



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, February 7, 2008

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

The Faculty Council has one concern that it would like expressed to the Board today. It has come to our attention that a proposal was presented to a recent district-wide administrators meeting for a "Human Diversity Requirement" for both the A.A. and A.S. degrees. It reads:

"Each student must satisfy a three credit-hour human diversity requirement by taking one course that explores human diversity within the United States or from a non-western perspective. This course may satisfy a general education requirement, a concentration or an elective."

At that meeting it was said that Faculty Council had approved this new requirement. Not only did we not approve it, we never were presented with it.

I'm not here to argue the merits of this requirement. In fact, this type of course is quite common at nearly all colleges and universities. What concerns us, though, is how the Faculty Council and its functions are utilized by the administration.

As I see it, we exist to serve as a bridge between faculty and administration to allow for constant communication about concerns and issues that arise. We serve as an advisory council in many ways. We meet monthly during the academic year. During these meetings our main function is to review and approve course and program proposals and discuss goings-on at the campuses. Compare notes, if you will. Occasionally the administration attends our meeting to seek Faculty Council approval for new programs or policy changes or, as courtesy, to update us on various district initiatives. For instance, last month AVCs Armster and Visser presented an administration proposal to move the City Colleges from an attendance-taking institution to a non-attendance-taking one. Questions were asked and answered, there was some give-and-take and, in the end, we were grateful for the heads up.

In fact, that's mostly how it goes. It's a nice checks-and-balance thing that we've got going on. However, on the rare occasions when there is disagreement, it seems that the Faculty Council's position is dismissed. When we agree with the administration, it's a shining example of shared governance. But when we disagree, we're viewed as obstructionists, intent on preventing progress.

Case in point: the College Success Seminar. It was presented to us last April. We were informed that the district was going forward with a pilot project at four colleges to begin in the summer and was seeking our approval. We had the sense that it was a fait accompli; no matter what we said, it was going to happen. What was wanted was the "Faculty Council Seal of Approval." We expressed our concerns that day both orally as well as in a written memo but agreed to *provisionally* approve it for the four colleges for the summer and fall semesters. We requested a progress report at our November 2007 meeting but will receive it in March 2008. This quote-unquote pilot program is now at all seven colleges.

This begs the question, what is the role of Faculty Council and to what end if our views and recommendations don't count when there is disagreement? I've said this before: democracy is a beautifully messy process. Just look at the current primary season - isn't it exciting? Shouldn't shared governance be the same?

My point is this: we're both on the same team. We both have the same goal: to educate our students. It's frustrating to us when there are two sets of rules and they're not equally applied. The Faculty Council *is* important and our opinions, be they concordant or contradictory, are valid. Shared governance needs to be more of a two-way street.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Lakin
President, FCCCC