

FCCCC President's Address

CCC Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday July 6th, 2017

Good morning Chairman Middleton, Chancellor Salgado, Board of Trustees.

I would first like to welcome our new Provost and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Mark Potter. Dr. Potter: welcome to Chicago! We are so happy to have you join us at the City Colleges. We know that starting any new job can be challenging and stressful, let alone moving across the country, as you have done very recently. As I am sure you are aware, we are undergoing our own major transitions at the City Colleges of Chicago and so you are in good company. As our Chancellor has stated in previous meetings: the City Colleges are the single most important higher-education institutions in Chicago. We are the “glue” that hold this complicated city together. I want you to know that you have a tremendous resource in your faculty, and your Faculty Council. In your faculty you have content-area experts in any imaginable subject area and a group of people with institutional knowledge and a commitment to our mission and the students we serve. FC4 looks forward to working collaboratively with you and we are ready to hit the ground running. The best news today that I can share with you is that you also get the pleasure of working with our extraordinary students! It will not take long for you to understand why the City Colleges' faculty are so dedicated to the daily teaching and learning that goes on at our seven colleges every day.

Faculty were stunned last week to learn the news that our Chancellor is exploring the option of selling this very building, the District Office. This is a major change for our district. As I was preparing this report, I was struck by the statement in the “Resolution to Authorize the Sale of 226 West Jackson Boulevard Office” which states: “Whereas, in reviewing the above property and determining it may not be needed for community college purposes, the Chancellor recommends that the District should proceed to explore options regarding the use or disposition of such property...” Faculty have long wondered how exactly district office fits with our seven independently accredited colleges. More importantly: how does district office serve our students? How does district office serve our mission? These are questions we will work through collectively as we face this major transition. Chancellor Salgado, Board of Trustees and District Officers: your faculty are here to participate as equal partners during this transition. More than

anything, we want our district to best serve the needs of our students and communities, especially during the trying financial times we are experiencing in Illinois. As I give this report we are still waiting to hear if Illinois has passed a budget. We were very sorry to hear in the news and then in last week's budget meeting that the combination of the state budget "crisis" and our low enrollment has meant district layoffs of approximately 120 CCC employees last week. As the Chancellor stated, these layoffs impact people's lives and their families. These are terrible times for so many people in our city and state right now. FC4 is committed to reviewing the draft of our CCC budget and will provide feedback through the appropriate channels in the upcoming weeks.

Finally, FC4 began a discussion last month that is very timely and relevant given the other news headlines this week. As I am sure everyone in this room is aware, there have been more than 100 shootings in Chicago over the past several days. This violent epidemic is not new to our city. FC4 wants to look at how the City Colleges of Chicago can become more intentionally and proactively involved in finding solutions to the violence and poverty that plague our city. We want to work with community groups, our Board of Trustees, our Chancellor, Provost, and other stakeholders in forming an initiative where CCC can address the sources of violence, crime and poverty in our city. We believe we cannot find any meaningful solutions to these persistent issues until we address the causes. We have set a tentative meeting date of July 25th for our first discussion on this initiative and I hope you can all join us in the conversation. I will send an email to follow up after today and will report back at next month's Board of Trustees meeting.

This concludes my report. Thank you very much for your time today.

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