

AGENDA
LCC Journalism Program Advisory Committee Email Conference

Email sent from Journalism Program head to Advisory Committee members:
November 19, 2012

LCC Journalism Program head:
Richard Swanson: LCC journalism, English, film instructor

Advisory Committee Members:

Sam Williams: Lassen County Times Managing Editor (voting)
Ruth Ellis: Lassen County Times News Editor (voting)
Debra Moore: Feather Publishing Staff Writer (voting member)
Lori Collier: LCC Digital Graphic Design/Art Instructor/Transitions/CTE Site Coordinator (voting)
Terry Wood: former Lassen Advocate Sports Reporter (voting)
Mary Carpenter: Freelance Reporter (voting)
Lisa Gardiner: LCC Work Experience Coordinator (nonvoting)
Michael Giampaoli: LCC Art Instructor (nonvoting)

Item 1: Explanation of Email conference (Swanson):

I called this electronic conference in the interest of expediency in recognition of your busy schedules. I'm being asked to complete my Instructional Program Review by the December Lassen Community College District Board of Trustees meeting. I had to await the trustee board's approval of my advisory committee candidates before I could send you this Email request for action. I also recognized that a one-action-item meeting was an unnecessary imposition on you committee members had I asked you all to meet in person. So, after I researched academic and vocational issues and had discussions with those of you in the vocation and those of you teaching the vocation, I generated the proposal outlined in this Email (Item 2). I have introduced the proposal to committee members Terry Wood and Lori Collier, who moved to pass and seconded. I'm left now with this request of you voting members to vote yea or nay, and ask that you accompany your vote with any comments if you wish to express. Those of you who are not voting members, I am asking that you please acknowledge receipt of the proposal (this Email document) and include any comments you have along with your response. These responses from both you voting and non-voting members can be Emailed to me (RSWANSON@lassencollege.edu) with the subject line [Re: Journalism Program proposal].

Item 2 (action item): Proposal to reduce Journalism Program curriculum and degrees

The proposal is to terminate the Associate of Science degree program and its certificates, and inactivate Photojournalism, Student Newspaper, Newspaper Production, and Digital Layout: Designing for Publication. Two courses would remain active in this scenario, and would be offered more frequently than every other year: Mass Communication and Society, and News Writing and Reporting. One issue of the student newspaper, *The Cougar*, would be published annually, in News Writing and Reporting.

Explanation for the proposal:

-Journalism is going digital with Weblogs and Online “news outlets” that are Internet based and whose resemblance to traditional newspapers is rapidly declining. These news outlets are not just newspaper articles and photographs posted on the Internet, but rather are centers of information with streaming video, audio, constant story updates. This format is foreign to the solitary LCC journalism instructor, a former print reporter and editor who learned newspaper layout on the job and in graduate school. The LCC journalism instructor hasn’t the training to, and LCC doesn’t have the facilities for, such a “news outlet.” That said, the basic news gathering skills and writing conventions learned in traditional news writing classes such as News Writing and Reporting are still the cornerstone of any such “news outlet.” The LCC journalism instructor is well qualified for and very good at teaching these skills and conventions in “News Writing and Reporting,” which has an enrollment of 14 students this semester. Likewise, the legal issues, ethics and standards of mass communication taught in “Mass Communication and Society” are key to responsible journalism in the future, no matter its medium. In addition to retaining those two course, this proposal includes retaining the student newspaper as part of “News Writing and Reporting” under the assumption that the printed newspaper is a good tangible medium for students, having written “outside story assignments” to reap both the satisfaction and (sometimes) the consequences of their reporting. Also, this proposal operates under the premise that a campus newspaper, even one published as infrequently as annually, is healthy for the campus environment. Many community members and college faculty and staff have expressed disappointment in The Cougar’s three-year hiatus. Also, while it is true that current trends in publishing lead one to conclude that newspaper layout and design are no longer viable subjects of an entire vocational curriculum, it IS estimated that newspapers will continue to print at the small community level (localized print advertising is still profitable) for at least two more decades. So, while it’s difficult to advocate devoting an entire class (“Newspaper Design”) to print layout because of the growing paucity of newspaper print layout jobs, it does seem reasonable to propose an infrequent publication wherein students get a few weeks’ experience in writing headlines and prioritizing articles on the news page.

Additional reasons for the proposal:

-Since 2001, (the date of the journalism instructor’s arrival at LCC) the Journalism Program has had inherent problems. Chief among these was that, in an effort to garner enrollment in “Student Newspaper” there were not the usual prerequisites set in place. The result was usually a newspaper staff made up of a handful of students who were not versed in basic ethics and standards of journalism. Often these students also required remedial English composition instruction! These conditions required the full attention of the journalism instructor, who was also teaching a load of English courses, and the program aide (a part-time employee that the program no longer has) to publish a frequent and accurate newspaper. This proposal is in part an attempt to have more control and quality by attaching the publication of The Cougar to the course: “News Writing and Reporting.”

