

JUNE 2, 2016

FCCCC President's Address

CCC Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday June 2, 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.

I would like to first thank all of our speakers from the Public Participation today. (Please note: there was significant public participation at today's Board Meeting, including seven speakers from the field of Early Childhood Education who spoke out against the proposed consolidations.) Today, Dr. Davis, who is sitting to my left, will be presenting a beautiful resolution memorializing our dear colleague and friend, Veronica Velani –Jackson, who passed away last month. We are so sorry to have lost her. And so I will limit my remarks today to ensure that we have an appropriate amount of time to devote to that resolution.

11 months ago, Child Development faculty were informed in a 15-minute conference call that our Nationally Accredited Programs were being closed at Olive-Harvey, Malcolm X, Daley, Harold Washington and Kennedy-King Colleges. We have never been given any justification for these proposed program closures. The most frequent question people ask me when I tell them the news of the closures is “why?” And we've never gotten an answer. Since that time, faculty have experienced desperate frustration as we have tried again and again to explain to district officers why our programs are so important to the students, communities, and children that we serve.

I have attempted – impossibly- to treat my role as Faculty Council President as somehow separate from my role as a Child Development Faculty member and Early Childhood Professional with 25 years of experience in the field. Finally today I can be both.

Please allow me to explain briefly what our program is and who we serve. I usually just summarize it as “I am a teacher-teacher.” Although that much is true: our programs prepare many students who wish to work professionally with young children in child-care centers or home day cares. However, that is not all we do. We also serve general

education students who take our classes as fully-transferrable electives, and ESL or Adult Education students who often take our classes as a “bridge” to college credit courses. We often serve many students, male and female, who want to learn more about children and become better parents or grandparents. So while we can be considered a career program, we are at the same time much more than that. Losing these programs in so many communities within the city of Chicago is detrimental to the success of all of the city’s residents.

Again and again we have heard that this Board, and District Officers, believe that our concerns about the Child Development Programs are “just faculty concerns.” I hope you have seen today that is NOT TRUE. As you have seen today and throughout the months leading up to today’s actions, there has been considerable concern about this decision raised by faculty, students, community groups and the Education and Child development Committee of City Council. All of the arguments against this decision are well articulated and publicly available. There is a petition with over 1,000 signatures on change.org to “Save Child Development at the City Colleges of Chicago.” These arguments have been written in letters, addressed to the board, and contained in Resolution 2015-809 “Call for hearings to determine Impact and consequences of consolidation of the Child Development Department of the City Colleges upon students, staff and communities.” I have prepared copies of student letters for each Trustee of the Board today, as well as copies of the resolution.

Closing programs in the name of “consolidation” does not have to happen. It is not “written in stone”. Right now it is just a plan. It is a plan that will hurt students and communities. Please bring faculty back to the table to discuss other options. Our programs are still open! Please take the time to ensure you are making an informed choice in approving this radical change in who we serve and how we serve them.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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