

MACCC Conference

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The “State” of Repeatability

John Gerhold, presenter

The “Repeatability” Story 2011

Background

In spring of 2011, the Academic Senate of California Community Colleges (ASCCC) voted on a number of resolutions intended to restrict the practice of repeating courses for credit—impacting many disciplines including music—at its plenary session.

The result of that vote was that faculty (non-music faculty of course) approved changing Title 5 to eliminate the category of “activity” courses and, in so doing, also decided to change the rules for repeatability—but left the details of that change undecided pending consultation with the affected disciplines.

After that vote, in June, 2011, a conference call occurred that was open to any music faculty that wished to participate (and who happened to find out about it). Several of your fellow MACCC members and two MACCC E-board members participated in that conference call and subsequently sent numerous essays, documents, data, letters from students, and letters of support from our CSU partners to the ASCCC for their consideration in establishing a “senate supported” position on repeatability.

In the following several months, the ASCCC and the Chancellor’s Office established a Repeatability Task Force to consider the question of repeatability for all disciplines. Below is the membership of that task force.

REPEATABILITY TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

Faculty Representatives

David Morse, Long Beach City College, Chair, ASCCC Curriculum Committee

Beth Smith, Grossmont College, Past Chair, ASCCC Curriculum Committee

Grant Gould, American River College, Career/Technical Education

Kim Harrell, Folsom Lake College, Kinesiology, Health, and Athletics

Estela Narrie, Santa Monics College, Articulation Officer
Michele Rivard, Cabrillo College, Music and Performing Arts
Erik Shearer, Napa Valley College, Art
Janice Townsend, Los Medanos College, Reading
Yvonne Valenzuela, Golden West College, Counseling

Chief Instructional Officer Representatives

Sherrie Guerrero, Chaffey College
Sue Nelson, Napa College

Chief Student Services Officer Representative

Lynn Neault, Can Diego Community College District

Chancellor's Office Representatives

Michelle Goldberg, legal affairs
Sally Lenz, academic affairs
Sonia Ortiz, student services

Note that, of this large body of interested parties, only one member of the group was from music. Although that person acted appropriately and energetically on behalf of our discipline, it is clear that a single voice out of fifteen—40% of which were non-faculty—could not ensure a decision that completely met the needs of music students and programs.

The Task Force, after two regional meetings this fall (also attended by MACCC members and E-board members), released a set of recommendations coinciding with the release of the first set of resolutions that would be voted on at the fall, 2011 ASCCC plenary session. Below are the Repeatability Task Force recommendations that apply to the Visual and Performing Arts.

- Continue repeatability for ensemble performance courses in music, theater and dance. Ensemble courses allowing repeatability will not be broken into separate levels. Leveled courses will not be eligible for repeatability.
- Limit students to repeating a specific performance course a maximum of 3 times and to a total of 16 units of performance courses total per college.
- Address community or extended participation needs through non-credit, audit, and community service classes by requesting appropriate changes to Ed Code.

- Eliminate repeatability for all other visual and performing classes, including all classes in studio art and all non-performance classes in music, theater, and dance. Purposes currently served by repeatability in these areas can be accomplished through existing curricular options.

Current Status

Ultimately, the ASCCC produced a resolution recommending accepting this set of recommendations (sorry for all the “recommend” words). Concerned faculty also wrote two other resolutions, one to remove the “16 unit” limit proposed in the Task Force recommendations, and another to add the category of applied music to the category of ensemble courses as those that would be repeatable. One resolution also attempted to extend the duration of repeatability to 3 years.

At the plenary session held November 5, the ASCCC voted to remove the 16-unit limit and to add applied music to the category of repeatable courses, but struck down the proposal to extend such repeatability to 3 years, holding this limit to 4 semesters or 6 quarters. Other than these changes, the ASCCC voted to accept the Task Force recommendations listed above.

ASCCC resolutions are not binding on the Board of Governors, but the Board and the Chancellor’s Office are obliged to “rely primarily” on the academic senate. Therefore, there is a high degree of likelihood that the content of these resolutions will appear in whole or in part in Title 5, perhaps taking effect as soon as fall of 2012. Changes to Ed. Code require an act of the legislature, but those are likely too if the Board of Governors and the Chancellor’s Office support them.

