

Chairman Cabrera, Chancellor Hyman, members of the Board, Officers of the District, faculty, staff and all others present, good morning

This morning I want to present a rather conventional review of the issues that FC4 members have wrestled with in our past couple of meetings. We are the academic wing of the institution, and we don't address contractual issues unless they spill over into issues of academic integrity.

Therefore, we have been discussing issues such as copyright and faculty ownership of materials, problems with emails and grading, rollout timelines (both with Blackboard and other initiatives), procurement issues and requests for monies, the high cost of textbooks and the feasibility of using iPads as a textbook delivery system, the flowchart of the process of academic change, IAI problems and challenges, the tenure process and hiring and credential recommendations.

One issue that keeps coming up because it encapsulates many of these issues is the CASH to ROI initiative, begun in spring 2011, at Daley College. As I mentioned at an earlier board meeting, the faculty are concerned about a number of things with this initiative. Let me be clear: We do not oppose it because it is a new initiative, and we do not oppose it because it proposes a novel delivery system. We want students to do well, and, if this works, bring it on!

Instead, we are concerned about its implementation and the lack of transparency around the program -- and we are skeptical about its efficacy in helping students learn. Here are our concerns.

First, good research design demands objective review of the data. We worry that the advocates of the program and the primary authors of the modules at Daley are also the individuals crunching the numbers. We need to make sure that the analysis and conclusions are valid and can be replicated. It is good news, we think, that the Office of Research and Development will review the raw data. (This brings up another issue: The institution needs an oversight review board permanently in place to review projects such as this for their efficacy and use of data. I'll talk more about this at a later date.)

Second, and here the system is so byzantine that I needed major clarification from faculty at Daley to understand the grading: When CASH to ROI was first implemented, administrators told the faculty that the wraparound services of the tutoring center (the modules for the course) were required and were "worth 15% of students' final grade in the course." Faculty in the program

understood this to mean that any student who attended the CASH to ROI modules had 15% added to her grade; a student who did not attend the modules had 15% subtracted from her grade.

This approach led to some problems. For instance, a student whose work was at the 65% level (in a traditional percentage grading schema, this would be a D) would receive an 80% for the course and a B if she did the wraparound services or alternatively, an F because she completed the course without attending the modules ($65 - 15 = 50\%$).

Because, I think, something was wrong with this picture, in November, faculty were asked to change this requirement (to attend the wraparound services) to include *only students who had an 85% or higher in the coursework*.

This approach also leads to some absurdities: The high-B or A student who hasn't attended the modules is penalized and knocked down to an 85%, while the student who has the grade of 84% and lower does not have to attend the modules. Consequently, what was instituted as a scaffolding service for struggling students has become a penalty for able students and only optional for those who really need the tutoring help.

It also means that the success in this course, if determined by a passing grade, has changed from spring/summer 2011 to fall 2011; in a rigorous research design, we can't really compare the grades from these two groups. (At this point, I don't want to discuss grading as an accurate evaluation of student learning and consequently student success; that's another address.)

Moreover, even if a myriad of problems did not exist with this iteration, this model presents a number of systemic issues, one of which is the administrative intrusion into faculty grading policy, with which Faculty Council takes umbrage.

Faculty should determine the weights of assignments for the successful completion of our courses. Concomitant with that issue is the use of percentage for wraparound services in a way that obscures student learning: 15% of the grade is a huge percentage for compliance and not mastery, and, as I suggested above, it "dirties" the data. If a student can raise her grade from 75% (a mid-C) to 90% (a low A) just by *attending* tutoring (as is described in the literature, but has subsequently been dropped) while another student lowers her grade from an A to a B by not attending a service that she doesn't seem to need, we don't know if the grade means that the student really understands the material (mastery) or just is following the rules (compliance).

Third, one argument that students are mastering the material is the correlation between grades and the final Compass and eWrite test scores, but that too is problematic. Here I just want to discuss the Compass test, which is used across the district as a diagnostic test. In CASH to ROI, the Compass test is used as both an entrance test for diagnostic data and as an exit test to determine mastery of the material. But the test itself is designed only for diagnostic, not exit, uses; this is not the manner in which the designer by his own admission conceived the test. I won't go into detail about the differences, but consider that the Compass test is designed in a

hierarchical manner to offer different questions depending on whether the test-taker has answered the previous question correctly; conceivably a student in math who has mastered geometry won't get those questions on the Compass test if she has botched the arithmetic or algebra questions, which are lower on the hierarchy. (And this is another issue: Success in pre-credit courses should not be measured with changes in diagnostic test scores, but should be determined by successful completion in the next transitional course. Otherwise, it's just teaching to the test and doesn't illustrate true intellectual growth.)

The administration has claimed, according to the Daley faculty, that the post-CASH to ROI standardized scores are used to re-place the students in classes regardless of their course grade (and there are some discrepancies between students' grades and their subsequent placement). But that argues against the correlation between grades and Compass/eWrite scores, and undermines the apparent success of CASH to ROI.

The real test of success is the retention of students in the transition and success to the next level of coursework, and we haven't seen data to support that students in CASH to ROI do better at the next level than other students not in this program. Also, although the Daley literature discusses an increased retention rate, it shows increased student success from Spring 2010 to Spring 2011 (when CASH to ROI had yet to be implemented).

We know that scaffolding services such as tutoring and counseling help students, especially struggling or first-year students, but that is because of what these services support in the classroom, not attendance itself, and we have to get away from gaming the system by allowing compliance to replace mastery. Indeed, these services are absolutely important and their impact on student learning is important data that we need to track, but it should be used to compare with student grades to tease out the correlation between using the services in a robust manner and a higher grade, and not used toward the grade itself.

Finally, if this initiative is the greatest thing since sliced bread, then share it. We want to see the modules and see how the initiative works. It should minimally have gone through the faculty curriculum process (Daley Academic Affairs, Daley Faculty Council, District curriculum committee, and the FC4) before its first iteration. We could have helped with some of these problems. But the administration at Daley College has refused to send the program through appropriate channels.

Because of these ongoing concerns (and we've been discussing the initiative since August), in the November meeting FC4 members voted unanimously in support of the following resolution: "There are fundamental concerns that the CASH to ROI initiative is in violation of the contract and (there are) additional concerns as to its implementation, methodology of evaluation and its pedagogical value."

We need robust faculty and administrative oversight; for our students, we have to get this right.

Respectfully submitted,

Polly Hoover

President of FC4