

# SPEAKING OF ENGLISH

English Department Newsletter

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## News and Features

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**A Lesson on True Equity**  
page 1

**Faculty Spotlights**  
page 2

**Your DSPS Questions  
Answered**  
pages 3-5

**Emergency Grade Policy  
(Covid)**  
Page 6

**Academic Senate Updates**  
Pages 7

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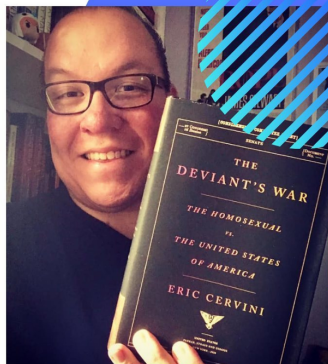
### **A Lesson on True Equity**

by Patty Godinez, English Department Chair

Working with the **DSPS** staff and their students has been an eye-opening experience for many of us. The lessons we learn every semester from working with students who require different accommodations help us to better-understand how equitable practices are the best way to help *all* students succeed. I have learned so much from students who surpass every expectation and succeed in spite of any challenge; I am always left standing in "awe" as Father Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries says, "at what they have to carry." Yet, I am never disappointed, and I appreciate their desire to learn no matter what. They often leave me with a better understanding of how to help everyone learn by forcing me to rethink everything I do, to serve all, not just the top students in the class.

I asked some of our colleagues to share the lessons learned and the brilliance that our DSPS students bring, and they all shared the same sentiment about learning more about the benefits of adapting and universal design, especially now in this remote environment. One colleague said, "The joy of working with DSPS students (like working with all students) is that wonderful moment when the lightbulb goes off you know that the student grasps the concept that you are working on because that student worked harder for it, they reached for it and now they have it." Elena Tinker-Diaz writes, "working with DSPS students allows me to evaluate and improve my pedagogy to promote more universal design learning. In seeking to offer multiple avenues of engagement, representation, and expression, it helps all my students participate and grow in meaningful ways." We appreciate all that the DSPS staff does to ensure inclusivity and support.

# JOSHUA RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ



ENGLISH DEPT. FACULTY

## What's the best aspect of Teaching at ELAC?

Being able to teach in a discipline where I can cultivate the reading lists and create the assignments is absolute heaven. It can be hell if I wait until the last minute (yes, faculty procrastinate too), but for the most part, it is a dream. Being a faculty member at ELAC specifically, I enjoy how the students WANT to learn and am humbled by the news things I learn from my students. Every semester I make it a point to ask students what they would suggest I teach from a selection of books that I provide them. By consulting the students, I give them the opportunity to influence the course experience for the next round of students and they feel great to know this.

#ELAC #EastLosAngelesCollege #majorinEnglish #ProfessorProfiles

# MANDY CONCOFF KRONBECK



ENGLISH DEPT. FACULTY

## Why did you become an English professor?

When I was a college student, I was interested in English, History, and Psychology. When I figured out that English had elements of both of the other subjects, I knew I had found the right field. Plus, I LOVE helping people, so being a community college English professor was the best choice for me.

# AMANDA RYAN-ROMO



LEARNING CENTER DIRECTOR

## What advice do you have to share with English Majors?

You don't have to be a teacher! English and Philosophy are the top majors that law schools look for. You can be a novelist or a screenwriter or a travel writer. You can be a continuity expert for film and TV. You can go into speech-writing or public relations. The world is open to you if you are a good reader and a strong writer.



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FACULTY

JAMES K. MORAN

## WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH ENGLISH MAJORS?

Read widely in as many languages as you can. Read books that challenge your assumptions about the world and about yourself. Speak up in class and listen closely to your classmates.

## PLEASE SHARE A QUOTE.

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

—Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO SHARE A STORY (FULL TIME AND ADJUNCT FACULTY) (YOUR OWN OR A STUDENT'S)**

TO SUBMIT YOUR STORY CLICK [HERE](#):

# Your Diverse ABILITIES (DSPS) Questions Answered:

Last fall, we invited our DSPS staff to our English Department Meeting and several of you provided questions for them. We have finally compiled their answers here to share them with you.

