

SEI on Academically Speaking

This March the Sustainable Environment Institute has been able to complete our 1.0FTE allocated last July 2021. We are now three faculty working on the various projects that we have been able to take on this year. George Leddy and Beth Abels (Architecture, Pierce) are co-directors, and Xiao Behlendorf (Library, Valley) works on our cyber presence on Canvas and on our Internet site <http://www.seilaccd.net/> and our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/SEILACCD>

With this increase in hours, we are looking to increase the frequency of our quarterly newsletter to a monthly, <https://conta.cc/35JzW85>. We have been encouraged by faculty and folks in Facilities to make a more frequent newsletter and to include a section on Facilities and another on student voices. This will require some outreach for content contributions from both faculty in fields like engineering and students in environmental clubs. We are currently working on the May 2022 issue in your mailboxes this month.

The SEI hosted a very successful Earth Day event on April 22 in coordination with the Professional Development College and thanks to Lourdes Brent, who suggested the event and helped make it happen. There were as many as 110 attendees. Our three-hour morning event was opened with a strong environmental statement from Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez and was followed by two panels of experts and activists. The first one-hour panel discussed toxic pollution in Los Angeles neighborhoods with a focus on environmental justice. The second ninety-minute panel focused on the need to develop a climate curriculum in the state from K-12 to two and four-year higher education degree programs. The recorded event and related files can be found on the Home page of the SEI (seilaccd.net). We ended by discussing the need for Sacramento to dedicate more budgetary resources for community college that are all too often left out of climate education budgets.

Finally, our current effort is going into establishing campus level sustainability committees that will be part of the shared governance structure at each campus. Pierce and WLAC have these committees up and running. Valley has started the discussion to establish a sustainability committee in the Fall, the proposal is being evaluated by the shared governance Evaluation Committee. ELAC and Trade Tech might be able to organize these in the Summer and Fall. This will bring faculty, administrators, staff, students, and college presidents into regular meetings where the ambitious goals the District has set for itself in electrification of energy systems, net-zero carbon footprints, water conservation, waste reduction, and increased use of photovoltaic electricity can be coordinated at the campus level. Each campus has its own peculiarities that make these committees essential.

G. Leddy, May 5, 2022