

FACULTY ASSEMBLY Candidate Statements

PRESIDENT

Brad Byrom

What skills or experiences do you possess that would be a benefit to the Faculty Assembly's main purposes (see FA Constitution, Article I, numbers 1-8--however, there is no need to address each of the 8 purposes)?

The Faculty Assembly (FA) serves many purposes at MiraCosta. These purposes are more varied and challenging than some might imagine, and as such require leaders who are well versed in many aspects of the college.

For example, FA leaders need a strong understanding of the college's governance structure, a close familiarity with the workings of the Academic Senate (AS), and a good relationship with AS leaders. Over the last decade I have developed skills and knowledge in all of these areas through service on numerous committees and Councils. This includes service as AS Senate representative, AS Vice President, and AS President (2005-2010), as well as chairing numerous committees, including the Governance Organization committee, the College Steering Committee, and PG&E. Through it all I have developed a comprehensive understanding of MiraCosta's governance structure and the academic and professional role of the AS. While serving as FA President over the last two years, I partnered with AS President Mike Fino to build a strong foundation for a good working relationship between the FA and AS, and am currently developing an equally strong working relationship new AS President Susan Herrmann.

To meet the challenges of the many purposes of the FA, the FA President also needs to possess the ability to maintain clear lines of communication with our FA membership and district leaders. As a former journalism major, small town newspaper reporter, and corporate public relations intern, I developed solid communications skills early in my professional career. These skills have been improved over the years, and are demonstrated through the various historical writings I have published, through my daily work alongside administration, and through my effective communications with our Exec and Council. Over the years I've developed a strong understanding of district and other local election processes. Part of this knowledge was gained through participation in campaigns for various MiraCosta Trustees, and during that time I developed strong, valuable professional relationships with Trustees.

Finally, I believe the FA president needs a basic understanding of the college budget, along with a strong familiarity with the labor laws, and clear understanding of negotiation strategies and tactics. While I can't claim to be a budget expert, I do have a solid understanding of MiraCosta finances developed through my three years as a member of the college budget committee. In recent years, I have received ongoing training through workshops designed for local union leaders that have provided me with particular insights into those aspects of the budget that most impact faculty salaries and benefits. After consulting with labor specialists and agents for the California Public Employee Relations Board (PERB), I played the lead role in completing the process through which the FA gained PERB recognition, and along with it gained

tremendous legal protections. This was done without conflict between faculty and the district, and without internal conflict among full time faculty members.

What will you do to keep all Faculty Assembly members updated about important issues?

I would continue my current approach, which is to provide detailed email messages whenever urgent business arises, and provide multiple articles in the regularly published newsletter that the FA produces (5-6 issues per year, with a minimum of two per semester, and one summer edition) for information that is less urgent. I would also continue to provide opportunities for faculty to learn more about the FA's work through spring and fall forums directed at new faculty, department chairs, and smaller groups of faculty impacted by the FA's work. Most importantly, I will continue to respond to individual faculty concerns through timely email, phone calls, and in person meetings.

What leadership roles have you assumed during your MiraCosta College career and which accomplishments are you most proud of?

Regarding leadership roles, please see my response to question number one. As far as accomplishments, I am particularly pleased with my past work in developing the tenure review process for untenured faculty, my role in creating and developing the Faculty Assembly, my leadership in multiple negotiations, and my efforts at pursuing and gaining formal recognition for the FA by the Public Employee Relations Board.

How does your previous service demonstrate your readiness to assume the presidency of the FA?

I have performed the job of FA president with dedication and professionalism, and will strive to continue to do the same. I have led negotiations on multiple occasions, and served on 5 different negotiation teams.

What would you do to ensure the creation of an inclusive Faculty Assembly Council that represents the full diversity of the MiraCosta faculty?

