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Wilbur Wright College

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Address to Board of Trustees October Meeting
Thursday, December 2, 2004

Greetings, Chairman Tyree, Chancellor Watson, members of the Board, Officers of the District and all others present.

Faculty Council did not meet in October due to the strike, but we did meet in November and the discussion at both Committee A and Faculty Council centered on the aftermath of the strike and the present atmosphere at the colleges.

I want to be honest here and not inflammatory, but the truth is that the strike hasn't reached closure. A number of people are still very angry: administrators, faculty, students, and the anger is like an acid on the delicate fabric of mutual respect and shared responsibilities that we, faculty, students and administrators, had before the strike. It will take a very long time and concentrated effort on everyone's part to repair the fabric.

There is any number of subtle and not-so-subtle repercussions to the strike. The faculty are quite disturbed by the actions that continue to disrupt classes and student learning, such as the arrest of a faculty member, the arrest of a student, the firing of part-time instructors, and the tripartite calendar for the end of the fall semester. These are just a few examples; there are other instances that are *perceived* as retaliatory against faculty and students. They may or may not be retaliatory. It isn't clear. What is clear is that the culture of the colleges is one of distrust and disharmony.

Let me be frank here. All the students, those who crossed the picket line and those who didn't, those in credit classes and those in Continuing Ed. and GED, those who enjoy a morning swim at the college pool and those who want a certificate, all were adversely affected by the strike and continue to be affected by the aftermath. We, the faculty, see everyday the ramifications of the rupture of this fragile equilibrium that students build to balance school, work and family; this equilibrium depends on a relationship among the faculty, the administration and the students. The faculty alone, the administration alone, the students alone, cannot rebuild that relationship; we must work together. This means real collaboration and trust, shared governance based on dialogue and communication

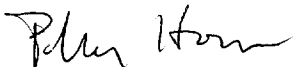
among equals, and the mature recognition of differences. The Faculty Council urges the Board of Trustees and the Officers of the District to lead the District forward, rather than retaliate for the immediate past.

One recommendation that came before the Faculty Council in this regard concerns proposed changes in the process by which the college presidents are chosen. The proposal that Faculty Council is suggesting includes the following changes to the original document:

1. That the President of FCCCC should be a voting member on the search committee for the new president.
2. That the Chancellor's power to select the candidate of his choice is front-loaded in the following ways: He may remove any applicant he deems unsuitable from the original applicant pool without explanation and he is encouraged to advertise the search for college president in print or any other appropriate media format, and employ a search firm.
3. That the interview phase of the search process does not proceed until the Chancellor is satisfied with the diversity and qualifications of the applicant pool.
4. That the top three applicants may attend an optional "meet the college" event before the Chancellor makes the final recommendation of a new president to the Board of Trustees. The outcome of these presentations, however, will not having any bearing on the Chancellor's choice.
5. That the Chancellor must select the new president from among the top three candidates as recommended by the search committee.

Given the number of interim presidents and the atmosphere at the colleges, any attempt at a "shared governance" culture should begin with a reworking of how the college president is selected. We need to go forward.

Respectfully submitted,



Polly Hoover

President of Faculty Council of the City Colleges of Chicago