



ACADEMIC SENATE
for California Community Colleges
LEADERSHIP • EMPOWERMENT • VOICE

ASCCC hosts many meetings/events through the year.
The Fall 2026 Plenary will be in Redwood City
November 5-7



SAN MATEO COUNTY
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE DISTRICT

District Academic Senate meets on the **2nd Mondays**
during Fall and Spring semesters, from **2:15pm-**
4:30pm. Open to all



CSM Academic Senate meets on the **2nd and 4th**
Tuesdays during Fall and Spring semesters, from **2:30-**
4:30pm. Open to all



The Curriculum Committee meets on the **2nd and 4th Thursdays** from **2:15pm-4:30pm**. **Open to all**

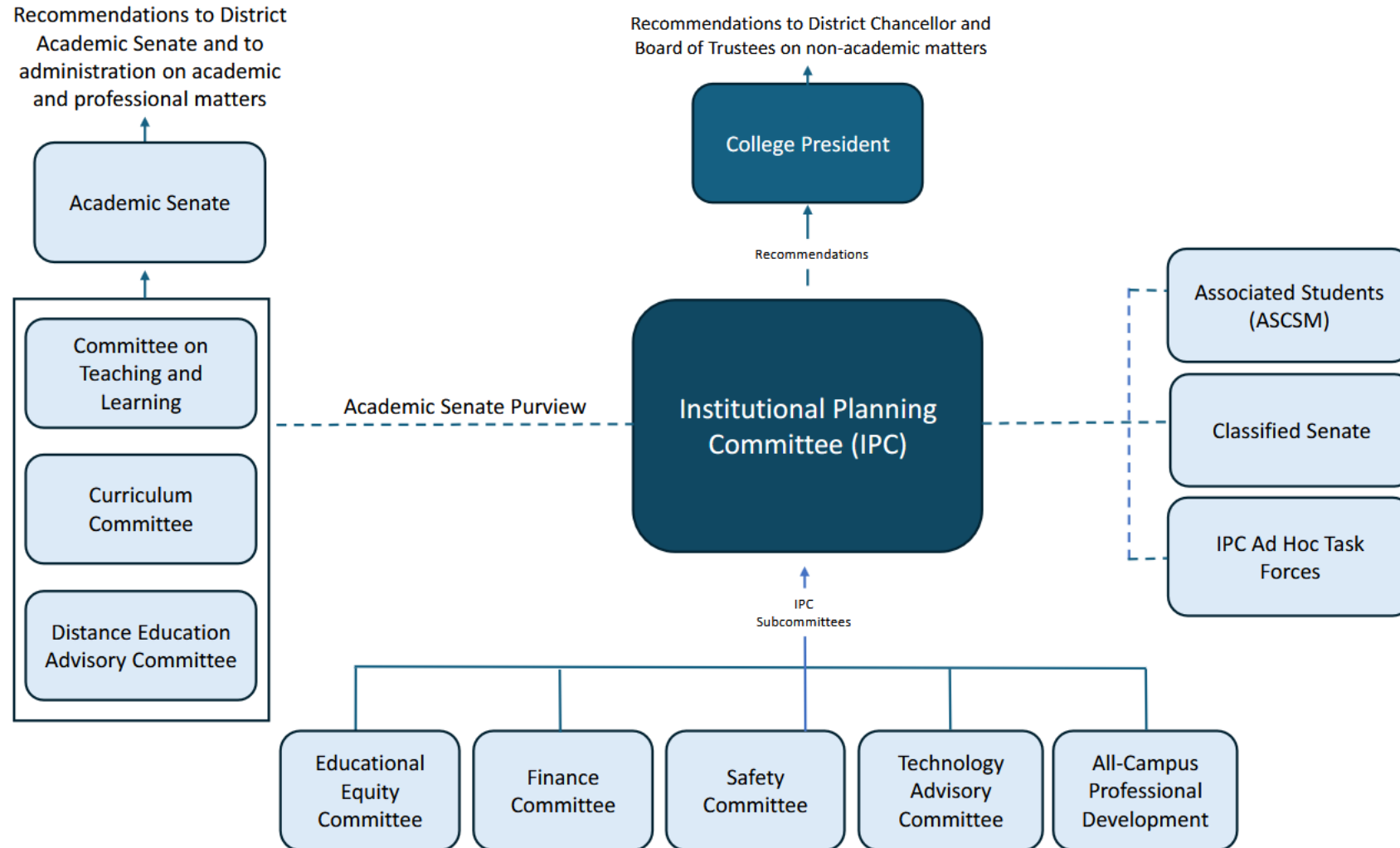


DEAC meets on the **1st Wednesday** during Fall and Spring semesters, from 12:00-1:00. **Open to all**



CTL traditionally meets twice monthly—to be determined

Current Senate/Institutional Planning Committee Structures



10+1

Title 5 § 53200 (b): Academic Senate means an organization whose primary function is to make recommendations with respect to academic and professional matters. In Sections 53200 (c), "Academic and professional matters" mean the following policy development and implementation matters

- 1. Curriculum including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines**
- 2. Degree and certificate requirements**
- 3. Grading policies**
- 4. Educational program development**
- 5. Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success**
- 6. District and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles**
- 7. Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports**
- 8. Policies for faculty professional development activities**
- 9. Processes for program review**
- 10. Processes for institutional planning and budget development**
- 11. Other academic and professional matters as are mutually agreed upon between the governing board and the academic senate.**

Basics of THE BROWN ACT

Intent of the Brown Act

“The people of this State do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. **The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know.** The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created.”

