



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
Thursday, December 07, 2006

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

Today I would like to respond to Executive Vice Chancellor Lewis' presentation on Tuesday and I'll begin by stating that I still stand by what I said in November's Board address: the tenure portfolio process is flawed and needs to be fixed.

I re-read what I wrote and, aside from some comments on the process at Daley College, what I suggested wasn't radical or even damning. It was, however, critical of the overall procedure of obtaining tenure within the City Colleges and, at the end of the speech, I offered some possible solutions, including mentoring, having a year to get one's bearing in the system before loading up on committee work, de-emphasizing the research project and making the portfolio a teaching-focused one. I suggested that a joint administration-faculty ad-hoc committee be formed.

I was taken to task at the last Board meeting and on Tuesday for relying on "anecdotal evidence." First of all, I don't have the resources available to me that the Academic Vice Chancellor does so, yes, I was unable to call every single college and discuss the tenure process with every administrator and non-tenured faculty. But I don't believe that's my job. Many of you work in the business world and would understand the term "climate" or "environmental scan." In my brief monthly contact with you I try to convey the climate of the faculty, that is, issues that are discussed and bandied about. Inevitably during many Faculty Council meetings the tenure portfolio is the topic of the day. It doesn't take a meteorologist to know that it's cloudy and may rain.

Still, after last month's Board meeting, a Tenure-Track Faculty survey was created at Daley College to attempt to quantify some of the issues. The same survey was then distributed to each campus just before Thanksgiving. While we have results from Daley, the other colleges are still collecting theirs. However, I have received a few from Wright and Olive-Harvey and the preliminary results are similar to those of Daley. I won't discuss the results from or the other colleges but I would like to share an unsolicited comment that was included and succinctly summarizes what's wrong:

This survey does not address my concerns [and] problems with the tenure process. I am working so hard to become a better *teacher* – not someone who knows how to fill out meaningless paperwork. [...] My third-year portfolio is due on August 1, 2007. I know that this process will not be changed for me – but I hope that it could be improved (or *dropped*) for future teachers. (emphasis in original)

Moreover I have spoken (off the record, of course) with former administrators, including deans and vice presidents, as well as with a few current administrators across the district. Without fail, all are critical of the tenure process as it is designed. One declared it, "the quintessential bureaucratic hoop-jumping exercise where the most important thing is to make sure that items are checked off." They, too, find it tedious, repetitive and, ultimately, a poor judge of whether or not the candidate will be a successful educator.

So I ask: if so many good people find this process severely flawed, why are we still doing it? I think it would be useful to find out 1) how it was developed: all at once or in stages? 2) when the various components were added to it; and 3) if it is based on best practices or if there are other models to follow.

While some would argue that, if a non-tenured faculty member resigns prior to achieving tenure, well, then, the process worked and that person isn't worthy of the CCC. I don't buy that argument. We have lost and risk losing many more good teachers because of this tenure process – that's my forecast.

Again, as I stated last month, I want to reiterate that we are not against a tenure portfolio. We are, however, against the current set-up and urge you to consider revamping the procedures to ensure that the City Colleges of Chicago fairly evaluates the new faculty it hires.

Finally, I would like to extend an invitation to our Board of Trustees to attend one of our monthly Faculty Council meetings so that you can hear us, not just me. January's meeting is on the 17th. Feel free to contact me for specific details.

Have a wonderful and safe holiday season. See you next year.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Lakin
President, FCCCC