Danita L. McAnally
Dean of Academic Assessment and Development
Amarillo College

BIO

Danita McAnally has dedicated her entire 30 year career serving Texas community colleges. She has been an administrator for the past decade and a faculty member for the previous two decades. As an administrator, she has lead Amarillo College in planning, evaluation, assessment, accreditation, and grant development. As a faculty member, she reached the rank of associate professor/department chair and was awarded tenure. She taught mass communications and speech both at Navarro College (1978-1987) and Amarillo College from (1987-2000).

In addition, she is a Past President of the Texas Community College Teachers Association (TCCTA) and a speaker/consultant on strategic planning, assessment and accreditation.

Danita holds baccalaureate and master's degrees from Eastern New Mexico University.

Written Testimony for the Senate Higher Education Committee

Interim Hearing – July 22, 2010
Charge #4: Accountability System and Faculty Workload

Danita McAnally
Dean of Academic Assessment and Development
Amarillo College
P.O. Box 447
Amarillo, TX 79109
(806) 371-5495
dlmcanally@actx.edu

Panel 3:

Study and make recommendations regarding the current accountability system and ways to measure faculty workload. Primary focus requested - ways community colleges manage and measure faculty workload

I. **Currently, Texas community colleges determine faculty workload.**

    i. For several decades, the Coordinating Board has assigned faculty workload determinations to individual community colleges rather than imposing restrictions.

    ii. Faculty workload decisions are on a list of many decisions made by internal management at community colleges.

    iii. These internal management decisions allow for flexibility within institutional guidelines and budget limitations.

    iv. The colleges are in the best position to make such decisions because the institution can determine the need for variables based on discipline, entry-level abilities of students, number of students per course, pedagogical approaches (lecture vs. active learning), course elements (all lecture vs. labs vs. practicum vs. clinical vs. private lessons) just to name a few.

    v. In addition, the college must determine what will be considered "work" for faculty. Common work definitions include

        a. teaching – time spent ensuring students attain high levels of learning which includes "classroom" time plus the time necessary to prepare content, grade, advise, coach, adjust content and approaches for delivering it, etc.

        b. committee assignments – collaborative governance necessary to accomplish the college's business

c. college and/or community service – efforts necessary for community colleges to fulfill their mission

d. assessment – evidence-driven decision making requires faculty involvement in the collecting, sharing, and brainstorming of new approaches to overcome the identified problems that students are experiencing; faculty at small colleges usually have to analyze the data, too

vi. New teaching approaches are required of today's community college faculty to accommodate two very different and new populations, including

    i. a generation of students whose brains are wired differently due to life-long reliance on technology; and

    ii. an increasing number of students at community colleges who are often under-prepared and the first in the family to attend college.

a. The first group – the new <u>generation</u> of students – require faculty to completely alter the approaches they use from almost exclusively lecture-based to experiential/collaborative/ active learning.

    iii. This means the faculty must re-learn how to teach by using service learning, problem-based models, simulations, synchronous or asynchronous instructional delivery formats, competency-based learning, and the list of options are extensive.

    iv. This new generation of students are natives to digital media and rapidly adopt the latest technologies while faculty are diligently working just to stay in the range of these adopted technologies.

b. The second group – the students who are <u>first-generation</u> and maybe under-prepared – require much more time with a faculty member.

    i. This group often needs basic explanation that a 3-credit hour course means that you attend the course at least 3 hours per week for 16 weeks – not three hours total.

    ii. This group usually needs extra encouragement and tutoring, coaching, practice assignments, etc. They can do the work if they are provided the extra academic support.

      iii. Community college professors understand that the success of this second group of students is essential to the future of Texas.

II. The <u>challenge</u> for Texas is to determine what will be <u>the</u> essential priority in a future with dramatically more students enrolled at community colleges and during an economic downturn.

     i. Some states have chosen to become intrusive by dictating those decisions from a state-level when they are more effectively accomplished at the college-level.

    ii. Faculty workload decisions are best made at the college-level.

        a. Most Texas community colleges have embraced a standard of 15 contact hours (number of hours in the "classroom" with students) as the minimum full-time teaching load per faculty member.

        b. The minimum amount of time necessary for a professor to teach five courses, which is typical if the courses are all lecture, is at least 2 hours per week for every contact hour or approximately 30 total hours a week for just the teaching component of the faculty workload.

        c. A "master teacher" dedicates even more hours per week because these professors have a passion for students to succeed.

        d. While measurements for faculty workload may vary in amount and approach, calculating faculty workload is complicated even for those of us in the business of education.

    iii. The bigger challenge in managing and measuring faculty workload is determining what is the primary goal?

        a. Is the primary goal to enroll as many students as the institution can handle?

        b. Is the primary goal to ensure retention, graduation, transfer, and successful employment?

        c. If the primary goal is both, it can be accomplished but more funding is required.

           i. To accomplish both the participation and success goals of "Closing the Gaps", lower faculty-to-student ratios will be necessary. Faculty will need to be assigned fewer students in order to provide more attention to an increasingly diversified college-going population.

ii. To accomplish both the participation and success goals without hiring more professors, more technology funds could be a solution. Both groups of the aforementioned students could use new technologies to repeatedly practice or review material, simulate real-life scenarios, or determine competency level and re-learn knowledge, skills or attitudes. Currently, technology is available if funds are available.

III. The State of Texas must find ways to cut allocations but Texas graduates must be able to perform at or better than potential competitors for jobs.

   i. Recommendation 1: Allow institutions to continue making those decisions that are best made internally – don't dictate faculty workloads or any decision that colleges should make, implement, and maintain.

   ii. Recommendation 2: Prioritize the "Closing the Gaps" goals of participation and success – colleges can achieve the desired results if they know which one is the critical goal.
- In the past decade, community colleges have increased enrollments by 40%.
- During the same decade, state funding to community colleges has decreased substantially.
- At some point, the law of diminishing returns will kick-in and the tipping-point will occur.

   iii. Recommendation 3: Place the focus of efficiency requests on those efforts which do not directly impact students and their ability to learn.
- Ask institutions to accomplish such efforts while increasing student learning.
- Remember, Texas community colleges, by statute, are independent institutions. We are not a system.
- The State may wish to revise policy or provide incentives to those colleges which implement innovative approaches for community colleges to trim budgets, merge efforts, or other budget saving measures as long as student performance and enrollments are not affected.

   iv. Recommendation 4: Continue to collaborate with community colleges on what is best for Texas community college students and what is achievable.