a presentation by Dr. Stan Rodriguez of the Santa Ysabel Band of the Lipay Nation where he discussed the history and uses of tule boats.

The program also featured Lisa Sherman, member of the Lipay Nation of Santa Isabel and founder of Tribal Sacred Waters, along with guests from the Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians (Payómkawichum), Miya Massell and Gavin Avila. The knowledge revealed was both informative and thought-provoking. Presenters shared an ocean creation story to foreground a discussion on educating native families about marine stewardship, fishing, species identification, and traditional tool-making practices. A performance by the Dancing Cloud Drum Group, led by Steven Mojado of the San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians.

Attendees shared a meal prepared by Irene Castruita, executive director of nonprofit Suprise Farm Retreat Center, including herbal iced tea and corn tostadas topped with beans and zucchini cooked with epazote and warm spices, served with cabbage, carrot, radish, and cucumber slaw and roasted garden salsa.

MiraCostans can learn about Tribal Sacred Waters, explore Native Like Water's programs and support options, and learn about the San Luis Rey Mission Indian Foundation, which supports cultural preservation, education, and environmental stewardship in Southern California.



Water is Life Event 10/9/2026

Professor Violeta Sánchez getting her book signed by Author
Amy Bowers Cordalis

MiraCosta Online Educators

Co-Chairs: Jim Julius & Nadia Khan
[Visit the MOE website](#)

Meetings: 4th Fridays, 10-12, OC 30115
and Zoom

MOE members have selected these primary focus areas for the work of the committee this year:

- Developing a new 3-year online education plan aligned with Education Futures Plan themes
- Participating in college Education Futures Plan theme communities of practice with an eye to ensuring adequate consideration of online education
- Supporting quality online teaching and learning. In particular, the committee expects to focus on providing resources and support focused on asynchronous and synchronous teaching, accessibility, and AI use in online teaching and learning (especially in relation to the work of the Academic Senate).
- Supporting and contributing to restructured technology governance.

We always welcome guests to join our meetings and help make our discussions richer! Our committee practices such as member-led check-ins at each meeting and varied methods of interaction and discussion help create an equity-minded, supportive community space for all.



Academic Affairs Committee

Chair: Daniel Ante-Contreras
[Visit the AA Website](#)

Meetings: Second Friday of each month, 9am - 11am

AAC reconvened in September to welcome a few new members and to begin setting our agenda for this semester. The big event of the beginning few months is, of course, hiring prioritization. Our taskforce completed ranking over two meetings and the prioritization list has been approved by AAC to be sent to Senate. Otherwise, some important college policies we will be tackling soon are Program Discontinuance, Academic Freedom, and Academic Renewal.

Courses and Programs Committee

Chair: Scott Fallstrom | [Visit the CPC website](#)

Meetings: 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 1:30-3:30pm, OC 1068 - all are welcome. Zoom option for guests.

During the fall 2026 semester so far, CPC has:

- Implemented a new curriculum management system, CIM, with many features.
 - Held multiple training sessions for different groups, including [videos on Canvas](#).
 - Completed a CPC training session with all CPC members.
- Held additional flex workshops on the curriculum creating process - these focused on turning faculty ideas into functional curriculum.
 - The [zoom recording](#) and [slide deck](#) from the Curriculum (Creation and Modification) workshop have been found helpful in understanding what curriculum pieces will be required by CIM.
- Updated the [modification checklist](#) to reflect the CIM components and new layout.
 - Faculty can use this to guide revisions to CORs.
- Approved a revised CPC calendar based on the CIM changes as well as new deadlines for Cal-GETC courses, and a separate timeline for local only courses.
- Approved administrative changes for SAM code compliance issues to avoid resubmission of impacted CORs.
- Approved the modified CPC handbook to reflect CIM updates.
- Started the process to modify MCUL timelines, in collaboration with department chairs, so they align with the related to IPRC comprehensive 3-year cycles.
 - This will avoid the future tsunami issues with curriculum and help reduce the impact on departments.
 - Department chairs are working to split courses into 3-year "chunks" so courses and programs come forward as cohesive groups.
- Received over 350 curriculum items this fall term; this should be the last huge wave of curriculum from the pandemic.
 - To assist and support faculty with rollbacks, issues, and questions, CPC members are also holding 2 curriculum support meetings each month where faculty can ask questions with CPC members.
 - Those needing additional support, or have questions on specific components, please submit the [November survey](#) for Nov 5 and Nov 19.

Professional Development Committee

Chair: Delores Loedel | [Visit the PDP website](#)

Meetings: The PDP Committee is busy preparing for our first ever end of the semester flex day. This day, reserved on the academic calendar, is December 14. Please stay tuned for information related to this day's planned activities.

Additional information will be provided for Associate Faculty who need to submit their PDP hours for the fall semester by November 6 and how they can utilize the 12/14 flex date to preplan and prerecord their flex hours.

PDP is also busy planning for Spring Flex week, which will be January 25-29. The flex call will be sent out soon where faculty and staff can submit their requests for flex presentations and meetings. Stay tuned!



Cupa Cultural Center Excursion | 8/10/2026

MiraCosta colleagues visit the Cupa Cultural Center and learn about the Pala community.

Photo credit: Amber Kae Niutoa, M.A.

Diversity, Equity and Cultural Competency Committee

Chair: Israel Pastrana | [Visit the DEqCC website](#)

Meetings: 2nd Fridays from 9 - 11 a.m.

