



Academic Senate Regular Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2026

3:00 - 5:00 P.M.

ARC Student Center Board Room

Meeting ID: 816 8060 2582

[Zoom link](#)

Preliminaries

1. Call to Order 3:04 PM by AS President Veronica Lopez
 - Land Acknowledgement Statement read by Senator Justus Carlisle.
2. Approval of the Agenda
 - [02/26 Agenda](#) approved.
3. Approval of the Minutes
 - [February 12, 2026](#) approved.
4. Introduction of Guests
 - Diana Lopez, ARC Research Analyst
5. Public Comment Period (3 minutes per speaker)
 - ARC Distance Education Coordinator, Pamela Bimbi shared that, after ARC voted to enable the IgniteAI Grading Assistant in Canvas, Instructure (Canvas' parent company) shared that the tool will only be free through June. Their intent seems to be to generate interest in some of these AI tools, gather user feedback, and then determine what that cost of the tools will be based on interest/usage; pricing is expected some time in April. Without the ability for the state (which provides Canvas for all the CCs) or the district to consider the potential added cost, it is reasonable to expect that this tool will no longer be available within LRCCD after June 30th.
 - Canvas' IgniteAI tools that will be free through June 30th, 2026:
 - [Rubric Generator](#) (not enabled)
 - [Discussions Insights](#) (not enabled)
 - **[Grading Assistant](#) (enabled)**
 - [IgniteAI Agent](#) (not enabled)
 - Canvas' IgniteAI tools that are expected to remain free:
 - **[Discussion Summaries](#) (enabled)**
 - **[Search](#) (enabled)**
 - Translations for Inbox and Translations for Discussions & Announcements—possibly two separate options (not currently enabled—still in early adoption phase)
 - [Question Authoring Assistance for Quizzes](#) (only for New Quizzes tool—not currently enabled—still in early adoption phase)
 - Accessibility Remediation (alt text generator for images—not yet available)
6. President's Report
 - Announced Faculty and Staff Campus Workshops (9:00 AM to 11:00 AM) (FLEX)

- Friday, March 6: Session 1: Overview of Domestic Violence and Impacts of Domestic Violence on Children (2 hours)
 - Tuesday, March 10: Session 2: Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Consent (2 hours)
 - Friday, March 27: Session 3: WEAVE Programs and Recognize, Respond, Refer (2 hours)
- Reminded current senators to review the [Senator roster](#) and recruit Academic Senators for Fall 2026
 - There are 9 Senator seats with terms ending this Spring 2026
 - Survey link scheduling preferences: [[Academic Senate Meeting Questionnaire](#)]. As of February 17, the **Academic Senate Meeting questionnaire** has collected **64 responses**.
 - Help set priorities and strengthen our shared governance efforts and Academic and Professional Matters (our beloved [10+1](#)): [[Academic Senate Survey](#)]. As of February 17, the **Academic Senate Survey** has collected **38 responses**.
 - During a meeting between the Academic Senate Executive Team (ASET) and the President's cabinet held on February 24, the administration indicated that no written response would be provided to the [Academic Senate Homebases Recommendations](#). Instead, the administration would forward the recommendations to the HomeBases Charter Team.
 - A senator asked if this is a violation of Policy 3412 and Title 5. Namely, when the Academic Senate makes a recommendation, if a recommendation is not accepted, the administration shall promptly communicate its reasons in writing. Is the administration not following the law?
 - Another Senator is asking: Is this the end of the process? What is the next action for the Academic Senate to take? In awareness of the law? Why was no written response provided by the administration when it is Title 5 and Policy 3412? The body would like to request the AS leadership team to request as to why a written response was not provided.
 - VPI Angela Daroy stated that she hears the Body and that the administration will be responding in writing to the recommendations.
 - Another senator also wanted the Academic Senate Executive Team to request a written response from the aRC administration to the Academic Senate Homebases Recommendations.

