

FCCCC President's Address  
CCC Board of Trustees Meeting  
Thursday June 7th, 2018

Chairman Massey, Board of Trustees, Chancellor Salgado, Provost Potter: good morning!

I do not have a particularly long Faculty Council report today as we have been on break between semesters since the last Board of Trustees meeting. Summer school starts this week, and many of us met our new students yesterday or will meet them today. One thing that I love about summer school is that we can focus on one or two classes rather than our usual four or five sections that we teach in any given semester. This is a really exciting opportunity to update some of the topics we will cover in class, and this is one of the reasons why I love summer school!

One FC4 project did carry over the May break, and I want to take a few minutes to tell you all about this work. As many of you know, we formed a Committee in April of 2017 called "Committee H" (the H stands for hope) which is our FC4 dream initiative for the City Colleges to intentionally address the sources of violence, crime and poverty in Chicago. As we have met throughout this past year we have come to the conclusion that we should begin to provide educational opportunities for current detainees at Cook County Jail as well as transitional opportunities for returning citizens through CCC.

I want to take a moment to say that if anyone: our Trustees, District Officers, college Presidents, faculty, or members of the public, have any reservations or concerns about the idea that we should be devoting any time or resources to detainees or inmates, please engage us in that conversation. Our committee has done extensive research and we welcome any dialogue about this initiative.

We have met with the Sheriff's office, received trainings and have also visited inmates at the jail to learn about them and the current classroom space that is available. We are not entering into this work lightly, nor are we naive. We understand that any new initiative takes time, planning, collaboration and thoughtfulness. Chancellor Salgado has provided support and encouragement and Dr. Potter has helped us work through a lot of the details in our planning as well. The detainees who we hope to initially work with have been specifically selected for special programming and in fact have been participating in programming with partners such as

DePaul, Loyola and Chicago State University over the past year. The criminal justice system as it exists today is deeply flawed and change within a massive institution such as the Cook County Department of Corrections is slow and challenging. The sheriff's office has been working to slowly shift the paradigm at a few Tiers and according to everyone we have met, including the Correctional Officers, the culture shift has been remarkable. Detainees who live on these tiers and who participate in programming are behaving differently than they ever have before at the jail. We want the City Colleges of Chicago to be a meaningful and significant partner in this endeavor at Cook County Jail. We have a very real opportunity now to address mass incarceration in Chicago and help returning citizens to make a more successful transition out of jail PERMANENTLY.

The Chancellor supports this initiative but we are currently tangled up in some details. We have three volunteer instructors: myself, Jessica Bader and Keith Sprewer, ready to start team teaching a course for about 12-14 detainees this summer. The goal is to use this work to plan and learn about best practices teaching "inside" so that we can begin to teach credit courses in the near future. We want to help them, when needed, to become English 101 eligible so that they can take gen eds, which is what they want. These guys are saavy and hungry for educational opportunities. While we dream of growing this program and being a big, significant partner for CCDOC and all of the returning citizens in the near future, right now we just want a nice small sustainable pilot where we can learn and succeed with the detainees. We are on the edge of our seats hoping that we can get the green light for this work from Chancellor Salgado soon so that we can get started as soon as possible.

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

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