FCCCC President's Address

CCC Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday May 5, 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'd like to take a moment to welcome our new Student Trustee Melanny Buitron - welcome to the Board of Trustees, Melanny.

FC4 conducted our annual elections last month for Executive Officers, and I am honored to report that I was re-elected to a second term as Faculty Council President. We have a new Vice President of FC4 who I would like to briefly introduce here today. Armen Sarrafian, the current Vice President of Harold Washington College, wrote the following biography of Jessica Bader in 2012: "Ms. Jessica Bader is an artist, educator and community activist, committing her professional and personal life to fostering better opportunities for those around her. After earning her Master of Fine Arts Degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2000, she began working in the Department of Art and Architecture at Harold Washington College in Chicago. As a tenured faculty member and Coordinator of Ceramics and Three-Dimensional Media, she has connected closely with the mission of the college, providing accessible, higher education in the visual arts to thousands of students. Her efforts offer students the tools and critical environment to liberate and develop their expressive voices. As a ceramic artist her work explores the concept of "home", communicating through contemporary interpretation a traditional notion of place. The visual discourse this presents in our easily clouded and confused time provides a much-needed grounding in who we are. On the whole, Ms. Bader is a catalyst for change, introspection and empowerment." Welcome to your new role as Vice President of Faculty Council, Jessica Bader.

We sincerely hope that the topic of this month's FC4 Board Report will help all of us: board members, administrators, and faculty, move toward a greater understanding of what shared governance is, with a hope that we can all arrive at a better way of working together. This

particular Board Report includes a complete bibliography for the purpose of further reading and research for any interested parties. We need to make this understanding a priority. The Higher Learning Commission (2016), as part of its accreditation criteria states, "The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort."

In a Chronicle of Higher Education article, Pannapacker (2014) describes the worst-case scenario in shared governance where faculty's role is seen as a rubber stamp for decisions that have already been made and separately, Weisbuch (2015) suggests that at the heart of the difficulties of shared governance is distrust. Unfortunately, it is the opinion of FC4 that these statements describe the current state of shared governance at the City Colleges of Chicago. It time for all of us to openly commit to working toward the ultimate goal of true shared governance, to commit to actively participating in defining what shared governance looks like at CCC, and to educate all stakeholders in the nuances of the other stakeholders' roles.

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (2014) suggests that shared governance is a system for building communication, respect, and trust with an eye toward developing integral leaders at all levels. They further suggest that boards should give legitimacy to faculty leaders by inviting them to the table at crucial junctures in a decision-making process and that following such practices can help institutions build the trust and respect needed to sustain shared governance through good and bad times (Bahls, 2014). Transparency and training do not eliminate disagreement, but over time they establish trust (Rosenberg, 2014). Importantly: when seeking to understand the sense of the faculty, trustees and administrators should rely on the ELECTED faculty leadership body.

Jenkins and Jensen (2010) write that true shared governance at community colleges is based on four key principles: faculty authority, inclusiveness, a commitment to tenure, and a commitment to the process. Following such practices can help institutions build the trust and respect needed to sustain shared governance through good and bad times. In doing so, the institution moves from the traditional approach of shared governance to the more dynamic approach of shared responsibility (Bahls, 2014). The second principle of shared governance,

inclusiveness, is that everyone who has a stake in a decision--faculty members, administrators, staff members, and students--should be represented when that decision is made.

      With all of this in mind, FC4 is committing to investigating some possible next steps before the next Board meeting and we hope that this Board and our administration will do the same. Let's lead by example. Let's teach one another about our respective roles. Let's move toward a true model of inclusivity and academic shared governance if our goals are the same: student success, access, and being true to our mission.

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

References

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