Consent Item

7. Approval of [Remote Attendees](#): Unanimous consent
 - Heidi Bennett (Business/Business Tech)
 - Shannon Pries (English alt.)
 - Christian Speck (Business/Business Tech - Adjunct)
 - Brian Rosario (Business)
 - Jeff Sacha (Sociology; People Culture & Society)
 - Mikhail Drobot (DCDT)
 - Lana Anishchenko (Math-alt)
 - Rachel Simon (Nursing)
8. [New Faculty Learning Community Coordinator Position F26-Sp27](#) job description
 - ARC will have a robust faculty hiring season, which means we will likely have large new faculty cohorts. The current job description is for two falls so could be a 2-year position, but it is currently listed as a one-year position.
 - Funding is a significant barrier. Currently, the position is funded for 1 year and not two. This is why the position is listed for one year for now but it can be revisited.
 - Senator asked a question about FTE allocation, if the 0.5 is for Fall and not Spring? Dean Brenda Valle clarified that the planning portion would be less time in the planning stage during Spring 2026 and more high-touch, hands-on in the Fall 2026, with the 0.5 FTE being for the full academic year.

- VPI Angela Daroy reaffirmed that the 0.5 FTE is per Academic Year, and not per semester.
- A senator suggested writing it a total of 0.5 for clarity.
- A senator had a question about face-to-face vs. online (last bullet under "Other Information"). First, there was a concern about the procedure that their comment was resolved without any discussion. The AS President Veronica Lopez clarified that she sent the comment to Dean Brenda Valles and "resolved" on the Google Doc. The comments were reopened in the document so discussion could occur at the AS meeting. Concerns with the language used included:
 - Current language is restrictive.
 - Senator suggested a more flexible language to be more responsive to pragmatic needs of specific cohorts. Suggested language as follows:
 - "The New Faculty Learning Community will operate with an emphasis on face-to-face engagement while intentionally integrating flexible modalities—including synchronous online sessions, asynchronous activities, and digital resource sharing—as appropriate to support faculty needs and the coordinator's planned activities."
 - AS Secretary Andréa Pantoja Garvey concurred with the senator's suggestion and wondered why the more restrictive language proposed was needed.
 - Dean Brenda Valles and AS President Veronica Lopez shared that the current NFLC Coordinator Rocio Owens had provided input and was involved in the current wording of the job description.
- Another senator pulled the item from consent. The item is now a decision item and discussion will continue to take place.
- Another senator shared that language of the job description, including the FTE allocation, needs more clarification.
- Item will return to the March 12th meeting.

Decision Items (5-10 minutes per item)

9. [Critical Hire for Fire Technology Coordinator \(2nd Read\)](#) - (Fire Technology Program, Ken Wong, and Apprenticeship and Public Safety Associate Dean Charissa Gorre)
 - [Request for Support](#) (Fire Technology Program, Ken Wong) and the [Old Fire Technology Job Description](#) were included in the Supporting Materials on Canvas
 - AS President Veronica Lopez and other senators express gratitude to Ken Wong and Charissa Gorre for their work on adjusting the language in the job description and for their responsiveness to comments. Also appreciated by the Academic Senate was how thoughtful Dean Charissa Gorre and Ken Wong worked with a complicated format.
 - A motion to support the critical hire for Fire Technology Coordinator was made. Motion second.
 - The motion passed unanimously.
10. [ARC Distance Education Project Charter \(2nd Read\)](#) - (Distance Education Faculty Coordinator, Pamela Bimbi, and Vice President of Student Services and Equity, VPSSE, Dr. David Miramontes-Quiñones, Dean Mikenna Modesto)
 - AS President Veronica Lopez thanked the team for incorporating a lot of the comments into the document.
 - David Miramontes-Quiñones explained how Dean Mikenna Modesto and DE Coordinator Pamela Bimbi worked collaboratively on the DE Project Charter and that they were asking the AS body for any additional feedback.
 - AS President Veronica Lopez shared that this DE Project Charter is really large, including three pillars: Instruction, Student Services, and Students. Within each of these pillars, we need to elevate the A of DEIA - the accessibility piece of the charter.
 - A senator mentioned that they appreciated how the DE Project Charter was thoughtfully written and had questions as to why AI was not explicitly named throughout the charter, although there is mention of how the distance-education landscape has changed significantly since the pandemic and there is some mention of AI in the membership composition.
 - Past President Alisa Shubb asked for clarification if the Senator was suggesting that this needed to be included under Project Assumptions. Senator concurred.
 - DE Coordinator Pamela Bimbi clarified that part of the reason was because they were aware of multiple

