The Senate’s members, subcommittees and leadership have been very busy in the month of March despite spring break, especially insofar as their work on several important task forces. These task forces accomplished substantial progress; most notably:

A. The Educational Pathways Task Force: As reported in much greater detail by Vice President Snow-Flamer, this task force is working on the next steps beyond merely completing the mandated nine Associate Degrees for Transfer, or ADTs, which we will have met given your approval during this meeting today. The next steps will codify the criteria we use to decide future ADTs, will generate a strategic approach to satisfying the requirements of SB 440, will build awareness among students about the degrees, will review local CR degrees for relevance in light of new ADTs, and will consider ADTs that should be tailored for the online distance education delivery venue.

B. The Distance Education Substantive Change Task Force: This task force worked with the Distance Education Advisory Committee and with ALO Jeff Cummings to guide his work toward writing the requisite Distance Education, or DE, Substantive Change Proposal which we must submit to the ACCJC in order to continue our strategic work to deploy online certificates and degrees. Its work now completed, this task force has handed off several tasks to the now-permanent DE Committee which will work to support current and future efforts toward accomplishing the many DE goals for CR, not the least of which will be securing our DE Substantive Change. ALO Cummings is circulating a first draft of the Substantive Change Proposal for peer review amongst key players of the DE Task Force; it will soon be submitted to Dr. Susan Clifford of the ACCJC for evaluation and feedback.

and

C. The Learning Management System (or LMS) Task Force: This task force – whose faculty members and its faculty co-chair, Lisa Sayles – are Senate appointees. This task force is making rapid and transparent progress toward exploring and adopting preferable alternatives to the current rSmart-hosted MyCR Learning Management System used at CR. A faculty survey and a student survey will be published soon, perhaps later this week, to elicit end-user and stakeholder input for this important process.

Distance Education is one of the primary areas of emphasis for the college and the Senate this year. The Senate has discussed and approved various pieces toward a more comprehensive DE effort, including the ASPC’s new AP 4105 on Distance Education that the College Council has reviewed. Although additional work on that AP is needed, that work is underway.

Finally, given the chronic concerns over budgetary issues, the Senate held a lively and productive discussion during its March 7th meeting on the issues of outreach, publicity, and how to grow enrollments. The faculty recognize our crucial role in student retention and persistence, and recognize that we need to do more than merely seek new students: we need to hold onto the students we have; thus, our Senate discussions about persistence. We will continue to explore ways to improve in this area and will continue our active work with the administration to improve in this crucial area.