In creating the first Faculty Assembly, I worked with the Executive Committee to consider a wide range of diversity issues. Once we identified needs ranging from a diversity of race and ethnicity, a diversity of gender, and a diversity of faculty from varying economic standpoint (everyone from recently hired faculty at the bottom of the pay scale to faculty at or near the top of the schedule), I approached dozens of individuals to solicit their involvement in the FA. That is, I did simply rely on fate to create a diverse committee—I actively sought out diversity, and that diversity is well reflected in the current Council.

How would you approach future negotiations? What long and short term strategies do you see as key to success?

I should begin by saying that I believe it would be a mistake to reveal details about negotiation strategies in a document that is not secure. In general terms, however, I believe it is critical for the FA to maintain good relations with administration and our Trustees. These relations provide

a foundation for good negotiations. I would also continue the practice our Council implemented in our first negotiation of actively seeking negotiation issues from the faculty at large. Finally, I would encourage a realistic approach to negotiations in which the FA identifies attainable negotiation goals, and works hard to lay the groundwork for success through a strategy involving intensive research and preparation.

What do you think are the two or three most pressing issues facing the Faculty Assembly today?

As the FA was established, those of us in leadership positions recognized the critical importance of maintaining good, effective relations with the AS. Over the last two years positive relations have been the hallmark of the interactions between the FA and AS. Still, maintaining these relations is just as important as establishing them, and so I would continue to list this as one of the most pressing issues facing the FA today. This is particularly important at MiraCosta, where the AS continues to perform functions that involve significant working conditions components.

The simple divide, in this respect, is between the “academic and professional” (AS) and “working conditions” (FA). While this distinction is valuable, there are some circumstances in faculty and the district are best served by the AS and FA sharing responsibility.

As mentioned in my response to the first question, my background for addressing these issues includes leadership of both the AS and FA. I served two consecutive terms as AS president, and before that I served as an AS Senate representative (one term), AS vice president (two terms) and chair of the Professional Growth and Evaluation Committee (two years chair, three years total). Of course, I also helped to develop the FA and have served as president for the past two years.

By serving in these many roles, I have developed an understanding and appreciation for the roles of both the AS and FA. I’ve been responsible for designing many of the policies that define our evaluation processes (especially for untenured faculty) and feel that this gives me both knowledge and credibility in the conversations surrounding evaluation in the years to come.

A second major concern is the 2018 negotiations that will take place at the conclusion of our current three year contract. I would refer you back to response to the question regarding negotiations for more information on the approach I plan to take in addressing this pressing issue.

A third major concern is the success of a possible bond campaign for fall 2016. The FA needs to play a leading role in the bond effort, which is not only essential to the future of the college, but important to demonstrating faculty commitment to the institution. For that reason I have appointed FA Vice President Christina Hata to the Bond Organization Committee (and asked her to serve as point person for the FA in relation to the Bond), while I serve on the Bond Advisory Committee which reports to the College President, and the Board of Trustees.

OMBUDSPERSON

Mary Gross

What skills or experiences do you possess that would be a benefit to the Faculty Assembly's main purposes (see FA Constitution, Article I, numbers 1-8--however, there is no need to address each of the 8 purposes)?

