Follow-up Questions with Ann's Responses from April, 2008

1. Would you say the district/system effectively controls its expenditures?

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE ADDITION OF POSITIONS AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND THE REMODELING FOR EACH NEW CHANCELLOR. HOWEVER, WHILE I'M SURE NEW POSITIONS HAVE BEEN CREATED, I CAN'T NAME ANY. MARK G. CAN PROBABLY TELL YOU. Please be specific with any examples you can offer as evidence.

2. You mentioned in your write-up that the district wrote a grant and got it, but never came to Merritt for input. I'm trying to connect that to one of the Standard's issues directly. Is this evidence to address the following standard issue?

The district/system provides fair distribution of resources to support the effective operations of the colleges?

I DON'T THINK SO. IT MAY NOT BE RELEVANT TO WHAT YOU'RE DOING.

3. In your response, you wrote "It troubles me that we don't have a good means for sorting out conflicts, for making sure everyone's needs are heard and understood, for having clear conversations and open dialogs."

When you say "we" - could you please specify exactly who you mean here? MERRITT AND THE DISTRICT.

Also, do you have any suggestions for how to improve this?

FOLLOW-UP ON LAST YEAR'S RETREAT WORK WITH NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION OR THE CREATION OF AN OMBUDSPERSON OFFICE

4. You mention that very "few faculty participate in shared governance committees" and that the "culture of complaint is so strong." What do you feel that this lack of participation is due to?

SOME FACULTY FOCUS ON THE FACT THAT SOME SHARED GOVERNANCE POSITIONS ARE COMPENSATED—CHAIR OF CIC, CHAIR OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT, CHAIR OF CDCPD (THOUGH NOT SO FAR)—AND REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE WITHOUT COMPENSATION. THERE SHOULD BE TRANSPARENCY AROUND WHY SOME POSITIONS ARE COMPENSATED AND OTHERS NOT. SOME FACULTY DON'T SEE IT AS A PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, OR ONLY WANT TO FOCUS ON TEACHING, OR FEEL 'WHAT'S THE POINT.' IT'S A COMPLEX OF REASONS.
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Response from Ann Elliott, Chair of the CDPCD
February, 2008

I see that over the last five years shared governance has become more and more of a reality ON CAMPS. I see the District Office is out of touch with the College and has a much weaker sense of shared governance. For example, someone at the District wrote a grant and got it funded for career advancement academy that required English instruction, yet no one came to the English department at Merritt to get our input or our expertise, yet we were expected to come up with classes and instructors (over the summer, no less). This was such a top down process that I didn't even know what was expected of the department.

Merritt’s Senate and Curriculum committee, the College Council, and CDPCD, the facilities and the budget committee all make faculty perspectives and voices strong on campus provide structures for shared governance. Stronger than they have ever been in my 17 years at Merritt. More dialog is occurring. However, sometimes the work still doesn't get done. Some of our operations are only in the hands of administration. And one or another doesn't follow through--at least so it would seem. Here I'm thinking of purchasing and requisitions in particular. What is the problem and why can't we fix it? Collegial consultation—that was Norbert's phrase—a lot of this does occur. I have found most administrators in recent years have open doors.

It troubles me, on the other hand, to hear faculty I respect say that it is 'dog eat dog' at Merritt in terms of resource allocations. or others say that the perks are not equitably distributed. This would say we need to be sure our processes and procedures are clear.

It troubles me that we don't have a good means for sorting out conflicts, for making sure everyone's needs are heard and understood, for having clear conversations and open dialogs.

It troubles me that so few faculty participate in shared governance committees. That the culture of complaint is so strong. That so many feel discouraged.