Below is the full text of the resolutions from the fall, 2011 plenary session that passed and will impact repeatability.

9.05 F11 Amend “Recommendations Regarding Repeatability” John Gerhold, Bakersfield College, Area A

Whereas, The California Community Colleges’ Board of Governors and Chancellor’s Office have expressed a commitment to changing Title 5 §55041 regarding repeatable courses;

Whereas, Repeatable courses are a curricular matter, and both Education Code §70902 (b) (7) and Title 5 §53200 indicate that recommendations regarding curriculum are the purview of the local academic senates;

Whereas, The Academic Senate has worked throughout 2011 to gather input from discipline faculty and other interested parties regarding possible changes to repeatable courses and led the Repeatability Task Force that developed the document “Recommendations Regarding Repeatability” that states in part:

In order to become a ...music major or to find a job in these areas directly from the community college, students need practice time as individuals, practice with groups or ensembles, and exposure to many.... Students need opportunities ... to learn to play an instrument with a group, to grow to be the lead (or chair), or sing solos or with a choir. And because many students had limited access to arts programs during elementary, middle or high school, some students need more time to progress to a level of competency required for admission into upper division work or to secure a job. **The development time for these disciplines may be from two to four years at the community college level. Since most community college students attend a college for more than two years for many valid reasons**, programs of study for visual and performing arts majors should be planned for students to develop in a minimum of two years and reach proficiency at a competitive level soon after that. Some students may take longer to develop the necessary skills, and private lessons may be required to help some students achieve the performance level desired;

Whereas, The document “Recommendations Regarding Repeatability” recommends limiting repeats to three on the number of ensemble performance courses and eliminating repetition of all other music courses, including applied music (private lessons on an instrument or voice designed to develop soloist-level skills), which are an integral part of the proposed Transfer Model Curriculum (TMC) for music and necessary to allow students to achieve the skill level required by transfer institutions and employers of musicians;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges amend the document “Recommendations Regarding Repeatability” by altering the first bullet point of the Visual and Performing Arts section to read, “Continue repeatability for ensemble performance and applied courses in music, and ensemble performance courses in theater and dance.”

9.06 F11 Limits on Leveled Courses Brian Sos, Santa Ana College

Whereas, The document “Recommendations Regarding Repeatability” attempts to redefine the guidelines by which courses can be designated as repeatable;

Whereas, The leveling of courses (such as beginning, intermediate, advanced) would allow for clear curricular demonstration of progressive development of skills and knowledge; and

Whereas, The document “Recommendations Regarding Repeatability” states repeatedly that “purposes currently served by repeatability in this area can be accomplished through existing curricular options” which is open to interpretation and therefore might lead to proliferation of extraneous courses;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommend limiting the leveling of courses to no more than four levels.

9.07 F11 Amend and Endorse “Recommendations Regarding Repeatability” Kim Harrell, Folsom Lake College, SACC

Whereas, The California Community Colleges' Board of Governors and Chancellor's Office have expressed a commitment to changing Title 5 §55041 regarding repeatable courses;

Whereas, Repeatable courses are a curricular matter, and both Education Code §70902 (b) (7) and Title 5 §53200 indicate that recommendations regarding curriculum are the purview of local academic senates;

Whereas, The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges has worked throughout 2011 to gather input from discipline faculty and other interested parties regarding possible changes to repeatable courses and led the Repeatability Task Force that developed the document "Recommendations Regarding Repeatability"; and

Whereas, The document "Recommendations Regarding Repeatability" contains unnecessary limitations on both the number of ensemble performance courses and on physical education, as well as omits classification of technical theatre production courses as "ensemble performance courses";

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges amend the document "Recommendations Regarding Repeatability" by striking the phrase "and students to a total of 16 units of performance courses" which places a non-curricular based limit on student course-taking;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges amend the document "Recommendations Regarding Repeatability" by striking the recommendation to "Limit students to a total of 8 PE courses";

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommend that technical theatre production courses should be classified as ensemble performance courses and as such, allowed to retain current repeatability (Title 5 §55041) along with all other ensemble performance courses in music, theatre and dance; and

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges endorse the document "Recommendations Regarding Repeatability" and its recommendations as amended.