-The new associate degree and certificate program in Digital Graphic Design” has usurped the space, facilities, and students who once enrolled in journalism classes. There is no resentment felt by the journalism instructor toward the Art Program over these developments, because the instructor recognizes the Digital Graphic Design program is more aptly suited as a vocational program aimed at employing its graduates than the journalism program was.

-Very few students ever completed the journalism associate degree or the certificates. The several theories for this abysmal completion rate do not reflect on the journalism course offerings or its instruction: Despite adjustments to course time offerings and curriculum, the rate of completion never improved. So, the question is: Why continue to offer the degree and certificates?

Final note on the proposal:

Should you the advisory committee approve this proposal, it is not permanent. There are alternatives that will be considered in the future, and any course or degree that has been inactivated can be reactivated in the future. One of the alternatives to consider in the future is: a cobbling together of a new degree and certificate Journalism Program curriculum that would borrow courses from the Digital Graphic Design Program, specifically “Art 16: Digital Layout: Designing for Publication” in place of the inactivated “J12: Digital Layout: Designing for Publication,” and “Digital Photography (Art?)” in place of “J5: Photojournalism.” The course: “Art 28: Intro to Webpage Design” could be substituted for “J3:Newspaper Design.”

This and other alternatives are food for thought. If a desire to expand the Journalism Program arises in the future, you will likely be contacted to again serve on an advisory committee. If you have any thoughts or ideas toward the future, please include them in your response to this Email request for action.

Closing comments:

Thank you for your participation on the advisory committee. Some of you have been serving on this committee since 2003. Thank you so much, new committee members and old, for your interest and participation in LCC’s Journalism Program: your input always influenced, and will influence, the direction of the program and my writing of the Instructional Program Review. If this current proposal passes, I will not require an advisory committee but, as I said, should the program be revisited and its degree and certificates be reinstated, you will be contacted! The college and I both thank you.

Subject: Re: Journalism Program proposal

Date: Monday, November 19, 2012 10:02:18 AM Pacific Standard Time

From: Lori Collier

To: Richard Swanson

Richard,

In light of the future of journalism, I am in favor of your changes to the program and can see the benefit in redirecting its course.

I also understand that it takes time, thought, and action to produce such changes.

This I say, will give LCC something to look forward toward to with future assessments of the Journalism industry and Media Arts.

With that said, I motion to dissolve the current Journalism program per your proposal.

I am willing to work with you in the future to bring Journalism to a new height as the industry, community, and LCC campus culture warrants.

Lori L. Collier

Art/Digital Graphic Design Instructor

CTE/Transitions Site Coordinator

Subject: Re: Vote on Journalism Advisory Board Proposal

Date: Monday, November 19, 2012 7:10:29 PM Pacific Standard Time

From: TERRY WOOD

To: Richard Swanson

I am voting yes on this proposal but I would like to see the school newspaper, the Cougar, instead on a monthly basis sometime in the future. I was a member of the Cougar staff during its earlier days (1965-67) and then volunteered as a sports consultant and sports writer for five years (2004-2009) and was sorry to see the paper discontinued. It may not be economically feasible to print a paper once a month now but an on-line product would be acceptable to me in this age and time. Thanks you Richard Swanson for chasing me to be a member on this advisory board.

Subject: Journalism Program proposal

Date: Tuesday, November 20, 2012 12:15:16 PM Pacific Standard Time

From: Debra Moore

To: Richard Swanson

Hello Richard, I vote yes.

You laid out the reasons for this proposal very well.

As someone who recently worked on a daily newspaper, I can tell you that the product is rapidly changing. Reporters and editors were increasingly taking photos and videos and posting directly to the Web. Where we once had a large composing room with employees whose task it was to lay out the daily papers, the work is now being done centrally from a newsroom in Texas.

There will continue to be a need for community journalism and the fundamentals that you teach will always serve the basis for good reporting.

I think your plan to continue with two basic classes and perhaps later incorporating a digital component is good. Good luck with your students and the future of your program.

Debra Moore
Feather Publishing

Subject: Re: journalism advisory committee

Date: Sunday, November 25, 2012 6:20:52 PM Pacific Standard Time

From: Mary Carpenter

To: Richard Swanson

Hello Richard,

I have received and read the proposal as outlined in Item 2 and vote Aye, in favor of proposal. Respectfully,

Mary Carpenter

11/25/2012

Subject: Vote on Action Item 2

Date: Tuesday, November 20, 2012 9:11:01AM Pacific Standard Time

From: Michael Giampaoli

To: Richard Swanson

Richard,

I vote in favor of Action Item 2. Michael Giampaoli