- [Government Code Section 54950](#)

Background—Gov Code §54950

In enacting this chapter, the Legislature finds and declares that the public commissions, boards and councils and the other public agencies in this State **exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business**. It is the intent of the law that their **actions be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly**.

Meetings (§54952.2)

- Congregation of a majority of members of a legislative body at the same time and location, including teleconference...to
 - Hear
 - Discuss
 - Deliberate or
 - Take action
- On any item within its subject matter

Brown Act Key Requirements

- Agenda posted 72 hours in advance (54954, 54954.2)
- Specify time and location of meeting (54954.2)
- Posted in a location that is freely accessible to members of the public and on committee website (if there is one) (54954.2)
- Provide opportunity for members of the public to attend and address the legislative body (54953, 54954.3)
- Only deliberate on items on the agenda (54954.2)
- Publicly report any action taken and vote of each member present (54953)
 - No secret ballots for actions

Public Deliberations (§54952.2)

- Business of the legislative body must be performed in public
- Careful:
 - A series of contacts that lead to a discussion with a majority of members
 - Communications that reveal positions of other members of the body
- Members may congregate
 - Simply do not discuss items within the bodies subject matter

Teleconferencing—SB 707 Basics (§54953.8.3)

- Votes by **rollcall**
- At least a quorum of members participate in person from a singular physical location
- *Location open to public and within jurisdiction boundaries*
- Member notifies body at earliest opportunity possible, including at the start of a regular meeting, to participate remotely for just cause
- Repealed Jan 1, 2030

Teleconferencing—SB 707 Basics (§54953.8.3) (2)

- Member participates through both audio and visual technology
- Member discloses whether anyone 18 years or older present and general relationship
- Minutes identify specific provision of just cause for each remote member
- Repealed Jan 1, 2030

Teleconferencing—Defining Just Cause (§54953.8.3)

- Childcare or caregiving need of a child, parent, grandparent...
- Contagious illness
- Physical or mental condition not subject to 54953(c)
- Travel while on official business of the legislative body or another state or local agency
- An immunocompromised child, parent, ..., requires that the member participate remotely
- Physical or family medical emergency
- Military service obligations...additional constraints here (≥ 50 miles outside boundaries of local agency)
- Repealed Jan 1, 2030

Teleconferencing—Limits on Remote Participation for a Member (§54953.8.3)

- 2 meetings per year if body meets 1 per month or less
- 5 meetings per year if body meets 2 per month
- 7 meetings per year if body meets 3 per month or more

- Repealed Jan 1, 2030

Teleconferencing—Public Access (§54953.8)

- Public may remotely hear and visually observe the meeting, and remotely address the legislative body by at least one of the following:
 - A two-way audiovisual platform
 - A two-way telephonic service and a live webcasting of the meeting

Teleconferencing—Broadcasting Disruptions (§54953.8)

- Legislative body shall take no further action
- Until public access (broadcasting) is restored

Teleconferencing—Accommodations (§54953)

- Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit a member of a legislative body with a disability from participating in any meeting of the legislative body by remote participation as a reasonable accommodation pursuant to any applicable law

Eligible Subsidiary Body (§54953.8.6)

- Serves in an advisory capacity
- Is not authorized to take final action on legislation, regulations, contracts, licenses, permits, or any other entitlements, grants, or allocations of funds
- Does not have primary subject matter jurisdiction[...] that focuses on elections, budgets, police oversight, privacy, removing from, or restricting access to, materials available in public libraries, or taxes or related spending proposals
- Repealed Jan 1, 2030

Eligible Subsidiary Body (§54953.8.6)—Additional Teleconferencing Requirements

- Designate one physical meeting location where members of the subsidiary body who are not participating remotely shall be present and members of the public may physically attend, observe, hear, and participate in the meeting.
- At least one staff member of the eligible subsidiary body or the legislative body that created the eligible subsidiary body shall be present at the physical meeting location during the meeting
- Repealed Jan 1, 2030

Robert's Rules of Order!