Although it took us a minute to get back to you, we wanted to be sure to provide you with the answers that will help you as you plan ahead. We hope this helps us provide as much support as possible to our DSPS students:

**Q: I have had a repeat DSPS student in several classes. I know this person's writing ability from the time they took my F2F class back in 2019 and Spring 2020. There is no doubt in my mind that this student is getting outside help, but there is also no way to prove it. The writing style is just an utterly different voice. Sometimes I see flashes of the "actual" student in an email, but in almost all of the online assignments and discussion boards, there is no way to point out the discrepancy. I would appreciate any suggestions on how to resolve academic dishonesty. I have a special section in my syllabus to address this, and I also include a reminder about the Student Code of Conduct in the online tests. When I ask to meet with this student during office hours, they do not show up.**

A. Thank you for sharing. It is difficult right now completely online. Many students are getting help from other people and there is no way to prove it. This problem is everywhere. DSP&S students should not be treated differently, ask yourself: what would I do with the other students? Again, engaging in a conversation, using this time as a teaching experience, a teaching moment, it is so valuable to teach students with disabilities or without disabilities, the importance of getting the right guidance as opposed to allowing people to do their work, especially when you have worked with the student before, and you know the student's writing ability. I am glad you have a statement in the syllabus about dishonesty and the Student Code of Conduct. This is great because they need to understand that a syllabus is a contract, and they need to follow that contract. If a student fails to meet with you when you have requested to meet, perhaps sending an email also can work. An email stating the discrepancy you notice between tests/quizzes and the homework assignments and that you want to better assist by offering support from other services on campus. This will let the student know that you are noticing the discrepancy. Many students "think" that instructors do not notice these things, and when they see that they do, they are more inclined to stop doing it.

**Q: How do we help students when we can't know the extent of their disability due to privacy?**

A: Maintaining an open-door policy and/or providing information regarding DSP&S and accommodations in your syllabus is extremely helpful. Students, that may or may not be already part of the DSP&S program, may feel more comfortable opening up and disclosing any needs. If a student is already part of the program, and you have received an accommodation letter for him/her from the DSP&S office, it could be an opportunity to communicate and initiate the conversation. We always encourage students to confirm receipt of the letter in order for the instructor to have a face to the name.

**Q: How long does it take for an accommodation to be approved after a student request one? Does anxiety still qualify? Does anxiety need to be verified by a physician for a student to qualify?**

A: Accommodations are approved during the initial intake process. If a student has official paperwork related to their disability, the intake process is quick. There can be delays if the student does not have verification or is waiting to obtain from his/her doctor. We encourage students to see a disability specialist every semester in order to review accommodations, but students have the option to return to our office at any time if an accommodation needs to be adjusted/added. **Anxiety is an eligible diagnosis** for participation in DSP&S and should be verified by a licensed physician/therapist or the appropriate professional.

**No questions. I had an extremely pleasant experience with DSPS services and staff members after the sudden COVID shutdown and transition to online learning last semester. I was very impressed with the department!**

Thank you! We appreciate the comment :)

**Q: It would be great to know more about allowing DSPS students extra time to submit assignments or discussion forums. Perhaps this could be added to the form. I do actually have a scenario that occurred already in one of my classes: I decided to use groups for peer-editing in Canvas, and one student with ASD who has "scanning issues" requested another day to post a reply to a student because other students were waiting too close to the deadline to post their drafts. I ended up extending the deadline for everyone in the class, but students in his group \*still\* hadn't posted and he got anxious and replied to a student's post in another discussion forum to make up for it. I probably won't use groups for peer-editing again because other students also had issues with their group mates posting late, but it would have been great to know that this student needed more time to review a classmate's post. I perhaps could have figured out a better way to accommodate him.**

A: The extended time accommodation only applies to exams and quizzes. Accommodations on assignments is not something that DSP&S encourages. However, there have been cases where a student might be going through a difficult situation related to their disability, or as a result of the stressful situation, it affected their disability in a negative way. In this case, the disability specialist will have an interactive session to talk about what is going on and possibly come up with a way to mitigate the situation. It really requires a team effort. The disability specialist should be in close communication with the instructor. Many students who request extra time on assignments and, we in DSP&S, do not feel it merits because it is not related to their disability, we encourage students to meet with the instructor and at that point, it is at the instructor's discretion to provide more time. Again, as stated earlier, we encourage open communication with the instructor. If the student meets with a disability specialist/DSP&S Counselor and it is found to be appropriate, the DSPs staff will recommend accommodation on an assignment. DSP&S Staff and an instructor will work together to come to an agreement.

