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Report to the Board of Trustees of the City Colleges of Chicago • <sup>APRIL 6</sup> [REDACTED], 1998

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Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Board:

- At its regular meeting last month, Council approved certain curriculum changes in Business and Mathematics, but sent back for further review a proposed Medical Assistant Program. The latter is a good venture for the City Colleges, but Council felt that certain disagreements in proposed courses needed to be settled before the program could be approved.
- Council's Rank Promotion Committee submitted its written recommendations regarding the new rank promotion procedures. This will be forwarded soon to Vice Chancellor Suarez.
- The Chair of Council's Committee M—this is the committee charged with interviewing candidates for Major Administrative Appointments—the chair of that committee submitted a formal letter of resignation. He was uncomfortable about the Board's recent handling of the change in chancellor.
- Council finally received from Vice Chancellor Suarez, a rejection of the motion Council had approved—almost a year ago!—allowing students to repeat a course after any grade. The rejection letter simply said that the District's Deans and Vice Presidents had unanimously voted "no," but gave no reason whatsoever for this action!

I had the privilege, on March 14th, of serving as a panel member—along with Dr. Suarez—for the League of Women Voters' colloquium on Accountability in the Chicago Public Schools and City Colleges. We were joined on this panel by the Public Schools' Chief Accountability Officer, Philip Hanson, and the Executive Director of the Chicago Academy for School Leadership, Dr. Karen Dyer. In my sometimes bold manner, I reminded the gathered assembly that education is positioned in the middle of a kind of beginning–middle–end paradigm of socioeconomic endeavor.

In brief, up front we must be aware that the students we receive are the products of what excessive influences of sex, violence, and sleaze have failed to be filtered by our modern broken families. Then, we educate them as best we are able—and we can set our standards at whatever level we deem appropriate; hopefully, we will set them high. But, finally, at the end of this process, there still lurks that troubling question: What will become of all those students who don't make it through the standards we have set?

I mention this here, of course, because you Board Members are among the many religious, community, and corporate leaders that must come to realize that education can **not** be expected to resolve all our concerns. And you must struggle to find answers to the troubling plights comprised within the beginning and the end of this paradigm. Our struggle—education's struggle, the middle—is the easiest of the three.

And now, I want to take a moment to congratulate my good friend Wayne Watson on his recent appointment, and I wish to express three broad recommendations to him:

- First and foremost, I urge you to be humble. You know, the Inauguration for Chancellor Temple at Rockefeller Chapel—with Local 1708 demonstrating across the street—was, in my opinion, a low point in the history of the City Colleges. Many a distinguished personnel were made to look rather silly that

day. Administrators are supposed to administer. Presidents are not supposed to be kings and queens; Vice Chancellors aren't supposed to be archdukes; the Chancellor is not supposed to be an emperor; and the Board is not supposed to be Mount Olympus. Break this cycle of pomposity; be humble. And let's not have an inauguration ceremony.

- Secondly, I urge you to decentralize. Think of what I'm sure you must have thought under the Central-Office-dominated regime of Chancellor Temple, while you were President of a college. Of course, there are issues such as fiscal accountability, districtwide computer intranet, payroll, etc. that require Central Office oversight. Moreover, there will be moments when you can act as arbiter or healer—for example, I urge you to go to Daley College, sit with various personnel there, and heal a few wounds. What a joke the past administration played upon us all: pretending to allow certain local campus autonomy, and all the while pulling in the reins. As I have often before stated from this podium: With local autonomy and good communication, the best ideas will surface and spread; with Centralized Control, the entire District will revert to a common denominator of mediocrity. Oh sure, with local autonomy we'd still have the kings and queens, but that whole heavy outer layer of royalty will finally be diminished.

- Thirdly, I urge you to stand up for what is right in education. We can—right here in Chicago, the hub of this great nation—we can begin the move to reverse this awful trend of delivering education with mirrors and part timers. Advocate for education—not for cost cutting and downsizing. And advocate for decency. Think about it: Isn't it better to RIF someone who has had a respectable job, with respectable salary, and respectable benefits, then it is to play pimp to the prostitution of these part-time personnel, and thereby, to promote a trend that will infiltrate more and more corporate and professional workplaces? A trend that many, such as myself, deem as downright unAmerican! And that, of course, is aside from any mention of what this national trend is doing to the quality of teaching and learning. Which side will you be on? Should you advocate for reversing this trend, there will be a whole army of angry, intelligent professionals standing behind and alongside of you.

So, those are my broad recommendations for you: be humble, decentralize, and advocate for education.

Of course, I have a long list of small recommendations—you know, the easy-to-do, little things that raises an institution to excellence. But, alas, the time does not allow for that discussion now. However, I certainly hope the fact that I will soon conclude my term as Council President does not preclude you from calling upon me to discuss these matters.

Finally, I wish to say that I have enjoyed coming here and hobnobbing with the aforementioned royalty. And, seriously, I thank the Board for the respect and, yes, the support and encourage it has so graciously extended to me over these two very, very short years.

Respectfully submitted,  
Arthur N. DiVito, Ph.D.

President, Faculty Council of the City Colleges of Chicago