This fall, DeqCC hosted the 15th Cultural Competency Conference, celebrated the Indigenous Peoples' Day Symposium, and is listening to students as part of MiraCosta's continued HSI work.

DEqCC held its Cultural Competency Conference on August 13 at the Community Learning Center. It was the conference's first time back at the CLC since 2020, and we are grateful for the support and warm welcome. Author and elder Victor Villaseñor, whose books include *Rain of Gold*, opened the day, and the morning included a preview of IDEAA's Culturally Responsive Pedagogies and Practices (CRPP) Toolkit. Breakout sessions covered student activism and the history of MiraCosta's Equity Centers, belonging for LGBTQ+ students, the history of Oceanside's Eastside, and collaborative mural-making. After lunch on the lawn, attendees visited community sites: the Oceanside Museum of Art, the Oceanside Historical Society's Weese History Center, the North County LGBTQ Resource Center, and the murals at Joe Balderrama Park. Thank you to the presenters, our community partners, and the DEqCC members who planned the day.

On October 9, MiraCosta held its annual Indigenous Peoples' Day Symposium, *Water Is Life*. The program included a book talk, a film screening, presentations, a drum performance, and a catered lunch. Congratulations and thank you to Zulema Díaz, who organized the symposium and brought these speakers and performers to campus.

DEqCC members are also thinking deeply about our college's continued commitment to serving Latine students. At our upcoming October meeting, we will hear from students in the HSI Club, PUENTE, and MEChA about their experiences and what they need from faculty.

DEqCC meetings are open to all faculty. We meet on the second Friday of each month from 9 to 11 AM, in person and on Zoom. Our next meeting is on November 13. Contact Israel Pastrana to learn more or get involved.

Sabbatical Leave Committee

Chair: Luke Lambert | [Visit the SLC website](#)

Meetings: Spring (February TBD)

As the Sabbatical Leave Committee's mission continues to ensure the integrity of the sabbatical leave process and support the professional development of colleagues by assisting colleagues in preparation of quality applications for sabbatical leave and sabbatical reports, we want to highlight celebrating the amazing work of our colleagues and encourage faculty to apply.

During summer FLEX week, the committee facilitated a workshop explaining the nuances of applying for sabbatical to help colleagues understand the process and offer encouragement. This fall, we also celebrate the return of six colleagues from their important sabbatical work and support twelve colleagues who are applying for 2027-2028 sabbaticals.

The committee looks forward to conversations about showcasing recent sabbatical projects during the Spring Celebration of Excellence, as a future collaboration with the Professional Development committee.

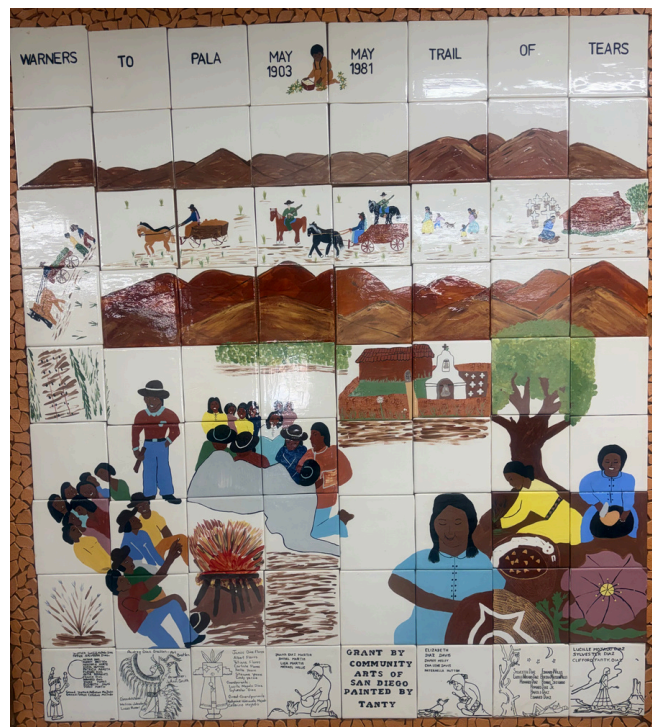


Photo credit: Amber Kae Niutoa, M.A.

Hiring Faculty? Plan Ahead for Equivalency!

Chair: Ashley Davis | [Visit the Equivalency Website](#)

As departments prepare for faculty hires, chairs should review candidates' qualifications early. Do their degree titles exactly match those listed in the [state's minimum qualifications](#)? If not, equivalency may be required before the candidate is eligible to teach. There are three distinct processes to consider:

- (1) Individual equivalency requests for specific faculty candidates; (2) Locally approved comparable degree titles, which allow departments to obtain standing approval for specific, commonly encountered degree titles (e.g., English Literature v. English), so future candidates with those degrees do not need individual equivalency. Chairs are encouraged to [review the list of previously approved comparable degree titles](#) and consider applying for additional approvals; and
- (3) Discipline-specific alternative equivalency guidelines, which establish additional, discipline-specific criteria for determining equivalency beyond the standard degree requirements. The committee is currently working to clarify and reconstruct the procedures for developing and approving these guidelines. Faculty are invited to share their input as this process takes shape.

Start early: Equivalency review and approval can take time and delay hiring. Questions? Contact the Equivalency Committee Chair or attend a committee meeting!

Salary Advancement Committee

Chair: Angela Senigaglia

[Visit the SAC Website](#)

Meetings: 2026-27 Schedule TBD