

FCCCC President's Address

CCC Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday August 4, 2016

Chairman Middleton, Chancellor Hyman, members of the Board, good morning. I am happy to be here today to deliver this report on behalf of Faculty Council.

Your faculty have remained engaged and involved with many projects this summer. In one example, we collaborated with District Officers to plan what we hope will be a very successful Faculty Development Week kick-off, which will be held at Malcolm X College on Monday August 15th. In more general terms, we are working together and still struggling with big issues that impact our colleges and our district. One very real issue that we are currently trying to balance is planning for the future of the City Colleges while at the same time confronting some serious and immediate challenges. For example: faculty need to prepare for the upcoming fall semester, which includes our contractual obligation to register students during the week of August 22nd. Unfortunately, due to a policy that was introduced a year ago, we are not allowed to register new students into any 16-week courses during this “registration” week. Why not? Why can't we enroll students in courses that have open seats?

It has been one year since District Officers – our leaders – made the decision to eliminate registration one week prior to classes starting - and we still do not understand why this decision was made or how it serves our mission or supports community access to our colleges. This question leads to a larger philosophical issue that we faculty have been grappling with particularly as we prepare for a transition to an administration that will be governed by a new, as-yet-unknown, Chancellor. What exactly IS the role of District Office when we have seven independently accredited colleges? We hope that during the upcoming year, as Faculty Council continues to work with our District Officers towards shared governance, that we can arrive upon shared understanding around these and other questions. In the book, *First Among Equals: How to Manage a Group of Professionals*, McKenna and Maister (2002) describe a leader as someone who helps their team view things in a different way and he or she doesn't try to force his or

her answers onto the team.

Faculty realize that the work of managing and planning for the future of the City Colleges of Chicago can be messy at times and that we may not always agree but, we can have disagreements within Higher Education – in fact, it’s to be expected. In order for faculty to be able to work effectively with our administration to handle current issues as well as long-term planning, we deserve to be treated with respect by leaders who maintain ethical and responsible conduct and who understand, or seek to understand, the consequences and impacts of the policies and decisions that they impose on our colleges. When faculty dissent from our administration’s policies, as we do currently on several issues, we have been dismissed with the phrase “that’s just a faculty concern.” Why would an administrator who requires their faculty to seek and maintain the highest credentials in order to teach in their discipline then dismiss that same faculty member’s input in a decision making process? It makes no sense at all. We sincerely hope that faculty professionalism and our continued dedication and advocacy for the students, colleges and communities we serve will be reflected in the respectful treatment we deserve and have earned.

This concludes my report. I thank you for your time today.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Alexander, on Behalf of the Faculty Council of the City Colleges of Chicago