groups on campus specifically dedicated to AI and they didn't want to become another group focusing on AI.

- Another senator mentioned the importance of centering accessibility and disabled students in the DE Project Charter, using the analogy of making trans students visible in the curriculum. While boosting trans representation benefits all students, for trans students, it is a lifeline. Accessibility benefits all students, but for disabled students it is a lifeline.
- Concerns about the bias of AI towards disability were also raised and a senator asked if this document was written using AI.
- One of the presenters addressed the questions by stating that they have been working on how to intentionally use generative AI. Another presenter also mentioned that in the earlier draft of the DE Project Charter they used AI but did not like the output so they decided to start over.
- AS Secretary Andréa Pantoja Garvey shared concerns about the Project Team membership with faculty from all of the divisions being included, instead of faculty representation being intentionally centered on the DEIA framework and the team membership needing to more clearly align with the purpose and scope of the charter.
- Past President Alisa Shubb wanted to clarify that we are noticing a lack of representation of disabled students and faculty. Are we recommending we review this document again and are there specific places where we should review?
- A motion was made to postpone the vote for the DE charter and to go back to its sponsoring council for more DEIA input. Motion was seconded.
- VPSSE David Miramontes-Quinoñes reiterated that they will be open for comments.
- Before leaving, one of the presenters wanted to clarify that disabled people were not highlighted in the document because not bringing up disability and stressing benefits to all helps create buy-in. A senator responded that they were sure the intentions were good, but that the document as written was not likely to land well with many disabled people.
- Item will be brought back to the March 12 meeting.

11. Centering Faculty Voices on Faculty Hiring Committees [Resolution](#) (**2nd Read**)

- District Academic Senate Resolution in [Support of Honoring Collegial Consultation Relating to Faculty Hiring Processes](#). The motion passed unanimously.
- A senator expressed appreciation for how the AS Resolution was brought together.
- Another senator shared discomfort with first Whereas on page two and recommends strikethrough because performance style or relatability is applicable to anyone in a hiring committee.
- Motion was made to support the resolution without the first whereas on page. Motion was seconded.
- Motion passes unanimously.

12. [Dual Enrollment Faculty Coordinator Position for F26-S28](#) job description (**1st Read**)

- AS President Veronica Lopez reminded this item is a 1st read item and to bring to their constituents.
- A clarifying question was asked about how this position is different from DE director and added as a comment to the Google Doc.
- A senator mentioned that the job description talks a lot about needs and not about success outcomes. As mentioned in previous Academic Senate meetings, holistic success such as mental health, burnout, anxiety, overscheduled adolescents, especially younger kids, are factors to be considered. Success outcomes, not just needs.
- Item will return as a 2nd read on March 12th.

Reports (5-10 mins per item)

13. LRCFT Location Safety Committee - (LRCFT ARC President, Art Jenkins)

- Written report [Notes from February 17th meeting](#)
- Concerns from the last meeting were brought up to the Location Safety Committee and there was a lot on the Feb 17th meeting so they weren't able to bring it up to that meeting. But they will bring it up to the next meeting TBD.

