

Academic Senate Resolution #AS-11-AY0203

Whereas the District Mission, Philosophy and Functions statement supports an English as a Second Language program "...which helps students succeed at the postsecondary level," and is based on the "...indispensable condition of public access without discrimination," and

Whereas the ability to use English is basic to involvement in this society, and

Whereas the zero-unit option for ESL classes on a college campus provides access to the college environment and the academic certificate and vocational programs a college provides, and

Whereas exposure to diversity is a key part of the community college experience and our ESL population is a diverse group which not only represents ethnic, linguistic, racial and cultural diversity, but also diversity of socioeconomic class and exposure to this diversity will suffer if the zero-unit option is eliminated, and

Whereas the blended unit/zero-unit option often leads students into credit ESL classes followed by mainstream classes for credit once students develop the linguistic skill and confidence for those classes, and

Whereas ESL classes at the college are financially advantageous to the district in their present format due to the fact that the classes are consistently large (making up in numbers for the fact that a zero-unit student received half funding from the state), contain a predetermined percentage of credit students in addition to the zero-unit students, and have a large number of nonresident students who pay non resident tuition, and

Whereas, many students including visa students who are taking a significant number of credit-bearing courses additionally take zero-unit ESL courses because they see these courses as necessary to their academic success, and

Whereas, we, the faculty believe strongly in the importance of a continuing zero-unit option for ESL classes and based our beliefs on ethical, pedagogical, and financial grounds, and that the barriers to access for under-represented groups and for the poor,

Be it resolved that future changes to the existing blended system will first adhere to the following procedures:

1. Gather financial data about the ESL program so that the potential financial gains or losses of a change can be better understood.
2. Gather demographic data about our students to better understand who will be impacted by a change and how they will be impacted.
3. In consultation with the ESL Department, arrive at a solution that is pedagogically, ethically, legally, and financially sound.

Be it further resolved that the Academic Senate asserts that any decision to change the existing blended system be made thoughtfully through consultation and agreement with Faculty and ESL disciplinary experts.