**Q: Another question I have is how to best serve students with ADHD. I have one student, who isn't actually signed up with DSPS, and who is on his third try with taking my class. In the past, he has posted maybe one or two assignments and then nothing else and ended up dropping. This time, he set up an office hour appointment with me early on and let me know that he has ADHD, which is why school is hard for him. We made a plan for him to meet with me every week after that first appointment. He attended one more appointment but then missed last weeks. How can I best help this student? Now that I know he has ADHD, should I refer him to DSPS? What kinds of support would he receive?**

A: We always encourage referrals to DSP&S, especially if the student has disclosed having a disability. Referrals should be made privately, and not in front of any other persons (students, or otherwise). If the student has not yet disclosed having a disability, and you feel like the student could benefit from accommodations offered by DSP&S, you could meet with the student privately and list resources offered on campus with brief descriptions, including DSP&S. We recommend suggesting DSP&S at the end so that students do not feel like they are seen as "special". If they mention to you that they were receiving special ed services in high school, then that is when you can give them additional information about our program. You can offer to connect the student with our program or someone specifically if you have our names and information. Sometimes students may not know there is such a program offered, and the connection to previous special education courses or having an IEP can help.

**Q: Accommodations are simple enough in principle (special desk, extra time on exams, etc.). But what can be done to help students with pretty severe learning disabilities who have little to no chance of being successful and in some cases truly need pre-101 courses? Putting them in 101 with no support beyond extra time to take their midterm and final is setting them up for failure.**

A: Disability Specialists do meet with students and advise on their academic progress, taking into consideration their disability, often advising non-credit or certificate programs when more appropriate. Students have the option to enroll in classes they choose—we at DSPS cannot restrict that. Disability specialists can only advise. Our office is always available for advice and to provide support.

**Q: My question is in regard to students who need more accommodations than extra time. For instance, students who are visually or hearing impaired. Is there a designated person that I am able to contact in terms of helping me help the student? For instance, how do I know what programs the student has at home to assist them? I feel that in special circumstances such as these, the instructor needs a point of contact who can help throughout the semester if needed.**

A: Please reach out to our office by emailing [dsp@elac.edu](mailto:dsp@elac.edu). Depending on the request, it will be forwarded to our High-Tech center technician, Mr. Kevin Nguyen, Special Services Assistant, Ms. Stephany Ruiz, our Student Services Assistant, Ms. Lorena Ruiz. We have been working with the district to provide adaptive software that can be used from home.

**Q: I do not give permission to any of my students to record me, audio or visual. Am I allowed to refuse to be recorded for or by a DSPS student?**

A recording is a reasonable accommodation as determined by law. Not allowing a student with a disability who has been approved for that accommodation can result in legal action. Please contact our office, if you have any concerns.

**Q: I am currently teaching English 102, where students are required to closely read texts and analyze them. My DSPS student's response to class readings is unique. I have never encountered it. She often reports, in long passages, detailed information that has nothing to do with the reading, including names and places that are a mystery to me. I am trying to Zoom-meet with her, but email communication is sporadic. I am doubtful that I can have much effect but am willing to talk with her about the way she approaches writing. Thanks.**

A: Thank you for sharing. Your approach is a good one. We encourage faculty to engage and take a proactive approach, to find out how they came to the answers, conclusion, etc. Communication is very important not only for DSP&S students but for all the students in your classes. We ask faculty to reach out to students if something is not adding up. Most DSP&S students will appreciate that. A call or email from the instructor can make a big difference in student success. We know it is double the work in a remote environment, but it does make a difference. Students have reported that the “call/email” made the difference in staying in class or dropping the class. If you are not sure how to approach the student, please reach out to DSP&S staff and ask for the Coordinator/Dean/Disability Specialist/Student Services Assistant -- our unclassified employees will refer you to the right person.

