



**MCC Academic Senate  
Meeting Minutes**  
April 5, 2024  
10:30 am - 12:00 pm

**Attendance:**

**Executive Council:** Bill Turini, Lynette Cortes Howden, Erin Heasley, Sheryl Young-Manning, Hillary Biehler

**Senators:** Jay Leech, Dr. Jon Carlson, Khayyam Qidwai, Dr. Prima Tatum, Dr. Elizabeth Mosqueda, Ray Sanchez (proxy for Gracie Spear), Lainey Campos

**Absent:**

Tina Ramsey

**Guests (in-person):**

Dr. Juan Alvarez, Dr. Antoniette Aizon, Alan Cade, Dr. Angel Reyna, Dr. Marie Harris, Dr. Kaomine Vang, Dr. Justin Garcia, Nancy Frampton, Kristen Mattox, Gina Vagnino, Ray Sanchez

**Guests (online):**

Traci Menz, Linda De Morales, Ryan Preciado, Shelley Renberg, Bill Kastanes, Kate Husain, Michelle Abou Naoum, Diane de Freitas, Sergio Lemus, Erik Hanson, Wilfredo Feliz, Sosse Kendoyan, Raquel Mendoza, Gracie Spear, Cory Burkarth, Dr. Brad Millar, Dr. Elizabeth Rard, Jerry Stupar, Michelle Simotas, Veronica Avina

1. Call to Order at 10:31 am
2. Roll Call and Guests
3. Public Comment (3 minutes per speaker, 15 minutes maximum)

There were no public comments given.

4. Informational Items
  - 4.1 Agrifood Technology & Engineering Collaborative (AgTEC) program study session (MCC President Dr. A. Reyna, MCC Vice President for Learning & Student Success Dr. M. Harris, MCC Dean of STEM & CTE Dr. J. Garcia, SCCC/Reedley College AgTEC Director Dr. K. Vang)

**K. Vang** and **J. Garcia** gave an overview and history of the AgTEC grant. The central valley area received funding from the federal government through a Build Back Better grant, and originally 8 colleges were involved: Merced College, the four SCCC colleges, College of the Sequoias, and two West Hills colleges. Since the beginning of the grant, COS has dropped out. **J. Garcia** described the grant as multi-year, intended to work with the farmworker population, who may have little to no college experience, and serve them with short, fast-paced instruction. A person who starts the program in Merced could follow the harvest and take courses at each college as they move. The goal is to serve 4800 participants across the life of the grant. As we plan, this project both grows and expands, and also narrows down the focus; the consensus right now is to use short-term, noncredit classes in a noncredit certificate. We expect these students to need lots of hand-holding, analogous to low-level ESL. Colleges are at different places in the process – for example, West Hills has created noncredit curriculum, Reedley has also created noncredit courses, and Clovis is putting through both credit and soon noncredit

courses. Merced is the only college that has put both credit and noncredit through; theirs are on their way to be chaptered by the Chancellor's Office as credit, noncredit, and also as CBE. CBE is a beast, very difficult to understand, and part of the "narrowing" of the grant focus is that if some colleges are ready to roll with CBE, roll with it; if others aren't, then serve the students with low-unit noncredit, traditional certificates. We have gotten approval to proceed with noncredit, traditional courses.

**E. Heasley** thanked K. Vang and J. Garcia for the easy to understand and succinct summary. She stated she is part of the instructional team building content, and all of it is CBE. If we are moving forward with noncredit, when will the noncredit aspects come in? All material built has been built as CBE.

**J. Garcia** stated Intent to Propose course forms were submitted for both credit and noncredit. On our outline, we have a box to check that says CBE, but no addendum. Each of those colleges in the CBE collaboration pilot are putting together their own styles of addendums based on their interpretation of Title 5. J. Garcia proposed that we do it the same way as pilot colleges, put it as noncredit, and then once we have a CBE addendum, we go back and put the CBE addendum through the process. The courses themselves still need to be built in terms of Canvas content; a group is working on stock shells at this time, but the content still needs to be created.

**N. Frampton** noted that in order to launch courses in Fall 2024, the curriculum would have had to have been received by the Curriculum Committee this semester, and **J. Garcia** mentioned that the colleges in AgTEC may be at different places in the process, and some colleges can start in Fall 2024.