I am honored to serve another term as your FA Ombudsperson. Know that I take the trust you have placed in me seriously and with the utmost respect for the position. The FA was established as the exclusive employee organization of the full time faculty, and within just a few years, the FA Executive team, the negotiating team, and the larger FA Council have worked diligently to represent all its members in employment matters and negotiated a comprehensive first contract that articulates our employment rights and responsibilities. A large component of my work as your Ombudsperson involves ensuring that the contract is upheld and assisting faculty members when an alleged violation is identified. I have been able to utilize my skillset as a critical and strategic thinker, an organized and diplomatic leader, an objective and empathetic listener, and a collegial collaborator all to support my work as your faculty advocate. As I am sensitive to the diversity of our faculty and the varied interests among us and to ensure input and thoughtful consideration of the various roles we have as faculty, I assembled a group of colleagues to assist in the development of processes and procedures related to the work of the Ombudsperson. The "Office of the Ombuds" advisory committee is composed of faculty who specialize in Transfer- Dara Perales; Noncredit- Julie Cord; Non-Classroom- Richard Ma; CTE- Mark Whitney; Performance- Andrew Layton; and ESL/Basic Skills- me. With this broad range of faculty background and experience, we have collaborated to further define the role of the Ombudsperson and established practices to ensure consistent and objective processing of faculty concerns, complaints, and grievances. We also developed a comprehensive website which details these processes as well as provides a wealth of information to educate faculty on their employment rights. These rights have recently been strengthened by the development of a strong Grievance Procedure that will be sent to you shortly for your consideration and vote. As the lead negotiator of this process for the FA, I worked with our team (Julie Cord, Richard Ma, and Dara Perales) to develop principles and priorities that guided our work in developing a complete, clear, and objective procedure.

What leadership roles have you assumed during your academic and/or professional career?

My twenty five years as a public employee devoted to the work and mission of the Community College has provided me with a comprehensive perspective and many leadership opportunities which all have influenced and benefited my work as Ombudsperson. I have served on the Academic Senate, the Collegial Negotiation Team, and a number of Senate Committees including Academic Affairs. For my department, I am the Lead Instructor and Department Chair. I also chaired the Basic Skills/ Student Success Committee as well as served as a former Faculty Chair for Accreditation. Each of these roles has provided me with opportunities to work alongside faculty, staff, and administration. It has also allowed me to develop a broad and wide-ranging vision of the workings of the college and the diverse perspectives among us.

What do you think are the two or three most pressing issues facing the Faculty Assembly today?

As an evolving and progressive college, MiraCosta and its employees, particularly faculty, will continue to be challenged with new and developing initiatives. As the exclusive representative of faculty for all working-related matters, the FA will consistently be involved with issues raised due to this evolution. It is critical that the FA leadership be positioned to deal proactively vs. reactively as issues develop. We have already recognized and addressed the need for continued work with the District to develop side letters and MOU's when faculty is tasked with additional assignments. Educating faculty and administrators to ensure the accurate interpretation and application of the contract is also critical to our success as an FA. Finally, the upcoming Bond and its success are critical for the future of all MiraCostans, particularly faculty and students. It is extremely important that the FA works to support its success.

What would you do to keep Faculty Assembly members informed, and what would you do to elicit feedback on important issues from members?

As your Ombudsperson, my door is always open. I have assisted a number of faculty members to resolve issues related to their working conditions and have ensured that faculty who are concerned about their rights are represented and protected. While much of this work must remain confidential, the issues and concerns often become the basis for me making recommendations to FA Exec and Council for consideration in subsequent negotiations. I made it a priority to develop an Office of the Ombuds website so faculty can access information related to their working conditions, and I regularly write articles for the FA Newsletter. Any faculty member can also submit a suggestion or request for agenda item through the FA website.

What skills or special training do you possess that would allow you to help others to resolve differences?

A critical and unique role of the Ombudsperson entails working to resolve differences, conflicts, or grievances. Doing this well requires careful reasoning, an empathetic character, and the ability to advocate. Through my career, I have worked to develop these very skills. I have completed a weeklong Mediation Training through the National Conflict Resolution Center. This training provided me with mediation concepts and processes as well as communication strategies for active listening, acknowledging, and reframing. As a language educator, I understand the art of communication and the delicate balancing act of skills required to hear and be heard, to understand and be understood. I know that my education, experience, and commitment to the community college mission have all benefited me in my ability to bring people together, encourage cooperation, and resolve differences collaboratively and professionally. It is with this same skill set that I promise to address the work required as your Ombudsperson.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Scott Fallstrom

What skills or experiences do you possess that would be a benefit to the Faculty Assembly's main purposes (see FA Constitution, Article I, numbers 1-8--however, there is no need to address each of the 8 purposes)?