14. Councils:

- Institutional Effectiveness Council (IEC) - Dr. Connie Ayala
 - [IEC Written report for Academic Senate](#)
 - AS President Veronica Lopez asked for any updates on the Institutional Equity Plan (IEP) progress. Dr. Connie Ayala mentioned that IEP completed the data collection from the surveys and town hall meetings with faculty groups from fall convocation. They are about to complete the student input through surveys, town hall meetings through specific groups such as Puente, Umoja. Then, they'll start writing reports to present to various bodies.
 - A senator shared a concern that the way of seeking information from students via the student services while some students feel alienated from the learning communities. They suggested a more general way to capture information from all students. There are in-person town halls to gather information and there are questionnaires; but since town halls are organized by specific student services groups, and some students may not feel comfortable with those groups, then some students cannot get their voices captured.
- Operations Council (OC) -
- Student Success Council (SCC) - Caitlin Zumalt
 - [SCC Written report for Academic Senate](#)

Discussion (10-15 mins per item)

15. Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Midterm Report - (Sociology Professor, Dr. Jeff Sacha, Research Analyst, Dr. Diana Lopez, and Dean of Institutional Effectiveness & Innovation, Dr. Brenda Valles)

- Slides - [Academic Senate ACCJC Midterm Report](#) shared by Dean Brenda Valles
 - Draft - [New ARC Midterm Report Writing Team](#)
 - Feedback [form for Academic Senate](#)
- Dean Brenda Valles went over the slides, explained that Diana Lopez represents the Classified perspective, Jeff Sacha represents the faculty perspective, and she represents the administration perspective.
- She started with the Accreditation Cycle.
 - ISER, Mid-Term Report, and Annual Reporting.
 - Our college is currently in the October 2026 mid-term report, which is between two annual and fiscal reports.
- Then, provided context we are accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) to validate our accreditation standing and approve funding for financial aid for our students, for instance.
- There are four key components that we are required to respond to and they are very prescriptive (see slide 6 of [Academic Senate ACCJC Midterm Report](#)).
 - Respond to recommendations (see slide 7)
 - In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends that the College adhere to its newly established process for developing and reporting improvement actions should the College or instructional programs ever fall below institution-set standards for institution-wide or program performance.
 - In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College strengthen its process to ensure there is inclusion of feedback on student performance as related to regular and substantive interaction in distance education courses providing students with opportunities to adjust their performance.
 - Consider external factors such as COVID and federal funding changes as well as internal factors such as Davies Hall and various internal changes.
 - A key area that the ACCJC is emphasizing is disaggregating data.
- Dean Brenda Valles emphasized that the body has the draft [New ARC Midterm Report Writing Team](#) and would love feedback using the Feedback [form for Academic Senate](#) organized by content area/section.
- It was reiterated that it would be helpful for faculty to review all of it, but try to focus on the components that can be modified. Most helpful to focus on areas A and areas D because this is where we capture and celebrate the advances and also the barriers we need to overcome.

- Diana Lopez reiterated that they really would love to hear from the Academic Senate.
- Dean Brenda Valle clarified that the midterm report has to be reviewed by all the governance groups and then be reviewed by the board of trustees. So, honoring that faculty is off contract during the summer, the timeline to hear from the Academic Senate so all faculty input can be incorporated would be by April.

16. Report Back (Feedback from College Areas)

- Open Issues from any Previous Agenda Item.
- A senator from science mentioned that that network outage needs more clarity of what constitutes a true emergency. Because if students are able to play sports, then why in-person classes/labs had to move their classes remotely on a Sunday night. How different disciplines, different areas can be affected.
- Alisa Shubb mentioned that it might be useful to gather information about the impact of short-term remote on instruction, therefore on students, to help administrative leadership to fully appreciate the impact. If you are not aware, in all of our curriculum, there is an emergency closure DE addendum, it is a blanket language, it was adopted in January 2021. "In the event of a college/facilities closure..." Contractually and curricularly, remote can be called at any emergency in a way that does not compromise the attendance counting. So what happened here is that when the facility of the network outage and the administration could not fully anticipate what would happen on Monday, that allowed them to evoke the emergency closure and move to remote.
- A senator reiterated if it was an emergency, then we should not have anyone on campus. And then, based on this "emergency closure DE addendum" almost anything can be called an "emergency" so we need to define what constitutes an emergency. During COVID, at Sac State, for instance, faculty, staff, and students had access to resources to effectively transition to remote. If you are going to evoke that, then provide resources for faculty and students such as laptops with cameras.
- Another senator reiterated concerns with the digital divide in terms of access to resources to be able to move classes to online and this is contrary to the message of the college of equity. How about students with disabilities? Would the classes that moved online that day be accessible?
- Another senator echoed the concerns of how can the materials be prepared for Canvas, accessible, in less than 12 hours?
- Another faculty reminded us how we handled the campus closure in 2018 due to the fires and we had no Emergency closure to evoke. There was no move to remote operations.
- Another senator shared via Zoom the 2018 email communication from Chancellor Brian King and the College Presidents then. It read:

Dear colleagues,

You should have seen a Rave Alert, moments ago, announcing that all classes are being cancelled effective immediately due to the fact that regional air quality conditions have not improved as anticipated. All college and district offices are closed through Sunday, November 18 except for essential operations such as security/police and critical IT operations. Other personnel may be required to perform essential functions, and they will be notified by their supervisor.

We very much appreciate the concerns and challenges you have shared with us that helped to inform this decision.

Thank you,

Brian King
Chancellor, Los Rios CCD

Thomas Greene
President, American River College

Edward Bush
President, Cosumnes River College

Whitney Yamamura
President, Folsom Lake College

- AS VP Daniel Slutsky recalled that his dean required them to make off-line activities to make up the lost time from when the campus was closed for air quality issues in 2018. Also, he mentioned there were challenges with the message about the campus being closed. Deans were told to tell their faculty that campus was open so that they could volunteer to be on campus and invite students to be there, but that they could not hold students responsible for the information provided so that those students that chose not to come would not be penalized. So you could have a lab, but not an exam, for instance. This message was not properly shared with all faculty equally. There is hope this communication will be improved should/when this occurs again.
- Another senator mentioned that if a class is synchronous online and someone is holding class in-person, how could a student run from their in-person class to their online synchronous class on campus that day? Consistency is needed.
- Another senator reiterated this is why in these situations we need more clarity in communication: is it an emergency? Is it a safety matter? Does the campus need to be closed or not?

17. Report Out (Information from District Meetings and Other Areas)

- District Academic Senate and District Meetings
 - Board of Trustees Meeting on 2/18 - student made a public comment advocating for more on ground classes
 - The District Academic Senate (DAS) did not vote on non-credit. LRCFT is working on CalSTRS retirement disparities.
 - [Resolution in Support of the Pan-African Virtual College](#)
 - A senator asked a question if it also includes offering online student services such as counseling?
 - AS President Veronica Lopez and Past President Alisa Shubb mentioned that their understanding from conversations with CRC President Ed Bush is that students would get their support services from their primary university in Ghana.
 - Another senator asked if this is only available for students in Ghana?
 - AS President and Past President said we should clarify how these classes will be offered.
 - A Senator shared that she thinks that it looks like it's an educational abroad program with a set of courses that are designated to it.
 - Another faculty member thought that during the DAS meeting presentation, the faculty thought it was a cohort program.
 - AS VP Daniel Slutsky did not get the impression that it was a cohort program.
 - Past President Alisa Shubb shared that while she supported the ASCCC resolution which supports the Pan-African Virtual College, her concern reading the resolution is with the language "fully supports". What does that mean? Past President Alisa Shubb is not comfortable with the ambiguity of the language "fully supports." What are the implications of it for serving our Los Rios students?
 - A senator suggested that we pilot, assess, and explore the sustainability of the program.
 - AS President Veronica Lopez indicated she will bring the suggested language of piloting and then doing an assessment of what worked and what didn't to DAS.
 - [CCC Vision 2030 - International Education Opportunities](#)
 - Questions for General Counsel Aly Bivins
 - re: SB 707 and Brown Act
 - Emergency hiring process for coaches: would we consider allowing 1-year terms for emergency-hired coaches?
 - A senator contextualized that this was brought by the Director of HR, stating that coaches don't fit the regular academic year. Senator also shared that Chief Negotiator Belinda Lum reminded during the District Academic Senate (DAS) meeting that job descriptions for coaches should be clearer because some of the justifications provided for coaches'

schedules not fitting regular academic year included coaches needing to recruit student athletes, but recruiting student athletes may not necessarily be the job of coaches.