**A. Aizon** mentioned she appreciated the identification of the desired student population – but is there any data on this population, whether we can really serve these students? Is there any data on CBE enrollment, matriculation process (as in, the time it takes them to complete), and success rates on students we are targeting? As a community college, we serve marginalized and disenfranchised students, and we have a responsibility to fully vet CBE and not harm these students. There is still much that is unanswered about CBE direct-assessment, although it has been around since 2001. How much recognition is there of CBE by employers? Can they actually use the CBE degree in non-central-valley employment? Is the goal transferability? If we are saying that the content in these modules is basic skills in nature, that is not transferrable. The grading scale of M and M+ is not recognized outside of Title 5 guidelines of CBE; the answer we've been given is dual transcription – but this becomes an issue with federal financial aid. The CBE model in Title 5 describes credit modules, not noncredit. How are these students in CBE programs who need support getting any help with tutoring, financial aid, and other services, when these non-traditional students may be working during our available support service hours. Having rubrics in CBE modules could also create a culture of bias within the modules and favor students who have college experience. Additionally, is CBE even accelerated when it allows up to 6 years?

**Dr. Reyna** asked for a list of questions to respond to, since there is some conflation between AgTEC and CBE. He spoke regarding CBE in particular (as opposed to AgTEC) and noted that CBE is a pilot, and we had some high-level conversations with the four-year universities when involved in the CBE collaborative. The intent of CBE is not to slow the pace down for students, but to accelerate for students who are ready for it; however, having multiple on-ramps and off-ramps was imperative. The statewide Academic Senate has been involved in the pilot. We ran into some issues of coordination; we are in a four-college district, and policies would have to change. There were barriers, but also an understanding that in a pilot, this would happen. The Chancellor's Office received an additional 10 million dollars to support CBE. I fully understand this is your purview. If you all want to walk away from this [CBE] and not do it, I understand and we're not going to force the issue. There are other pieces in AgTEC that we have committed to as a district that are different from CBE. These are all good questions, and a lot of them are being addressed as we speak through AgTEC or the CBE collaborative. CBE can be done a ton of different ways, it doesn't necessarily have to follow direct assessment. If we choose to do this, in terms of the CBE pilot, we need to figure out what works for us.

**E. Heasley** repeated, "You said if we don't want to do it, we can walk away, it's our purview." However, all the information we just heard was that we're going to do noncredit at first, then move it to CBE, and that language feels contradictory to the idea that this is our purview.

**Dr. Reyna** stated the courses won't get through curriculum if you don't approve them; we know that. Reedley College is moving forward without CBE as well. Clovis is moving with CBE. We respect the right of you all to decide how to move it forward. The AgTEC grant we entered as a district, and we have a commitment to that.

**L. Cortes Howden** noted the separating of the ideas of AgTEC and CBE, and asked Dr. Reyna if there is anything else that could come from senate that would clarify that we do not want to move forward on CBE.

**Dr. Reyna** mentioned that the Academic Senate does have the resolution [opposing CBE] and said he and B. Turini could talk. Regarding AgTEC, meetings are still happening to clarify what people are doing and how they are moving forward with different approaches. Our SCCCD Chancellor asked the group if we are willing to have more conversations with that goal. With the CBE pilot, if you all don't want to move forward, we won't keep spinning the wheels and telling the State Chancellor's office "pause, pause, pause."

**G. Vagnino** brought forward concerns about whether there is redundant curriculum with AgTEC and Office Technology, digital literacy among others. Reedley passed the noncredit curriculum without looking at OT.

**N. Frampton** mentioned ESL has a lot of experience with dual-listed credit and noncredit courses. Are these AgTEC courses not being designated as OT discipline?

**H. Biehler** provided an overview about what the curriculum committee has received so far, and asked questions about the actual level of the material in these proposed AgTEC courses. Are these noncredit? Or are they collegiate or transfer-level? If they are indeed transfer-level, there are a lot of questions about duplication of existing Madera curriculum.

**N. Frampton** mentioned one of the reasons ESL uses mirrored credit/noncredit courses is that students who are undocumented would only qualify for noncredit.

**R. Sanchez** mentioned that official documents for the AgTEC grant seem to specifically state that competency-based education is a goal of the grant. If the beta is noncredit, it is inevitable that after the beta, pressure to move to CBE will come.

**G. Vagnino** asked what happens to students who take noncredit courses that then want to transfer? Do they have to retake the course?

