

Foreign Languages Department Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2011

The meeting was held 1:00-2:00 pm in H 210.

Minutes recorded by Carmen Sotolongo

Present: Dean Tom Lew, Elise Geraghty, Sabra Sabio, Mercedes Thompson, Tom Fonte, Donna Factor, Carmen Sotolongo, Alicia Class, Anne Cummings, Evelyne Berman, Takiko Morimoto, David Shan, and Mari Lopez.

I. Elise Geraghty on announcement that Mercedes Thompson has offered her home for the yearly Division Holiday party to be held on December 9th from 6:00 PM until... Detailed information will be available soon in our mailboxes.

II Tom Lew on the President's approval to replace the full-time position which will be vacant upon the retirement of Takiko Morimoto next semester. The full-time faculty position identification committee has ranked the replacement of Takiko Morimoto's position as number one in priority.

III Elise Geraghty presented Evelyne Berman with an "Applause" award.

IV Tom Lew and Elise Geraghty on objectives for Foreign Language Plan Builder 2012-13. Regarding AB 1440: A lot more flexibility for students in satisfying major requirements and obtaining AA and AS degrees has been built-in. Mercedes Thompson expressed a concern about students receiving less or no financial aid if they already possess an AA or higher degree. Sabra Sabio explained that students need to apply for their degree during the last semester that they are here; otherwise they will not get financial aid because it appears as though they are being funded for more than one goal. These guidelines are imposed by the Federal Government and not by El Camino College. Tom Lew concurred that limitations on financial are stipulated by the Federal government, not El Camino. The problem occurs if a student gets the units required for the degree earlier than when they're ready to transfer. Mercedes Thompson asked if it would be possible to send out a letter to students informing them when they are eligible for the degree stating that this type of notification is currently practiced at Santa Monica College. Mercedes also mentioned that she was informed that ECC does not automatically send out a notice to students simply because "the counselors don't want the extra work." She also stated that this is something that we should be telling the people who could actually do something about it. We (the teachers) can't really do anything about this. "Don't tell us when the responsibility lies in the process of administration." In response to Mercedes' underestimation of the value of an AA degree Tom Lew commented that the AA degree is, in fact, "a measure of achievement."

V David Shan on attendance policies. David expressed concern for the fact that we (the foreign Language department) all have different attendance policies for our classes and asked if there is an official policy or if there is a possibility of having some consistency as a department in terms of when a student is to be dropped and how to interpret late arrivals and early departures from classes. Elise Geraghty brought to our attention that on page 12 of the catalog is the ECC attendance policy. She also stated that we need to make our policy for dropping as clear as possible in our syllabus as well as verbally. The catalog states that if a student misses 10% of the hours a class meets he/she may be dropped.; In our foreign language classes that means that in a class that meets 3 times a week for a total of 5 hours the student would be dropped after 5 absences and for a class that meets 2 times a week for a total of 5 hours the student would be dropped after the 4th absence. Tom Lew stated that if we have our drop policy in our syllabus, and it is reasonable we may enforce it. Elise Geraghty clarified that a tardy and an early departure from class are interpreted in the same manner. Tom Lew cautioned us to be careful in how we apply our policy. Both Tom Lew and Elise Geraghty reminded us that we should be giving students the discipline form if they're going in and out of the classroom and using cell phones in class. Elise Geraghty asked that on our attendance sheets we include a key to explain the meaning of symbols we might be using other than the ECC official abbreviations, so that if a student complains about being dropped we have documentation that can be easily interpreted. Under Title 5 a student is required to complete 16 or 18 hours per unit to receive the units. At the close of this meeting there was no solution in terms of establishing some type of conformity as a department for the dropping of students with excessive absences.

VI The foreign language faculty as a whole expressed concern and or frustration over the growing trend of students who are simply uninterested in learning. They don't want to be here and they don't want to learn what we have to teach them. Their maturity level is alarmingly low.

VII Tom Lew discussed Claudia Prada's desire and written proposal to teach a Spanish class on-line. Many but not all of the Foreign Language instructors rejected the idea as a whole because of the technology level at ECC and also stating that one to one interaction between teacher and student would be non-existent. Some of us agreed that the department is not ready to endorse language acquisition courses on-line and some of us preferred not to opine on the issue.

VIII Sabra Sabio on ten-month contract for counselors. Sabra Sabio briefly touched upon the issue of the ten month contract for counselors and how this will impact students in the long run. This topic was not discussed at length at this meeting.

IX Anne Cummings on retirement of Takiko Morimoto.; Anne Cummings announced that Takiko Morimoto will be retiring after this semester and that a retirement party "will come in May of 2012."