One of my strongest skills is being willing and able to analyze data and budgets. The FA is the exclusive employee organization for full-time faculty at MiraCosta, and in order to be effective as a group, we need to often “crunch the numbers” and look for results. I've spent countless hours sifting through past district budgets related to the 50% law and working to understand college practices when it comes to implementing our contract. Working on the negotiation team did allow me to read the current contract in-depth. This experience will be helpful in about 18 months when the process begins again. (Purposes 5 and 6)

Further, I've prepared the FA budget and worked with FA council members to create a tri-fold brochure which has been disseminated to all faculty. The goal of the brochure is to make sure all faculty know where their contributions are going, and that the money is being spent to support the FA mission in a transparent way. When changes are coming that impact faculty wages and benefits, I have created detailed documents for all faculty to read as a way to help them understand the changes clearly. I created these for the STRS changes as well as for the COLA that came into effect with the contract (Purpose 7). Also, serving on the Fringe Benefit Committee and representing faculty, I brought ideas forward that were accepted by the committee giving better benefit packages to all benefited employees without an increase in costs to those employees (Purpose 1).

Lastly, I feel that I listen well to faculty concerns and work for ways to improve them. I hope to continue providing this for all faculty as a way to make sure their voices are heard. (Purposes 3 and 4)

What leadership roles have you assumed during your academic and/or professional career?

Roles that I've assumed:

BPC member (4 years); served on a significant number of subcommittees including revising the ranking system, drafting the new Resource Allocation program, budget subcommittee, and Education Master Plan Addendum subcommittee.

- FA Exec member (2014-present); served in the role of treasurer
- MiraCosta FA negotiation team member (2015)
- Fringe Benefit Committee Faculty Representative, 2014-present
- FA Budget and Benefits subcommittee, chair
- Math 52/95 Pathway Lead Writer
- Math Department Pre-Transfer Committee member (2011-present), Chair (2012-2014)
- Led Flex Workshops on Faculty Retirement options (2013 – present)

- Oregon Teachers of Teachers of Math (TOTOM) Conference President (2010)

What do you think are the two or three most pressing issues facing the Faculty Assembly today?

1. I believe that keeping faculty informed of their rights under the contract is very important. While most faculty do know that we have a contract, the details included within are not well known. Increasing communication between faculty on campus will lead to a stronger faculty unit as well as making sure that any issues are brought together as a group. Further, having input from faculty about concerns with the contract is vital to prepare for the next negotiation cycle.

2. I also believe that maintaining strong lines of communication between FA (Exec and Council) and all faculty is critical for the ongoing success of the FA. Faculty want to know what's going on now and what is coming down the pipeline.

3. Understanding how to best represent and protect faculty concerns under the new contract.

What would you do to keep Faculty Assembly members informed, and what would you do to elicit feedback on important issues from members?

While I believe email is a convenient way to keep people informed, I am more inclined to meet face-to-face. Over my term as an Executive Officer, I've personally met with more than 50 faculty and the conversations raised issues related to working conditions in nearly every instance. My goal is to meet people where they are and make sure they can put a face

Mark Whitney

I do my very best to be diligent in my governance responsibilities and bring a sincere commitment and an open-mind to our collegial decision-making processes. I consistently do the work required to get things done well. I value the insights, experiences, comments and contributions of my colleagues, and do not view my ideas as any more important than those of others.

I am completing my 17th year as faculty in Child Development and have served as Academic Master Plan Committee Co-Chair, Student Learning Outcomes Coordinator, Academic Senate Representative, and Academic Senate Vice-President. I have also served on the Governance Organization Committee, the College Steering Council and the Professional Standards Committee. I currently serve on the Sustainability Committee and on the Professional Growth & Evaluation Committee and am now completing my second year as a member of the Faculty Assembly Council and the Office of the Ombuds. I have also served as Director of the Child Development Center for ten years.