Robert's Rules ensure that:

The majority rules — decisions reflect the will of the group

The minority is heard — dissenting views get a fair hearing

One thing at a time — discussion stays focused on the current question

Every member has equal rights — no one person controls the outcome

Decisions are recorded — the organization maintains a clear record of what was decided

For all types of items (information, discussion, action)

- The **chair** is a facilitator, not an advocate. If the chair wishes to share his precious widdle opinions, he (I) *can* comment as a member of the faculty after saying something like “taking off my President’s hat and putting on my English faculty hat”
- The **executive committee** participate in debate and discussion but do not get a vote
- The **student representative** gets an **advisory vote**—recorded in the minutes, but it does not determine outcome of a vote
- The chair should ensure that discussion **stays civil and on topic**, and that **all members get a chance to speak once before anyone speaks twice**
- Information and discussion items do not require a motion and a second. *All action items must have both!*

Special kind of action item: The Consent Agenda (aka “Consent Calendar”)

The chair/executive committee bundles what we assume are **non-controversial** items (usually committee appointments or approval of minutes) into a single agenda entry to be approved with one vote rather than handled individually

Per the Brown Act, all items and documentation must be posted 72 hours in advance

When the agenda reaches the consent item, the chair asks whether anyone wishes to remove an item. **Any Senator or member of the public may pull an item from consent**— no second needed, and no reason required. This will then be voted on separately.

All other items are passed together without discussion and by a simple majority vote

Example of a regular (not consent) action Item:

3.1 Shall the College of San Mateo Academic Senate adopt Jinny, the 2026 World's Ugliest Dog Contest winner, as our official mascot?



Process for an action item:

Note: It is the past practice of CSM Academic Senate to have a “discussion” on the agenda before an action item, and the Brown Act requires that any supplementary materials for consideration be made available with the agenda. As a result, most action items require two meetings.

To begin discussion of an action item, the chair requests a motion:

- Formal: *“Would any member of the body care to make a motion?”*
- Less formal, but OK: *“Imma need a motion and a second on the dog mascot issue”*

Not OK: Skipping the motion before beginning debate

No motion, no second? The action dies

To begin debating an action item, a voting member must move, and another voting member must second the motion.

- Formal: Member A stands. *“The chair recognizes Member A”*
Member A: *I move that the CSM Academic Senate adopt Jinny as our official mascot.*
Member B: *Second!*
Chair: *It has been motioned and seconded that the CSM Academic Senate adopt Jinny as our official mascot. Are you ready for the question?*
- Less formal, but OK: no need to stand, and we can just use names. To begin debate, chair can just say *Is there any discussion?*

Not OK: Leaving out names entirely from discussion and the minutes

Discussion/debate of the action item now begins

The person who moved to discuss the item is given the right to speak first.

Debate continues: **each person is allowed to speak only once until all others desiring to speak have done so.**

Smooth example:

- Member A: *Jinny is the perfect mascot! She has all her shots, and gets a bath twice a year, just like most Senators.*
- Member B: *I wish to speak against the motion: a cat would be a better representation of our Senate.*
- Member C: *Cats always sleep through meetings, so I don't think that would represent us. Jinny's tongue says it all about how we are all feeling these days*
- Chair (on seeing no further debate or if we have reached time allotted on the agenda): *Are you ready to vote? (Formal: "shall I call the question")?*

If all members are in person, the motion passes with a **simple majority**, usually by voice vote of "Aye" "No" or "Abstain"

If any voting member is attending **remotely**, we must use **role call voting—state your name before voting**

**Not as smooth, but important:
Amendments, stopping discussion, requesting clarification**

Amendments: You generally support the motion but want to make changes to the language. Requires a motion and second. Some bodies make distinctions between “amendments” and “friendly amendments”—we generally do not.

Member D: *I move to amend the motion by striking “winner of the World’s Ugliest Dog Contest”*

Member E: *Second!*

Chair: *It has been moved to strike “winner of the World’s Ugliest Dog Contest” from the motion. Is there any discussion?*

Member D: *Jinny is not ugly; she is beautiful!*

Member F: *The title is an honorific, not an insult!*

(And on it goes)

This proceeds as any other motion, with debate continuing until a final vote on the version *as amended*.

A few other issues: **Points of order and appeals**

Point of order: if someone is violating our bylaws, engaging in personal attack:

Member F: *Don't you cretins know that all dogs are ugly?*

Member A: *Point of order!* (No second required)

Chair: Requests Member A to state the point and issues an immediate ruling: *Members will refrain from personal insults to humans or dogs.*

Member F can **appeal** this ruling by stating “appeal”—if the appeal is seconded, the matter moves to a vote

If the chair is uncertain how to respond to a point of order, members are given a vote:

All members who believe that Senators should not insult dogs, please say “Aye”...Any Nays?...Any abstentions?

Ending the debate or extending time

Debate on a motion usually ends when the matter is “at time” as given in the agenda.

The chair will “call the question” or (less formally) just ask if members are ready to vote

Any member may also move to end debate by calling the question (requires a second)

To **extend time** (for action items or any other) requires a motion and a second and **a 2/3rds vote** (as opposed to simple majority)

Member A: I motion that we add ten minutes to our discussion of agenda item three

Member B: Second!

Chair: All those in favor of adding ten minutes to this agenda item, please say “Aye” (nay, abstain)

