



## **RICHARD J. DALEY COLLEGE**

ONE OF THE CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

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TRUSTEES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NO. 508  
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FCCCC President's Address  
CCC Board of Trustee's Meeting  
Thursday, April 3, 2008

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

At the last Board meeting I did not read my speech due to the longer-than-normal meeting and the special celebration for Executive Vice Chancellor Lewis. Although I asked Ms. Hawkins to email you my speech, I would like to take a moment to highlight one part regarding faculty safety.

At our past two Faculty Council meetings, we have discussed safety issues on our campuses, not just from someone with a gun, but also the more prevalent threats of violence and sexual harassment from students towards the faculty. One specific threat towards faculty occurred recently at Truman College where a nursing faculty received a threatening email from a former student who had failed out of the program. The other nursing faculty are frightened because they do not know this student or what she looks like so they are rightfully concerned about their safety. Fortunately, they met this week with President Lynn Walker who has agreed to implement security measures and to examine the overall strategy in dealing with threatening students.

The overall consensus throughout the district, though, is that we don't feel safe. One member asked, "If I hear gunshots in the hallway, what am I to do? Duck?" We do not want to see metal detectors at every entrance at every school. However, in light of the tragedy at Northern Illinois University, we hope that the district and each campus have begun to reexamine safety plans at each campus and that all employees are made aware of them. Additionally, at the start of each academic year, we recommend that drills be held at each campus to remind us of our roles during an emergency, be they of fire, medical, tornado or gun violence. As the saying goes, "Prepare for the worst, hope for the best."

Speaking of hoping for the best, that's how I have tried to represent the faculty's view these past three years. If you aren't aware, today is my last Board meeting as Faculty Council President. And, if you recall, when I became the president, it was the spring semester after the fall strike and the faculty had just taken a vote of 'no confidence.' Needless to say, the atmosphere was very tense and I remember wondering how we, the faculty and administration, could move beyond the bitter labor dispute. I didn't have an answer but I did know that moving in to this position I wanted to be an honest broker and I think I've been able to be that. I've given kudos where kudos were due and have criticized when criticism was called for.

So today it would be remiss for me to not give kudos to or criticize some recent developments. First, kudos to the Chancellor and his Vision 2011 plan. He has positioned the City Colleges nationally as a leader in innovative and exciting educational programs. Kudos to the Vice Chancellors and Associate Vice Chancellors who have had to manage the multiple responsibilities of numerous simultaneous missions and doing so with less and less state

resources. Both the veteran and new presidents deserve credit for steering their colleges through some tough times and righting themselves for future challenges. Special kudos to Presidents El-Amin and Wozniak for managing to keep their campuses open during major construction. We see the beautiful results today in two impressive campuses.

In fact, I've been impressed by how the tenor has changed since Fall 2004 to today. When I became Faculty Council President in May, 2005, I wouldn't have believed that we'd already have a five-year contract a year early and that many of the issues that have arisen would be resolved amicably before becoming major issues and grievances. What I think has happened is that we got back to the business we do best: educate students. Our mission is too critical to fail and we all play a crucial role in this institution's success. However, the two most important elements that constitute a college must always be first and foremost: the student and the teacher. Without one you cannot have the other. Everything else is ancillary.

So it is disheartening to see in the Board report today that while there are eight Distinguished Administrators representing all seven colleges and the district, and all deserving, I'm certain, there are only *three* Distinguished Professors: one from Daley, one from Kennedy-King and one from Truman. I certainly hope that by the May Board report, the other four colleges will have named their distinguished professors. Having attended Board meetings for the past thirty-six months, I know that there are deserving faculty for this recognition. Many of them have presented before you or are highlighted monthly in Section 7 of the Board Report. Not nominating anyone for the award belies its spirit and is discouraging to the faculty. I urge the four presidents to move without delay to recognize the stellar faculty that you have at your campuses who, every day, are on the front lines building personal connections with the students they're teaching and, bottom line, bringing life to the classrooms, libraries and hallways of our colleges.

And, finally, I have a challenge to issue to our Board. For the past three years I have extended an invitation to you to attend a Faculty Council meeting. My reason for this is simple: you represent the citizens of Chicago and, by sitting on this board, you have a responsibility to all the constituents that make up this great institution. However, the one group of constituents that receive the least amount of attention is the most important after students: the faculty. Your only contact is here, in this room. Aside from the Faculty Council President's monthly speeches, you only see and hear the extremes. You see the best when an award-winning faculty member presents his or her project before you and you hear about the worst when you go into closed session to make personnel decisions.

My challenge to you is to not only attend one Faculty Council meeting, if only for an hour, but to also visit the campuses that you represent. Walk in unannounced and talk to regular faculty and regular students to really get the pulse of the City Colleges. Be that intrepid "man-or-woman-on-the-street" Board member who hears all the perspectives, from the official version on down to the unfiltered, street-level what's what. After watching you in action these past three years and seeing how much you care for the City Colleges, I'm certain that you're up for this challenge.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Lakin