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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, February 9, 2006

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

I wasn't present this past January to wish you a happy New Year so I will do so now: Happy New Year!

Yesterday I attended the Strategic Planning Steering Committee meeting for the CCC's Vision 2011 plan and, as always happens, I come away impressed with the people who have been assembled to begin to think about where the City Colleges needs to be in five years. This collegial group includes faculty, district and local administration, staff and a student (Trustee John Jointer). There are six subcommittees all examining specific issues pertinent to the development of the overall plan: Demographic, Educational, Technological, Economic, Socio-Political and Workforce Development. All the data presented was truly informative and two that caught my attention came from the Demographic subcommittee: 1) In the next five years higher education is going to experience massive retirements in faculty and 2) The ratio of full-time to part-time faculty has been inverted, affecting the quality of education that has not been for the better.

Both present a challenge and an opportunity for the City Colleges. The challenge is to continue pursuing high standards in difficult budget times that necessitates the over-reliance on adjuncts. Concurrently, large retirement classes strip departments of senior faculty who serve as mentors to junior faculty and have vast institutional memory. These difficulties, though, present an opportunity for the City Colleges to position itself as a leader in community college higher education.

Perusing Section 1G: Resolutions, I am glad to see that the Chancellor is recommending second- and third-year contracts and tenure to, by my count, 112 faculty members and another 75 will be beginning to teach in the summer and fall of 2006. This doesn't include those that began their teaching assignments this January. In other words, over 200 tenure portfolios will be passing through the office of Academic Affairs this next calendar year.

That's a lot of teachers and we certainly need them...but we need more. It's a litany that you've heard many times and this issue is not unique to the City Colleges. One first step that will attract and keep new hires is the Chancellor's initiative to offer financial assistance for first-time homeowners to help offset closing costs to live in the city.

Another avenue that we should pursue together is political. Our mission, after all, is the education of the citizens of Chicago. Yet here we are again, the Union and the Administration pursuing separate agendas when working in concert would perhaps yield better results in Springfield. What is needed is that clarion call, that Sputnik moment, which reawakens in the public and, most importantly, in our political leaders, the belief that investment in education at all levels, is prudent and wise for the future of our communities. Let's make that call together.

Here in Chicago we have to make it clear to the leaders, to the public and to our students that our mission is indispensable.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Lakin, President, FCCCC