



## RICHARD J. DALEY COLLEGE

ONE OF THE CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

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FCCCC President's Address  
CCC Board of Trustee's Meeting  
Wednesday, October 5, 2005

Chairman Tyree, Chancellor Watson, members of the Board, Officers of the District, faculty, staff and all others present: Good morning and a happy Rosh Hashanah!

I, too, on behalf of the Faculty Council, would like to congratulate President Wozniak, his faculty and staff for seeing through this logistically complex renovation to fruition – it is stunning. It is a welcome change to what once was quite dreary and certainly outdated. This renovation clearly welcomes students and the citizens of Chicago to participate in education and civic duty. And kudos to Vice Chancellor Donahue for his leadership overseeing the project from District Office. He has been quite busy with the Malcolm X asbestos removal and renovation, the groundbreaking (finally) at Kennedy-King and soon the resurfacing of 76<sup>th</sup> street at Daley College.

I would also like to add that at the last Board meeting I was remiss in not recognizing President Campbell and her faculty and staff for the equally monumental task of accomplishing in one summer the bulk of the renovations at her campus. The lighting and facility upgrades at Malcolm X College were much needed and it positions the college to continue to be the West Side's beacon and focal point for education, civic engagement and community involvement.

Today I would like to focus on two intertwined themes: perception and reality. In my speeches to you I try to say something of consequence effervescently but I'm afraid that today, writing this last night tired from fighting this cold and delirious from Nyquil, I'll just have to be plain spoken.

Today marks my sixth presentation to the Board – how time flies when one is having fun. I stated in my first presentation in May that the issue of trust between faculty and administration was the most important issue that we faced. Wariness and mistrust between parties affects all transactions.

Three issues come to mind: the proposed reorganization of the pre-college math program, the nursing situations at Olive-Harvey and Kennedy-King and not rehiring a vast majority of the professors emeritus. Discussing these issues with the various stakeholders has led me to conclude that the perceptions of what is real and true for each party greatly differs from another.

I'll offer my own take on these.

In the case of the math faculty, many veteran teachers perceive an attack on their autonomy and see it as a low-grade RIF of their numbers. In the case of the nurses, it is perceived that with the one-to-one gain in the contract two programs are being closed and nursing faculty unfairly attacked in order to make up for funding shortfalls. And regarding the professors emeritus, many feel that they are being reprimanded for walking the picket line. All are justified feeling this way.

On the other hand, the administration perceives the low pass rate in math to be a significant problem worthy of radical change. The administration also sees two nursing programs in disarray that have required major and immediate change. Finally, the administration has determined that the professors emeritus, like adjunct faculty, are "at will" employees and they have rehired a handful of them this semester. The administration is also correct from their point of view.

Ah, but there's the rub: point of view. So what's my point of view? First off, last year's strike continues to permeate the actions of faculty and administration. I recognize that there exists many problems in pre-college math and that it should be reorganized so that more students have an opportunity to move on to college-level math. But it also concerns me that many of my veteran colleagues' concerns are dismissed outright. After all, by moving Math 100 and Math 110 into the pre-credit program deprives students of our most talented math faculty. The requirements to teach in the pre-credit program are significantly lower than to teach developmental math. We also run the risk of grade inflation by setting arbitrary pass rates. If success is defined by a 60, 65 or 70% pass rate, then it is only logical to assume that less secure faculty will teach to that number or test, not simply teach.

We must avoid the consumer-based model in which customer satisfaction is first and foremost: "I pay my tuition, I should get a satisfactory grade." This goes against everything we should be about and we run the risk of diluting the value of a City College certificate or degree for if everyone "wins," then no one "wins." As the Chancellor demands higher standards moving forward, a commensurate amount of failure must be accepted. In the end, the value of our degrees depends upon the degree of difficulty to attain it.

Regarding the nursing situation, I've heard the gamut: these faculty are exemplary to the worst ever and everything in between. Currently the lawyers are involved and at some point in the future the two dismissed faculty will have a legal resolution. I do not dismiss the students' complaints as invalid. However, one statement that was made does concern me. A student complained at the August board meeting that, even though she had gotten all the way through to the HESI exam and failed, subsequent skills-based analysis indicated that she totally lacked the fundamentals of nursing. She blamed the instructor for not teaching her. I'm sorry? Let's examine the meaning of that statement: it is the teacher's responsibility to make the student learn. That raises red flags.

Finally, I've tried to look at the professors emeritus situation from an educational point of view and, quite frankly, I can see no reason why these dedicated and experienced teachers should not be teaching for the City Colleges. Please help me understand how hiring less experienced part-time faculty over professors emeritus improves the educational experience for our students. I just can't wrap my mind around it.

The comedienne, Lily Tomlin, remarked, "Reality is nothing more than a collective hunch." And looking at our situation today, I believe that the different constituencies that make up the City Colleges have very disparate perceptions of our collective reality. In my role as President of Faculty Council I believe that it is my duty to try to understand these unique perceptions and find some common ground from which to dialog with the various constituencies. It certainly isn't easy and I doubt that it ever will be.

However, I am certain on one reality:

**Go White Sox!**

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Lakin  
President, FCCCC