What are your role and the role of the other members of the faculty in the Participatory Governance?
One part of participatory governance is the Academic Senate. The role of the Academic Senate is to make recommendations on issues for which the faculty knowledge and experience is of particular value. These include curriculum, grading policies, faculty professional development. The ten areas are listed in a Board policy. 2.08 (http://www.ccsf.edu/Policy/Manuals/2/bp2_08.pdf) Making recommendations means that the Academic Senate gives its best, most honest advice, and then the administration and the Board of Trustees makes decisions. The Chancellor and the Board of Trustees are never required to follow the advice of the Senate, although in some cases they are supposed to explain why they've made a different decision. Every California Community College has an Academic Senate that fulfills this role. As President of the Academic Senate it is my job to facilitate this role. I serve as a go-between, providing the faculty with information and expressing faculty views to the administration and the Board of Trustees.

Are you elected (if yes, by whom?)
I am elected by the Academic Senate Executive Council.

How are you organizing on your team?
The 29 members of the Academic Senate Executive Council meet twice a month when school is in session. The meeting are 2.5 hours long, and there are usually many issues that need to be considered, so the Council members need to do a lot of reading between meetings. There are three additional Academic Senate Officers. The Secretary keeps minutes, records resolutions, makes sound recordings of meetings, posts it all online. The two Vice Presidents coordinate faculty appointments to committees, look into issues that need to be brought to the Executive Council and prepare materials to help explain these issues to the other council members, and go to various other meetings with me or sometimes instead of me.

What is your role?
It is my role to organize the agenda for Executive Council meetings, to chair meetings, to communicate recommendations to others, and to speak for the Academic Senate on many occasions. As I mentioned, I serve as a go-between. When I am doing my job well, I express the views of the faculty, which may or may not be my own personal view. Sometimes it is very easy to speak for the faculty, but here are times when the job is difficult:

1) It's difficult when the issue is controversial - different faculty have very different perspectives. In these cases, I need to express the view of the majority. The Executive Council (the elected representatives of the faculty) vote, and that tells me what to say.

2) It's difficult when the issue is new but I've been asked to represent the faculty view on it right away. If I have to make a recommendation on an issue before there is time for it to be discussed at a meeting of the Executive Council, then I talk to faculty about it -- faculty whom I know usually have different views, so that I can get an idea of the range of perspectives on the issue. If it looks like there are differences of opinion, then I do my best to represent what I think is the majority perspective, and then I take the issue to the
next meeting of the Executive Council to find out if I represented faculty perspective correctly, or if I need to go back and say I gave the wrong advice.

3) It's difficult for me when the people with whom I'm speaking don't like what I have to tell them. Sometimes the faculty have reason to think that what the administration is planning to do won't bring good results for students. It's uncomfortable to have to be very honest in giving the Academic Senate's perspective when it's different from what the administration or the Board of Trustees wants to hear.

What kind of power do you have in this process?
The only actual "power" is having a voice -- opportunity to speak, to provide perspectives or a recommendation. I don't have a budget to spend money. The Academic Senate can't tell other people what to do, and can't stop anyone from doing anything. The Academic Senate has no veto power.

What kind of decisions do you make?
Mostly my decisions are about how to get good information out to faculty so that they have well-informed perspectives on all the different issues. And I have to make decisions about which issues are most important to work on next. I have to decide when to speak up and when to remain silent. I think almost all of my decisions are about communication, because of the role of the Academic Senate is to provide the faculty voice. The Administration and the Board of Trustees are the ones who have to decide what to do on the big issues.

What is your position on CCSF accreditation?
It is very important for City College to keep our accreditation. I have worked many, many hours to help with accreditation. I've read the accreditation standards many times (http://www.ccsf.edu/Organizations/Academic_Senate/ACCJCStandards.pdf) I recommend that everyone read them. I really like what they say, although I have to admit that I wish they were written a little more simply. The main things that I like about the standards are that they say that there should be clear goals and plans for how what we all do supports and improves student learning, that decisions should be based on good information, and that everyone should be clear about who makes decisions and how they make them. The standards say that institutional leaders should "encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved."

(IV.A.1)
The Standards specifically mention the Academic Senate to help us understand our role:

IV.A.2.b. The institution relies on faculty, its academic senate or other appropriate faculty structures, the curriculum committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services.

Who/What do you represent?
It's my job to represent all the faculty - full-time, part-time; instructors, counselors, librarians; faculty who work at all our different locations; faculty working with noncredit as well as credit faculty. I represent them on perspectives about student learning and related issues. (I don't represent faculty about working conditions.) Communication is really key to doing this. Since not all the faculty can easily come to meetings, a lot of my communication is through reading and writing -- email especially, and then reports, plans, all kinds of documents.