**Q: I don't have a scenario but would appreciate tips to making teaching my DSP&S students a better experience for them and not so taxing for me (e.g. To give sufficient time, do I have to duplicate assignments, quizzes?).**

Accommodating extended time on canvas requires a manual extension on your part. For assistance with how to do that, please reach out to the Department of Distance Education at [onlinehelp@elac.edu](mailto:onlinehelp@elac.edu).

**Q: What is some approach to best help students online who are vision impaired? Also, is there a DSPS phone number that I can call or connect students to if they have questions? If so, what are the available hours?**

We have adaptive software available that can assist with reading files and webpages aloud. It is very important that all documents uploaded or provided to students be accessible. An example of something that is often missed is adding accurate alt-text to photos. Oftentimes, the alt-text auto-populated is generic or even inaccurate. Please help by ensuring alt-text is correct, especially if it is an image that will later be referenced during an exam. Accessibility Guidelines: <https://www.elac.edu/Academics/Online-Classes/Accessibility-Guidelines>

**No question. Just a comment -- none of my students identified themselves as being part of DSPS. I chose "Not sure" because maybe they are there but don't want to self-identify.**

A: We encourage you to always include information on our program in your syllabus! We'd also be available to present and provide information regarding our program during the first or last 10-15 minutes of class. Please email our office at [dsps@elac.edu](mailto:dsps@elac.edu) for presenting requests.

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## **Admissions and Records Updates**

### **Emergency Grade Policy (COVID-19) extended through the rest of the 2020-21 academic year!**

- **A&R will accept and process P/NP** petitions until the deadline to drop with a "W". After that date, faculty must be consulted before the P/NP can be applied. A&R will reach out to the faculty regarding the request. Students may request P/NP up to one year.
- **Prior to Last Day to Drop with a "W"**: A student may petition for an EW due to COVID-19 until the deadline to drop with a "W". The student will need to mention reasons for the request are due to COVID-19 challenges. No additional documentation is required.
- **After Last Day to Drop with a "W"**: After the final grade is posted for the class, a student may petition for an EW grade using the General Petition or the Grade Change Petition. If the student mentions COVID-19 reasons, no faculty approval is needed for substandard grades (F). If the grade change request is to change a passing grade (A, B, or C) to EW due to COVID-19; faculty will be consulted before changing the grade to EW. Once grade changes are processed by A&R they are irreversible. Students may request an EW grade up to one year.

#### **Submission of Student Requests for EW and P/NP can be submitted by:**

- Student LACCD Email Account: from their student LACCD email account to the A&R email address: [admissions2@elac.edu](mailto:admissions2@elac.edu)
- Live Chat: The tile is available on the students' SIS [MyCollege.laccd.edu](http://MyCollege.laccd.edu) homepage or directly on the department webpage: <https://laccd.craniumcafe.com/admissionwindow>

# Academic Senate Updates

- Due to the delay in transitioning to eLumen and the need to preserve continuity and experience on the curriculum committee during this challenging transition, the Senate voted to extend by one year the term of the members of the curriculum committee.
- The Senate reiterated its position that faculty should be permitted to teach remotely from their classrooms.
- The Senate affirmed a position that faculty voices should be involved in a shared governance process to prioritize needs that may be covered by the Covid relief bill. The district and administration have been trying to do this unilaterally without meaningful faculty input.
- The Senate voted to request faculty participation in discussions on what programs will be able to access the HyFlex classrooms.
- There was a lot of discussion about a Senate measure in support of the position to add back hours to programs that lost hours due to covid.
- The Come Back Committee and Work Environment Committee continue to work toward a safe and successful reopening of campus.
- A group of faculty in the Social Sciences helped to draft the proposal for the "ELAC Academic Senate Resolution Call to Condemn Anti-API Violence" which was then adopted by the Senate.



*Thank you  
for all you  
do for  
students!*