

Decision-Making Process

The decision-making process is a five-step process. If the initiator or group is aware that an idea, plan, or policy falls under the purview of the Academic Senate Council, or collective bargaining units, the proposal should first be brought to the appropriate stakeholder group for discussion. When an individual or group proposes an idea, plan, or policy that would have district-wide impact, the process is to submit and present a preliminary proposal to the College Council co- chairs, who will review it for inclusion on the agenda. In the event that a proposal is submitted to the College Council co-chairs that falls under the purview of the Academic Senate Council or is an item subject to collective bargaining, the College Council co-chairs will direct the initiator to the appropriate stakeholder group. This initial dialogue helps to bring information to the district as a whole and helps the initiator determine an effective path to bring the idea or policy to implementation.

Questions to ask when developing an initial proposal:

- Does this have district-wide or campus-level impact? If yes, go to the appropriate central committee(s).
- Does this have negotiated pieces? If yes, inform the correct stakeholder group(s).
- Does this pertain to academic and professional matters as described in BP 2510? If yes, contact the Academic Senate Council President.
- Is there a student interest? If yes, contact the Associated Students of Cuesta College.
- Does this impact another committee? If yes, contact the appropriate committee chair or co-chairs.
- In what ways will the proposal impact other areas? If necessary, notify the committee or division/department chair, or the administrator.

Roles and Authority in Decision-Making

Members of the SLOCCCD work together across committees, task forces, and ad hoc groups, in ways that merge areas of expertise in order to develop plans and initiatives in which all members have an investment. Decision making at SLOCCCD occurs in an open structure that puts into practice the principles of participatory governance and a student-learning approach. Members of the district have the authority and responsibility to make recommendations in matters appropriate to their roles. The scope for each stakeholder group as outlined below is derived from the California Code of Regulations, SLOCCCD board policies, the Academic Senate Council constitution and by-laws, administrative procedures, job descriptions, and district practices.

Role of Faculty

Full- and part-time faculty members participate in the formulation and development of recommendations in committee as well as in the processes for developing recommendations that have or will have a significant impact on faculty. For purposes of district governance, faculty members are represented by the Academic Senate Council. SLOCCCD's Academic Senate Council and leadership represents the faculty in making recommendations to the district administration and the Board of Trustees on academic and professional matters, which are specifically defined as:

- Curriculum, including establishing prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines;
- Degree and certificate requirements;
- Grading policies;
- Educational program development;
- Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success;
- District governance structures, as related to faculty roles;
- Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports;
- Policies for faculty professional development activities;
- Processes for program review;
- Processes for institutional planning and budget development; and
- Other academic and professional matters mutually agreed upon between the Board of Trustees and the Academic Senate Council.

The SLOCCCD Board of Trustees agrees in Board Policy 2510 to “function with the district’s Academic Senate Council” in academic and professional matters by use of “rely primarily” or “mutual agreement.” The areas of “rely primarily” include:

- Curriculum, including prerequisites and placing courses within disciplines;
- Degree and certificate requirements;
- Grading policies;
- Standards or policies regarding student preparation and success;
- District governance structures, as related to faculty roles;
- Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation process, including the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report and annual reports; and
- Policies for faculty professional development activities.

For matters that concern the above “rely primarily” areas, the Board of Trustees must ordinarily accept the Academic Senate Council’s recommendations; exceptions to this acceptance are detailed in BP 2510.

If the Board of Trustees does not accept the recommendation, a written explanation must be provided to the Academic Senate Council upon request.

In the areas of “mutual agreement,” the Academic Senate Council and the administration work in good faith to reach agreement on academic and professional matters. The areas of “mutual agreement” include:

- Educational program development;
- Processes for program review;
- Processes for institutional planning and budget development; and
- Other academic and professional matters as agreed upon.

In instances where “mutual agreement” with the Academic Senate Council is not reached, decisions made by the Board of Trustees will be based on a clear and substantive rationale that puts the explanation for the decision in an accurate, appropriate, and relevant context.

For purposes of collective bargaining, faculty members are represented in collective bargaining by the Cuesta College Federation of Teachers (a chapter of the American Federation of Teachers), which operates under a contract negotiated and approved by its members. The two bodies that represent faculty are compatible: The Academic Senate Council is responsible for professional and academic matters, while the Cuesta College Federation of Teachers responds to matters within the scope of salary, benefits, and working conditions.

Role of Classified Staff

Classified staff members are provided with opportunities to participate in the formulation and development of district recommendations as well as in the processes for developing recommendations that have or will have a significant effect on them. The SLOCCCD Board of Trustees agrees in Board Policy 2510 that recommendations and positions developed by classified staff are given every reasonable consideration prior to the Board of Trustees acting on a matter having a significant effect on classified staff.

Classified staff members are represented in collective bargaining by the Cuesta College Classified United Employees, which operates under a contract negotiated and approved by its members.

Role of Students

Associated Students of Cuesta College (ASCC) is recognized by the district as the representative body of the students. In its role representing all students, the ASCC offers opinions and makes recommendations through the district’s committee structure. They do so within the guidelines of state law and in support of the purview of the Academic Senate Council. The ASCC offers its opinion and recommendations to the administration of the district and to the Board of Trustees with regard to district policies and procedures that have or will have a significant effect on students. The specific areas of their purview are¹:

¹ Title 5 Section 51023.7

- Grading policies;
- Codes of student conduct and discipline;
- Academic disciplinary policies;
- Curriculum development;
- Courses or programs which should be initiated or discontinued;
- Processes for institutional planning and budget development;
- Standards and policies regarding student preparation and success;
- Student services planning and development;
- Student activities including the development and maintenance of club activities;
- Student fees within the authority of the district to adopt; and
- Any other district policy, procedure, or related matter that the Board of Trustees determines will have a significant effect on students.