MSC

9.08 F11 Clarification of Implementation of Recommendations Regarding Repeatability Kim Harrell, Folsom Lake College, Area A

Whereas, The document "Recommendations Regarding Repeatability" proposes set limits on the number of units students may take in ensemble classes and on the number of courses in physical education; and

Whereas, Students who have already taken units in ensemble and physical education courses could be adversely affected in pursuing degrees and certificates in music and physical education should the unit or course limits be implemented retroactively;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges ensure that any proposals in the "Recommendations Regarding Repeatability" document be implemented as a forward looking policy upon the official change to Title 5 Regulations.

MSC

9.09 F11 Equity in Length of Time Between Semester and Quarter Terms Paul Setziol, De Anza College

Whereas, Lower division courses in higher education are structured to be completed in two years;

Whereas, Individual skill development instruction as well as ensembles is structured by weeks becoming years (e.g., the term “five years of piano lessons” assumes weekly piano lessons for five years);

Whereas, Current repeatability regulations governing semester and quarter term colleges refer to years worth of instruction (e.g., four semesters/six quarters); and

Whereas, To change the regulations for currently repeatable skill development courses to a limit of a single term would create an inequity for students taking such courses in different term lengths (e.g., a student at one college would get 11 weeks of lessons while a student at another college would get 16);

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommend that any changes to regulations regarding currently repeatable courses be set in terms of years, i.e., one or two years, two semesters or three quarters equaling one year and four semesters or six quarters equaling two years.

MSC

Other resolutions also passed at the fall plenary that were intended to provide alternatives to course repeatability—particularly for community members that often participate in our ensembles. These included one that would encourage districts and colleges to allow audits by changing the audit fee structure (Resolution 6.02 F2011) and another that would have the effect of allowing not-for-credit (community education) courses to be taught in the same room and with the same instructor as a credit course (Resolution 6.01 F2011).

Student Success Task Force Recommendations

The Student Success Task Force is a group formed by the Chancellor’s Office to respond to the requirements of AB 1143 (Liu). This group released another set of recommendations that, when finalized and implemented, will have wide-ranging impact on our colleges through changes to Title 5 and Education Code.

Some of the draft recommendations that came out of this process were the following:

- Amend statute and Title 5 regulations to reflect that apportionments may only be claimed if scheduled courses are part of student education plans.
- Amend statute (Education Code 78300) and Title 5 as needed to explicitly allow colleges to enroll community service students in otherwise state-supported credit classes, where there is excess capacity in those classes.
- Current law authorizes community college districts to offer community service classes, but specifies that no General Fund dollars be used to support these classes.
- Under this recommendation, students having the course in their education plan would pay the credit enrollment fee, while students not having the course in their education plan would pay a fee covering the full cost of instruction

Music faculty expressed concern about the highlighted sections above, recognizing that, if they were implemented, it would effectively eliminate the opportunity for non-majors to participate in music courses, which would have a devastating affect on performance ensembles. Just last week, the Task Force decided, based upon overwhelming negative feedback, to eliminate this idea from the recommendations. Therefore, it appears that we do not need to worry about the impact of this on our programs, at least for now.

Lessons Learned (Our SLO for Today)

Now, more than ever, music faculty must keep abreast of the political forces that are changing our colleges and, by extension, our discipline. MACCC can and has helped to fight against those “reforms” that could weaken our programs, but that fight isn’t over and MACCC cannot do this work alone. Every CCC music department needs to ensure that they have a representative on their campus academic senate and that representative needs to be active and vocal at meetings when these topics come up. We need, for the foreseeable future, to maintain CONSTANT VIGILANCE and respond to such threats before they become the law of the land.

Sources:

ASCCC Appendix C Repeatability Task Force Recommendations for the Fall 2011 Plenary Session

ASCCC Adopted Resolutions, Fall 2011 Plenary Session

ASCCC Appendix E Student Success Task Force Draft Recommendations

<http://www.asccc.org/session/materials>

