

SBVC ACADEMIC SENATE PRESIDENT REPORT

FEBRUARY 2026



SBVC ACADEMIC SENATE PRESIDENT: ANDREA HECHT

OUR PURPOSE AND MISSION

The Academic Senate serves as the primary voice for faculty in district governance and decision-making processes. Our fundamental responsibility is to ensure meaningful faculty participation in all matters related to curriculum, academic standards, and the educational mission of our institution. We operate under the framework of the "Ten Plus One" guidelines established in Title 5, which defines our areas of primary reliance and consultation.

OUR ROLE IN SHARED GOVERNANCE

The Academic Senate operates under a dual mandate: our local charter (see Constitution) establishes us as the faculty advisory body to the Administration and Board of Trustees, while state law (Education Code and Title 5) grants us authority in the 10+1 areas. This creates a framework where we provide expert faculty perspective through both advisory consultation and areas of primary reliance.

In matters within the 10+1, the Board of Trustees must either rely primarily on our recommendations or engage in collegial consultation with us before making decisions. This means faculty knowledge helps shape college policies that impact academic quality and student success. We work collaboratively with administration to make sure academic and professional decisions are grounded in faculty expertise and support student success.

Thomas Berry

IN MEMORIAM: THOMAS BERRY

The Academic Senate mourns the loss of Thomas Berry, Faculty Chair of the Curriculum Committee and member of our Executive Team. Thomas's 18-year journey from adjunct to full-time faculty exemplified dedication to both students and shared governance. He was more than a colleague, Thomas was a dedicated member of the SBVC family.

SBVC ACADEMIC SENATE PRESIDENT REPORT

FEBRUARY 2026



Thomas served in numerous leadership roles including Curriculum Faculty Chair, Academic Senate Executive Team member, Arts & Humanities senator, Academic Senate Secretary, Student Learning Outcomes Faculty Lead, and ASCCC representative. As SBVC's OER/ZTC Faculty Lead, he worked tirelessly to remove barriers for students while empowering faculty colleagues. Just months ago, he presented at the Academic Academy and Fall Plenary Session on curriculum innovation and AI integration.

Thomas brought deep expertise and genuine care to every aspect of his work. His legacy of leadership and commitment to our institution will continue to shape our community. The campus extends deepest sympathies to his family, friends, and colleagues.



SBVC ACADEMIC SENATE PRESIDENT REPORT

FEBRUARY 2026



Eliminate Barriers to Student Access and Success

Artificial Intelligence: Our Work Ahead

The district is working on an AI policy that will set the framework for how we handle artificial intelligence across our colleges. Our faculty have provided important input on that policy, particularly around academic freedom, due process for students, and the need for real training and support. Once the district policy is in place, our work really begins.

We need to figure out what implementation looks like at our college. That means our faculty, through shared governance, will need to develop the practical guidelines and support structures that make the policy work for our students and our classrooms. Having a policy on paper is just the starting point. The real work is building the training programs, creating the support systems, and giving faculty the tools and knowledge they need to make good decisions about AI in their teaching. We will need our IT/TESS teams working closely with faculty to choose the right tools, set up the infrastructure, and provide ongoing help as technology changes.

I want our faculty feeling confident and supported, whether they are using AI tools or choosing not to. I want our students learning how to use AI responsibly and critically, not just following trends. And I want us building this together through shared governance, with faculty voices leading the way on academic decisions and the resources and support from administration to make it happen.

We are asking for the continued support of the district in securing dedicated funding for comprehensive faculty training and professional development, so our instructors, counselors, and librarians can make informed choices about AI.

Second, resources to build and maintain the IT infrastructure and support systems that faculty and students will actually need. And third, protected time and resources for our faculty to lead the implementation planning through shared governance. The district policy gives us the foundation. With these resources, we can do the hard work of making it real and making it ours.

SBVC ACADEMIC SENATE PRESIDENT REPORT

FEBRUARY 2026



Be a Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive, and Anti-Racist Institution

SBVC Counseling Grad Fest

The SBVC Counseling Department hosted our annual Grad Check Festival on February 11th, led by Debbie Orozco and Erica Begg. The Festival provided students with the opportunity to receive a graduation check, apply for graduation with a counselor, and sign up for additional graduation ceremonies and events, all in one place.

Our counseling faculty showed up wholeheartedly for our students, ensuring they received the guidance and support needed to move forward in their graduation journey. We also want to recognize Gloria Kracher, our custodian, who was on site assisting with setup and was instrumental in making the event run smoothly. Their collective dedication and initiative is a testament to the collaborative spirit at SBVC.

Grad Fest continues to grow in visibility and impact across our campus and is consistently recognized as one of the best and most impactful student-facing events we host. Its success is a direct reflection of faculty and staff commitment to eliminating barriers to student completion.



Be a Leader and Partner in Addressing Regional Issues

I am pleased to share that Kennon Mitchell, Ph.D., will be assisting in bringing our Multicultural Center vision to life in a way that reflects what our faculty, classified professionals, and students envision it to be. President Contreras has demonstrated a commitment to shared governance by collaborating with our affinity groups and HSI and BSI task forces in this process. On January 27th, the President's Executive Council and Faculty Senate leaders convened for a collaborative visioning session that focused on shared commitments to action, accountability, inclusive engagement, and ensuring the center serves as a hub that connects and amplifies existing efforts across campus.

The insights from this session provide an important foundation as we move into the next phase of community engagement, research, and alignment planning. The next steps include gathering input from affinity group, BSI, HSI, and student leaders, along with faculty and student surveys, to further inform recommendations related to the center's purpose, scope, advisory structures, staffing, and programming. As this work moves forward, we ask the district for its support through policy alignment, dedicated funding, and staffing to ensure the Multicultural Center can be sustained and serve our campus community in the way our faculty, classified professionals, and students deserve.



Ensure Fiscal Accountability and Stability

Submitted by Andrea Hecht,
SBVC Academic Senate President