Our new contract brings with it more formally delineated elements of our working conditions, and we are indebted to the work that has preceded us in this endeavor. Working collaboratively with my colleagues on the FA Council, I have contributed to a wide range of issues impacting faculty working conditions, including our new Grievance and Class Size Maxima policy negotiations and various proposed MOUs in response to increased faculty workload. I believe the next two years will provide continued opportunities to address any inconsistencies in our current contract and to appropriately align the work of the Faculty Assembly with that of the Academic Senate. I will strive to be available to your ideas, open to your input, responsive to your concerns and always appreciative of your confidence.... and your vote.

Kristi Wish

What skills or experiences do you possess that would be a benefit to the Faculty Assembly's main purposes (see FA Constitution, Article I, numbers 1-8--however, there is no need to address each of the 8 purposes)?

The skills and experience I possess which would benefit the Faculty Assembly's main purposes stem from my 16 years of counseling and teaching experience in the California Community College system. During this time, I have developed a thorough understanding of the California Community College System, and have had the opportunity to serve in multiple leadership roles, such as Counseling Department Chair.

As a result of my varied experiences, I have developed a diverse skill set in areas such as institutional planning, budget oversight, resource allocation, collective bargaining, and participatory governance. For example, I worked collaboratively with college administrators to oversee the Counseling Department budget, meet faculty contract obligations, develop counselor schedules and course offerings, coordinate faculty evaluations (full-time and adjunct) and submit activity proposals (yearly one-time funding with annual renewal if approved) for projects such as UMOJA, the Veteran's Art Project and Early Admissions Opportunity. In carrying out each of these duties, it was imperative to work in the spirit of timely cooperation and maintain a collegial atmosphere. I was an active member in district, college and department discussions where varying opinions, ideas and criticisms were expressed keeping the mission, goals and planning of the institution at the forefront.

These are examples of skills and experiences that I believe have prepared me to represent the faculty at MiraCosta College in the Faculty Assembly, to support quality education and the general welfare of the College in matters related to employee working conditions and employer-employee relations.

What leadership roles have you assumed during your academic and/or professional career? During my professional career, I have served in multiple leadership roles. The most relevant to this position would be my three-year tenure as Counseling Department Chair at Grossmont College, which included additional administrative Dean of Counseling duties in which I was solicited by the Vice President of Student Services to oversee in the absence of a permanent Dean (1.5 years).

In addition I have also served as a member of Academic Senate, Chairs and Coordinators, Student Services Council, Enrollment Strategies, Matriculation and varied other councils, committees and task forces.

What do you think are the two or three most pressing issues facing the Faculty Assembly today?

California Community Colleges are very complex institutions, that are not only expected to provide the highest quality educational programs and services for its' community, but do so in an ever changing environment, both locally and statewide. For example, we are impacted by statewide initiatives, such as SSSP, Enhanced Non-Credit, and CID course requirements.

Thus, a major issue would be closely looking at new legislation to determine the local impact and how it may affect our working conditions.

Locally, I think it's important to prepare for the next round of negotiations as well as listen to faculty and learn about their biggest concerns, particularly in regards to equity and fairness. Lastly, I think it is important to get all faculty involved in understanding their rights as faculty.

What would you do to keep Faculty Assembly members informed, and what would you do to elicit feedback on important issues from members?

I would begin by working to foster of an environment that supports the exchange of various ideas and opinions, maintains a collegial atmosphere, and is sensitive to the diversity of our faculty. I have great integrity and keep at my core, the ethics and professional standards that are governed by the faculty. I would work diligently to be objective and I would value the opinions of others. I would welcome input and collaborate with my colleagues to develop clear roles and responsibilities particularly in regards to unified communication and the distribution of information.

If I were selected, I would see my role as a representative of the faculty as a whole, understanding that faculty will rely upon me to represent the collective opinions in areas such as working conditions and employer and employee relations.