**A. Aizon** noted Title 5 defines CBE as not classes, but modules.

**L. Campos** brought concerns from the counseling department – they have questions regarding student ability to complete if we can't figure out CBE. It's been stated these students will need a lot of support and hand-holding, who does the hand-holding? We can't start this program and then let students get lost or unable to finish. How long is this pilot? If we try it for a year and it's not working and we drop it, what happens to those students?

**K. Vang** stated the idea is to hire more help. Reedley is putting together positions for two faculty and two adjunct outreach counselors. If Madera scratched the program after a year, the students would go to another campus.

**B. Turini** stated that we've heard a few times the goal is a student could follow the seasons. If a student starts at Merced and finishes at Reedley, who gets the FTES? A lot of innovations come out of the Chancellor's Office, and when the budget gets cut, those students get abandoned. **J. Garcia** responded that the school where they're enrolled gets some apportionment and the school where they finish would get some, under the new funding model.

**B. Turini** brought up the issue that the courses being developed are stated to be rolled out commonly between colleges and that's a massive academic freedom issue. Even in a noncredit system, if we want to create a sequence of courses, we are losing local control of curriculum. He also asked if we know why COS dropped out.

**J. Garcia** thought COS felt it was too big of a project.

**B. Turini** asked questions regarding the budgets. We appreciate Dr. Reyna mentioning the State Chancellor's office put another \$10 million toward CBE, but that's not a lot of money in this system. Is this a wise move in the midst of a budget crisis? K-12 is looking at huge midyear cuts to facility money. Even if we go with a noncredit model, are we going to have the funding to support these students?

**E. Heasley** asked how much funding MCC received, and **K. Vang** replied \$1.2 million.

**B. Turini** asked whether the district willing to cut into reserves when that inevitably runs out? What is the commitment from the district?

**N. Frampton** asked how short is short-term [for noncredit courses], and **J. Garcia** answered 9-week classes. **N. Frampton** stated ESL also deals with the situation where students take a noncredit course and then later want the credit for that course.

**E. Mosqueda** noted there is still so much work required to even get this program started. The capacity at this college is far different from the others in the AgTEC grant and the majority of this work has fallen on her. MCC doesn't have the capacity even now, in Ag or in Counseling. Where's the support?

**E. Heasley** noted Dr. Vang stated the courses will use a hybrid model. As DE coordinator, she brought grave concerns with expecting the target population to be successful online learners, and concerns we are setting these students up to fail. Also, the instructors who have been assigned to create these courses on this campus

do not have current online teaching certification as far as she is aware. MCC is asking part-time instructors, with no training to take curriculum they didn't write and turn it into a hybrid environment (the hardest modality to do correctly). On top of that, we're asking them to teach it to students who have no experience with computers. **J. Garcia** would like us to hear from those faculty directly. They are being compensated hourly on timesheets. However, getting people to the table on this project has been difficult. He met with them a few weeks ago, and they are excited to be asked to contribute. Some have experience with this population and want to help them.

**L. Cortes Howden** brought forward a variety of equity issues and process issues. First, when a dean asks part-time or tenure-track faculty to work on a project, that comes from a position of power, and it is difficult for those people to say no. You state you're having a hard time with the buy-in – no one wants this, or there's a power dis-balance, and that's an equity issue. We've seen it happen time and time again, that grants come to this campus or district, and the work lands on women of color. Regarding process, at College Council yesterday, Dr. Reyna made it clear we are not going to get counselors because of the budget and the 50% law. We have an existing process, the HR Hiring Process, and we won't get counselors from it, so where is the hand-holding going to come from? Regarding the AgTEC grant, we would still love to know who applied for it originally; can we see the grant documents? Also, Dr. Vang, last time you were here, your role was characterized as a middleman, but why is that necessary? We have an existing mechanism for faculty to meet with industry partners through advisory committees, and it seems like that entire process is being circumvented. Why is there no buy in? We are not getting clear answers.

**A. Cade** stated we say we are here to help these students. Have we seen industry demand for this type of program? Why would industry hire with this noncredit certificate of completion? At least a credit course has standards of grading that industry understands. The people who come up with the grant ideas don't understand what the local level is. Why would a student take a noncredit class when they could take a credit class and move on in their college career?

**B. Turini** thanked everyone for coming and participating in the special meeting.

Next meeting: April 12, 2024