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FCCCC President's Address
CCC Board of Trustee's Meeting
Wednesday, January 16, 2008

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

During the December and January Executive Committee meetings, we discussed two issues that I feel deserve attention today: the Center for Distance Learning and the College Success course.

First, I want to alert you to some possible issues that may arise next fall regarding the Center for Distance Learning when the new contract is in effect. There is confusion right now about how it is going to work in terms of seniority, load, overtime, stipend and summer pay. I think it behooves all of us to be on the same page to avoid messy and costly grievances.

The College Success course has been rolled out to all campuses. While it is a work-in-progress, the Faculty Council does support the initiative to assist the most vulnerable students.

In fact, numerous policy changes have been put into effect this year to address student success. One such policy change is the no-late-enrollment rule. That is, once a course meets for the first time, a student is unable to enroll in the course. This seemed counterintuitive to me but I was informed that the data actually supports this policy change: students who late enroll disproportionately fail to successfully complete the course. At the same time, to assist the students who do enroll late, more and more courses are being offered in the 13-week and 8-week special sessions.

Another on-going initiative is to train faculty and college advisors on student retention. At the end of last semester Kennedy-King College hosted two half-day professional development seminars on this topic. It was an overwhelming success and bears repeating. Yet another on-going initiative is, essentially, a customer service program to train all employees in customer relations.

The pattern seems clear: the City Colleges of Chicago is focusing its collective energy on our most important constituents, the students. From Vision 2011 and the yearly APSA reviews to the Recalibration Committee and College Success seminars, we are showing a commitment to improving the lives of our students. But I would be remiss to not mention one very important cog that is missing in this student-centered apparatus: counseling services. This *is* counterintuitive to invest so much in student success yet not have a key component that, as far as I am aware, is on every other college campus.

I think it's wonderful that the CCC receives multiple accolades nationwide for its innovative and, yes, sometimes controversial positions. But having no counselors is one that I'm not proud of. Again, we beseech the Board and the Chancellor, please bring back counseling services.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Lakin
President, FCCCC