October 9, 2012

1. Good evening. Last month, I extended an open invitation to the B of T to attend our October 4, 2012, general senate meeting. I am happy to report that Trustee Brady did indeed come to our meeting, which faculty appreciates. What faculty appreciate even more is that Trustee Brady ‘broke bread’ with us, literally, having a sandwich and sitting in the midst of our faculty and silently listening intently to the positive news we had to report, as well as our concerns. I think that this is a positive sign of support that Trustee Brady became a part of our meeting, hopefully paving the way for more administrative and B of T guests at future senate meetings. It’s of vital importance that faculty feel the support of administration and the B of T, which can easily be done by simply showing up and observing faculty concerns.

2. Accreditation and faculty participation
   a. One of the items Trustee Brady heard, along with faculty in attendance at this senate meeting, was that faculty-related completion of ACCJC recommendations have been met, and in some cases exceeded. 100% of PRAISE revisions have been completed; PRAISE annual update drafts are underway with over 50% in progress, even though the due date is not for almost two months from today; 78% of SLO Assessments of active courses have been completed as of last week.
   b. Now, as we await the ACCJC visiting team, faculty hope that all their hard work will be reflected in other constituency groups’ reports, so we can continue this commitment to quality education and improvement.
   c. Faculty also hope that the hard work we’ve put into accreditation, and the positive results achieved last beyond any immediate benefit. If faculty have one concern about the process, it’s that of sustainable change in this institution.
3. Therefore, the Academic Senate is committed to continuing on the path of sustainability and overall quality improvement. We will be undergoing a revision of our governing documents, handbooks and materials to reflect an organization mindset change of continuous evaluation of what the Senate does, and how we can do it better.

4. The **most important** part of any institutional organizational mindset change is how faculty can assist students in their educational goals, and attending Senate Plenary Sessions, Curriculum Institutes and discipline conferences contribute to student and community service.

5. Faculty ask the support of the B of T and college administration as we continue our journey down the path of continuous quality improvement. It’s important that faculty have the academic freedom to teach their courses with the technological and pedagogical tools they need to deliver course content and ensure academic integrity. There should be no censoring or blocking of classroom technology, support of technical upgrades and software, and treating faculty with respect. Other elements involve treating faculty as the experts they are in their disciplines; this includes recommendations on class size; course variety; and number of sections offered in a semester or summer session.

6. But there’s a larger picture here: whether it’s curriculum improvement, library materials, counseling assistance, workforce preparation, or personal development for faculty, we hope that the B of T and administration understand that education is an ever-evolving endeavor for both faculty and students. Our PRAISE annual updates, due December 1, 2012, will reflect our goals for improvement. Faculty hope that PRAISE will indeed be the basis for allocating needed financial and personnel support in instructional disciplines, as the requests in this document reflect our commitment to student success.

7. There is no doubt that there is an economic crisis in California. VVC is, comparatively, in great shape compared to other community colleges. It’s possible to maintain financial stability here, while not neglecting the most important reason why VVC exists: student and community service. Faculty
are committed to serving students, and have done so with little to no budgetary assistance in some disciplines for several semesters. Some disciplines have no full-time faculty; others are heavily impacted by retirements, and are woefully shorthanded. Our dedicated full- and part-time faculty have worked long hours to bring the best educational experience to the Victor Valley. Now we ask that the B of T and administration support our continuous efforts in quality education.

Thank you.