The SLOCCCD Board of Trustees agrees in Board Policy 2510 to provide students with an opportunity to formulate recommendations through council/committee participation and to give the recommendations and positions developed by students every reasonable consideration. Similarly, the Academic Senate Council consults with the ASCC prior to making recommendations that impact student interests.

Role of Administrators

The SLOCCCD's organizational chart outlines the scope of responsibility for each administrative position; further details about specific job responsibilities of each position are available in the job descriptions housed in the district human resources department.

Drawing from job descriptions approved by the Board of Trustees for each administrative position, in addition to the supervision of budgets, personnel, and related operational responsibilities, administrators are responsible to:

- Provide leadership and expertise in assessing, identifying, formulating, and aiding in implementing the overall direction for the district in conjunction with the Superintendent/President;
- Plan, organize, direct, and evaluate the activities of the district pursuant to the district mission and institutional goals and objectives; report on achievement of district goals and strategic objectives;
- Plan and recommend the district budget and organizational structure of the district;
- Coordinate the development and maintenance of an educational master plan and support institutional research related to student learning, development, and outcomes;
- Remain current on emerging services, methodologies, and technologies relevant to the district's educational programs and student services;
- Establish and maintain liaisons with business and community representatives as participants in the planning, development, and modification of division curriculum and programs;

- Serve as a resource to and collaborate with faculty and staff in developing, coordinating, and evaluating the district’s programs and services;
- Ensure that the district’s educational programs and student services comply with the California Education Code, state and federal regulations, accreditation standards, district policies, contractual agreements, and articulation agreements; and
- Promote the appropriate inclusion of students, faculty, and staff in participatory decision-making processes.

Final Recommendation Authority of Central Committees and Academic Senate

College Council

College Council makes final recommendations to the Superintendent/President (to review and use to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees) on district-wide issues that have significant institutional impact and that are not within the authority of the Planning and Budget Committee or the Academic Senate Council. College Council also has specific authority to make recommendations on the following:

- Review and support the initiation of institution-wide proposals and new board policy proposals or updates;
- Development of and/or revisions to existing district-wide committees;
- Implementation of annual faculty hiring prioritization process;
- Reviewing and forwarding of new program recommendations approved by the Academic Senate Council to the Planning and Budget Committee for financial viability analysis; and
- Implementation of program revitalization, suspension, and/or discontinuance policies.

Planning and Budget Committee

The Planning and Budget Committee makes final recommendations to the Superintendent/President (to review and use to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees) on budget and institutional planning items. These items specifically include:

- The SLOCCCD educational master plan and the facilities master plan;
- The development and review of the annual operating budget;
- The budget income and expenditure assumptions;
- Contingency reduction plans for addressing shortfalls;
- The proposed final budget including any modifications that were made based on funding changes;
- Augmentations and shortfalls that occur that may impact commitments and/or unmet needs; and
- Levels of funding for all employee positions and non-instructional equipment, capital outlay projects, etc.

Academic Senate Council

The Academic Senate Council makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees on academic and professional matters on which the board should “rely primarily” using a standard procedure. The Academic Senate Council President shall provide information to the Superintendent/President or the appropriate Vice President concerning placement of items on the governing board’s agenda. The Academic Senate Council President or designee shall present these recommendations to the governing board for information, action, or both. For “mutual agreement” matters the governing board or its designee and the representatives of the Academic Senate Council shall have the obligation to reach mutual agreement by written resolution, regulation, or policy. In instances where the governing board elects to provide for mutual agreement with the Academic Senate Council, and agreement has not been reached, existing policy shall remain in effect unless continuing with such policy exposes the district to legal liability or causes substantial fiscal hardship. In cases where there is no existing policy to be changed, the governing board may act, after a good faith effort to reach agreement, only for compelling legal, fiscal, or organizational reasons (Board Policy 2510).

The Use of a Minority Report

In the event of a conflict that cannot be resolved with full consensus, a minority report may be produced. A minority report is written by at least two committee members who are in the minority on a particular issue, most notably a policy or proposal that will be forwarded as a recommendation to the Superintendent/President. The report officially states the minority position on the issue that is in contrast to the majority advocating approval. The minority report is forwarded along with the recommendation.

Role and Authority of the Superintendent/President

The Superintendent/President receives recommendations from central committees, which he or she has the authority to forward to the Board of Trustees. Furthermore, the Superintendent/President has the full responsibility and authority to implement and administer board policies and administrative procedures. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Superintendent/President the executive responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the Board of Trustees and executing all decisions of the Board of Trustees requiring administrative action (see Board Policy 2430).

Role and Authority of the San Luis Obispo County College District Board of Trustees

The SLOCCCD Board of Trustees receives recommendations forwarded to it by the Superintendent/President and/or the Academic Senate Council. The Board of Trustees may adopt board policies as authorized by law, as rules prescribed by the California Community College Board of Governors, or as determined by the Board of Trustees to be necessary for the operation of the district (see Board Policy 2410). The Board of Trustees also approves other documents as need be when recommendations are received from the Superintendent/President or from the Academic Senate Council.