- AS President Veronica Lopez highlighted the term “continuity” and mentioned that this could potentially apply to other areas/disciplines as well.
- A senator used the term critical hire and emergency hire interchangeably.
- Past President Alisa Shubb clarified the difference between emergency hire and critical hire.
- Another senator mentioned that they could see how allowing 1-year terms for emergency-hired coaches could smooth things over for HR, but that would put PT faculty at a disadvantage since emergency hire does not count toward preference.

- Other areas

18. Items from College Areas for Academic Senate Consideration

- None brought up.

Upcoming meetings:

- Board of Trustees Retreat, Feb 27 - 28, District Office Board Room
- ARC Academic Senate Meeting, March 12, 3-5 pm, Student Center Board Room
- District Academic Senate Meeting, March 3, 3-5 pm, District Office Conference Room

5:05pm Meeting adjourned.

Sign-In Sheet 02-26-2026

(Y=Yes; N=No; A=Abstain)

ARC Academic Senate Sign-In Sheet & Roll Call 02-26-2026	In-Person	Remote	Absent	Item 9 Critical Hire Fire Technology	Item 11 ARC Resolution Faculty Hiring Committee
Veronica Lopez	✓				
Daniel Slutsky	✓			Y	Y
Andréa Pantoja-Garvey	✓			Y	Y
Alisa Shubb	✓			Y	Y
Adrienne Avila			✓		
Ally Joye	✓			Y	Y
Behrang Mokarami	✓			Y	Y
Ben French			✓		
Brian Rosario		✓		Y	Y
Caitlin Zumalt	✓			Y	Y

Cheryl Tsushima			✓		
Chris Moore	✓			Y	Y
Christian Speck		✓		Y	Y
Connie Ayala	✓			Y	Y
David Bell			✓		
David McCusker	✓			Y	Y
Diane Lui	✓			Y	Y
Dyanne Marte	✓			Y	Y
Eric Black			✓		
Erik Haarala			✓		
Heidi Bennett		✓		Y	Y
Janay Lovering	✓			Y	Y
Jeff Sacha		✓		Y	Y
Jennifer Scalzi	✓			Y	Y
John Burke	✓			Y	Y
Judith Valdez			✓		
Justus Carlisle	✓			Y	Y
Kim Herrell			✓		
Kris Fertel			✓		
Lana Anishchenko		✓		Y	Y
Lisa Delgado			✓		
Marianne Harris			✓		
Mayra Mireles-Tijeros	✓			Y	Y
Michael Angelone	✓			Y	Y
Michael Nakada			✓		
Mihaela Badea-Mic			✓		
Mikhail Drobot		✓		Y	Y
Nicole Mann	✓			Y	Y

Paul Knox			✓		
Pat Wood			✓		
Rachael Simon		✓		Y	Y
Raquel Tejomaya	✓			Y	Y
Ray Simmons	✓			Y	Y
Rob Juner			✓		
Sarah Lehmann	✓			Y	Y
Seth Clark			✓		
Shannon Pries		✓		Y	Y
Susan Chou	✓			Y	Y
Tak Auyeung	✓			Y	Y
Tim Finnecy			✓		
Tracie Tweet			✓		
Valerie Bronstein	✓			Y	Y
Vivian Orcasitas Dillon	✓			Y	Y
Angela Darory VPI		✓			
David Miramontes-Quiñones	✓				
Mikenna Modesto	✓				