Advancement of Educators Committee (AEC)

In response to the ACCEPT Task Force Recommendations and to Sylvia Kelley’s guidance in her capacity as the Interim President of PCC, the Advancement of Educators Committee has been formed to collaborate with key stakeholders to change PCC’s culture, policies, and climate in order to improve respect, inclusion and equity for part-time faculty and for all educators and students. The committee will function under the Educational Advisory Council’s umbrella as the committee’s purpose fits well under the mission of the EAC responsible to “work with the college community to explore and examine issues concerning the educational experience at PCC and to create and recommend district-wide guidelines, standards, and practices.” (EAC by-laws)

The proposed wording for the by-laws for the Advancement of Educators Committee is: “The purpose of this committee is to review and make recommendations to policies and practices which affect part-time and full-time educators in order to best serve Portland Community College students.”

In addition to implementing the recommendations of the ACCEPT task force, the goals of the AEC are designed to support and operationalize the accomplishment of strategy 5 on diversity, equity, and inclusion of PCC’s five-year strategic plan.

Strategy 5: Think Proud: Create a Nationally Renowned Culture for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Overview: In order to succeed as a college and to enable student success, PCC must proactively address institutional inequities and provide a high level of welcome and support to students, faculty, and staff of all backgrounds, both locally and globally.

Stakeholders important to this collaborative process are depicted in the following visual:

Student Centered Education Structure
Committee’s Proposed Mission:

In aspiration of achieving PCC’s stated mission of creating a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion by collaborating with all stakeholders to create a student-centered learning and teaching environment, the primary purposes of the committee are:

1) to advance equity in the classroom through the creation of a culture and climate that supports and empowers all faculty, part-time and full-time, elevates the crucial role that teaching plays in student learning, provides necessary resources including knowledge about PCC policies and student services, and to enhance faculty effectiveness in the classroom by supporting opportunities for participation by part-time faculty in shared governance, professional development, curriculum development, and integration into the college by encouraging relationships in organizational structures such as SACs, departments, and divisions.

2) to identify cultural values, beliefs, and norms that function as barriers at PCC to the accomplishment of equity and inclusion for educators beginning with part-time faculty with a focus upon creating a learning environment of equity and inclusion for students.

3) to analyze the impact of policy and procedures that create inequalities and barriers to access and participation for part-time faculty with the intent of purposeful change. This focus fits within the EAC By-Laws statement of goals especially 2 (d) “Advance discussion of administrative decisions affecting the educational experience.”

Suggested Objectives of the Committee:

- Facilitate the process of implementing the ACCEPT Task Force Report. The first five of the following objectives fall under recommendations 2 and 3, PCC Structure and Culture, proposed by the ACCEPT task force.
- Act in an advisory capacity to work with the administration to review and when appropriate change policies and procedures to meet the goal of changing the culture and climate at PCC to meet the strategic goal of inclusion and equity.
- Encourage the implementation of policy that increases the participation of part-time faculty in governance by creating a system that offers incentives for involvement that are designed to reduce the burden for part-time faculty.
- Review the policies and procedures on academic staffing, starting with the following:
  - The ratio of full-time to part-time faculty including an empirical assessment of how the ratio impacts the culture, climate and experience for students, faculty and staff at PCC.
  - Consider the impact upon motivation and empowerment for part-time faculty by changing how full-time faculty are recruited. Assess and make recommendations to the administration regarding recruitment procedures for open full-time faculty positions. Consider the positive impacts of changing these procedures to consideration of current part-time faculty at PCC in the first round of recruitment, moving to a national search only if an appropriate candidate is not found within the pool of interested part-time faculty. Business and other organizations have found that adopting a policy of “promotion from within the organization” improves employee morale, motivation, loyalty and commitment to the organization.
- Address the current culture and climate at PCC and suggest changes to promote inclusion and a sense of belonging. Some ideas to address during the first year include:
  - Providing business cards to part-time faculty.
  - Providing office supplies to all faculty working on all campuses. Currently, many part-time faculty supply their own printers, ink, paper, and other office supplies without reimbursement. These expenses are normally considered legitimate costs of running a college or a business. Transferring the cost of office supplies to the institution from part-time faculty is reasonable and considered an appropriate business practice that is tax deductible. Providing office supplies to all faculty would contribute to a climate of equity for all employees of PCC.
  - Examine the issue of parking accessibility for part-time faculty. The ACCEPT survey indicated a concern by faculty to find an available parking space in adequate time to be in class on time. This is a challenge for many part-time faculty but especially for those who work on multiple campuses.
  - In response to Recommendation 4 of the EAC ACCEPT Task force, contribute to the creation of a best-practices orientation system for all instructors, so that all new faculty receive the necessary training and resources to begin their work at PCC. Utilize the work done by the L.E.A.D Academy to create a well-planned and consistent approach to part-time faculty orientation at PCC. Continue the investigation of best practices in various departments at PCC to compile a model and checklist of minimal departmental practices proven to support part-time faculty. Further the development of optional practices that can enhance and improve the culture and climate at PCC contributing to a rich learning environment and improved outcomes for students. Distribute orientation information to all departments at PCC. (ACCEPT Task Force Report, Appendix B)
  - Collect, compile, and analyze best practices by Faculty Department Chairs with regard to part-time faculty and provide a template for training new Faculty Department Chairs.

- Strive for greater equity and inclusion for part-time faculty especially in regard to perceptions and realities of available support whether physical or emotional to best create a positive learning environment for students. While we recognize that the employment environment differs greatly for part-time and full-time faculty, research supports the understanding that part-time faculty demonstrate a commitment to high professional standards for creating a rich learning environment for students (Kezar and Sam 2010, Maynard 2000). It’s important to understand that the research on faculty commitment is somewhat mixed dependent upon how commitment is measured and if the contribution of compensation and inequities in working conditions are considered as a barrier to long-term commitment. At the same time, academics and researchers recognize that part-time faculty are a heterogeneous group along the dimensions of age, education, motivation, discipline, and length of time working for institutions such as PCC (Kezar and Sam, 2010). It’s important to consider the role of choice for part-time faculty. Some part-time faculty prefer working part-time. This group includes faculty with family commitments that restrict available time to teach, professionals who work full-time jobs in their fields and enjoy teaching as a supplemental activity, and faculty that have retired but want to remain active and engaged. Other part-time faculty prefer teaching full-time and would be motivated by changes in policies and procedures that offer opportunities to teach full-time. In any case, all part-time faculty need consistent support whether they prefer being promoted to a full-time faculty position or not.
- Professional development: work in partnership with TLC whose mission is to provide professional development for teaching excellence and innovation and other professional development projects. Specifically, follow the recommendations 5 and 6 of the ACCEPT task force: improve awareness and support for professional development and training opportunities, and facilitate the provision of faculty development opportunities identified by individual faculty at different stages in their careers as well as to meet college requirements.

- Create a structure and implement a process to comply with Article 4 – Employment of Part-Time Faculty, p. 11 of the union contract: “New faculty members will be assigned a faculty mentor during the first two years of teaching at PCC.”

- Collaborate with the union and the administration to represent the interests and needs of faculty throughout the year, and to ensure inclusion for all faculty regardless of work status.

- In compliance with the ACCEPT task force’s recommendation 7 and 8 on data, the committee will conduct empirical research to determine the impact of part-time/full-time faculty ratio on the culture, climate and experience at PCC and to make recommendations for best practices. Over time, the committee could conduct research on student outcomes and propose possible linkages whether causal or correlational to the changes in culture, climate and policies resulting from the committee’s work in collaboration with all stakeholders.