

Southwest Tennessee Community College
Faculty Senate
Position Paper for President
March 24, 2012

My name is Todd Blankenbeckler and I am an Assistant Professor of Information Technology in the Technologies Department. I have been a faculty member at Southwest since June of 1998. In my tenure at the college I have served on the Faculty Senate and as a member of the Senate Executive Committee during the consolidation in 2000. I have had the honor of serving on many of the college's committees over the years including the Curriculum, Distance Learning, Facilities (as chair), Information Technology, and Web committees. I served on the Memphis Ryan White Transitional Grant Area Part A Planning Council, serving as co-chair for 18 months, from 2007 to 2010, overseeing a multi-million dollar federal grant for HIV services. I have had the pleasure of supporting many of you during my time in the Center of Emphasis for Teaching and Technology and seek to continue supporting you as your faculty senate president.

In recent years the college has faced many challenges that have required the faculty to adapt and change. In order for the college to transition and survive in this new environment it is more important than ever that the faculty have a stronger role in the shared governance of the institution and a deeper level of participation in the academic decision-making process. We have been repeatedly reminded that we have to "do more with less" yet we see little evidence that the administration shares this burden. We need a more transparent level of communication between the administration and faculty. The faculty is deeply aware of the needs of the student body at the college and eager to share our recommendations with the senior staff but must be treated as equal partners in the discussion. The budget is tight and getting tighter every year. We face a major change in the funding formula that puts Southwest at a distinct disadvantage when compared to other institutions in the state. Now, more than ever, is the time to work with the administration as equal partners in setting a new course for Southwest that continues to meet our mission as an open access partner in community education.

My vision for the Senate is to strengthen its role in the decision making processes at the college. To this end I have three top priorities for the coming year. First, I seek to remind the administration that decision making involves give and take and that decisions cannot be reached by dictating what will be done, regardless of faculty recommendations. Second, in order to improve the communication between the faculty body and the administration, the senate will post all formal responses by administration (per the senate constitution and bylaws) to faculty committee and senate recommendations to the faculty senate web site for all faculty to read. Before any compromises are reached with administration on issues that are important to the faculty body, the faculty as a whole will be given the opportunity to respond to their senate representatives to ensure the senate performs its role as designed. Third, I will work to implement a new system of

evaluation for the administration of the college that will accurately gauge the overall confidence of the faculty in the leadership of the institution. I propose that all senior administrators be ranked on a ten-point scale that ranges from zero (no confidence) to 100 (full confidence). The average of all will be the overall measure of faculty confidence. The evaluation will be conducted annually and act as a changing barometer of our confidence in the direction the college is taking. To provide a level of accountability, the results will be posted publically on the faculty senate web site and the administration will be asked to respond with a written administrative development plan that will outline what steps will be taken to improve relations with the faculty body.

In conclusion, I wish to make clear that I seek to be an agent of change that represents the will of the faculty body. I will always keep a professional and courteous tone with the administration even when we may disagree. I will not simply agree to every demand the administration makes of us when the faculty have clearly indicated their dissent. Compromise isn't always simple or easy, but it is obtainable when all parties involved have an equal voice at the table. We have the power to effect change during this critical time and I seek the honor of representing your voice and your vision for the future of our institution.