

FCCCC President's Address
CCC Board of Trustee's Meeting
Thursday, April 2, 2020

Good afternoon Chairman Massey, Chancellor Salgado, Members of the Board, Officers of the District, faculty, staff and all others virtually present.

I would like to begin this report by offering my most sincere condolences on behalf of CCC Faculty Council to all our CCC community facing this pandemic, and especially to the Wright college community for their recent loss. We demand that masks and gloves be provided to all essential personnel working at the colleges; we understand that this is not the case at all CCC facilities.

Three weeks ago, we were sitting at Harold Washington College at this same time for the March CCC Board of Trustee's meeting. We were sitting in separate tables on the administration's side of the room using a separate microphone, while the audience was sitting in chairs next to each other in the usual way. At that time, the CCC faculty community had only received a Special Announcement from the Provost stating that, "instructors, department chairs, program directors, and administrators should not be deciding on their own to pause face-to-face instruction." I want to begin my report this time with that image, which spoke by itself: it physically and emotionally separated administration from the rest of the CCC community in the same room. I will avoid establishing painful historical comparisons to that specific moment, but would like to highlight it to avoid similar future divisions. We are all part of the CCC community and this pandemic should make us reflect deeply on that.

The Friday following our last meeting was also the last day our students were able to physically attend our colleges, but faculty and staff were still mandated to go in person to the colleges to develop remote teaching plans for the rest of the semester. Emails among CCC faculty went back and forth that previous weekend and a lot of confusion was generated across the CCC community. Communication from CCC-District Office was unclear, and local college administration -who are in direct contact with faculty and staff- had difficulty interpreting District Office guidance. There was no contingency plan designed in case of a pandemic, even though regular news developments showed that it was going to hit us, and even though we knew the virus was beginning to spiral out of control on the East Coast. Our own beliefs made us skeptical of the realities we are facing now.

Two weeks have passed since these events, and here we are: the majority of college-credit classes are taught remotely without major disruptions. Our CCC faculty and staff have responded to our students' needs as usual and without hesitation. Why? Because we committed to serve our students the moment we accepted our jobs; because we are problem solvers and have years of experience solving them at our colleges; and because we work at community colleges in the city of Chicago.

Based on that, we are expecting a contingency plan for the summer and fall 2020 sessions **now** because registration for those sessions begins in a few days. The community you lead is asking questions like: Are all the courses open for the summer session ready to be taught remotely? Are students aware that this might be a possibility? Are faculty and staff at each college ready to avoid similar circumstances like the ones we just faced? Is everything legally in place to move in that direction and keep the academic integrity of our CCC curriculum? There are only nine weeks

before our summer session starts, and too many unanswered questions remain. Our CCC students, faculty, and staff need those answers **today**.

This is probably my last report to the CCC Board of Trustees as CCC Faculty Council President. I have been honored to serve in this position for almost a year. Communication improvement between District Office leadership, college administration, and faculty has been my main focus during this time. I am glad to find out that, as of last week, the Chancellor recognized similar communication gaps in dealing with mid-level administration at the colleges. I hope this will be a final step in addressing what we all face on a daily basis.

We have learned a lot over these last three weeks, and we will keep learning over the course of these unprecedented circumstances in our country and in the world, but we need to develop practical resolutions coming from our reflections in isolation. Our personal divisiveness and pride have no value in our current times. We need to understand for once that together in collaboration we are stronger and can prevail. Faculty and staff have already begun the challenge; we are waiting for you.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Adriana Tápanes-Inojosa, on behalf of the Faculty Council of the City Colleges of Chicago

Board Of Trustees of the City Colleges of Chicago:

Thank you for your work on behalf of students during this very uncertain time, particularly your thoughtfulness in considering the proposed policy changes for student grading in light of the Covid 19 pandemic. Faculty are appreciative of district administration meeting with us to be nimble and creative in making our transition from the face-to-face modality to a virtual one as smooth as possible.

During our March FC4 meeting with Provost Potter, we discussed the need to both encourage faculty to begin taking the coursework to become credentialed to teach online and possibly an MOU allowing uncredentialed faculty to teach online courses for both summer and fall while they take the coursework to be fully credentialed. Provost Potter mentioned the possibility that faculty could begin with the CCC portion of that online training to provisionally credential them for summer and fall, giving faculty a foundation for teaching in the online modality while they work to become fully credentialed through the formal coursework. We are eager begin planning PD for faculty and would like to formalize some language around provisional credentialing.

Also, in that conversation, concerns were voiced about a cultural shift toward more courses being offered online versus face-to-face. Provost Potter agreed that this is a trend that we would possibly see in the fall and moving forward. In light of this, faculty have raised further concerns. In an email sent to Provost Potter on March 30th, two simple questions were asked:

- 1. Is CCC planning to offer summer courses remotely (like we are currently doing for spring) with the faculty that have already been assigned to those courses or are they moving online (fully asynchronous classes housed at Harold Washington's Online Learning)?**
- 2. If the bulk of summer coursework will be offered online through Harold Washington, are the faculty currently scheduled to teach those courses still teaching them for their individual colleges, or will the vast majority of the courses belong to Harold Washington (save a few courses here and there that Harold Washington isn't approved to offer)?**

To date, we have not received a response to those inquiries whatsoever.

There is great concern that if the courses move to a fully online modality, that this could mean that, essentially, every college except Harold Washington would not be offering courses this summer, and depending on how Covid 19 infections progress, possibly Fall. If we are seeing that this shift and credit hour production doesn't revert to the colleges, this could irreparably damage enrollment at our individual colleges and eventually lead to closures or further consolidations.

As we saw with Reinvention, when students were told that they could do their basic coursework at their home colleges but would have to do specific work at another college, two things happened: 1) Students went fully to the college that could provide everything that they needed, resulting in plummeting enrollments at their home colleges, and 2) Students left CCC

altogether. In both cases, the reduction of course offerings at individual colleges lead to students to leaving either their home college or our system of colleges and not returning. If students are directed--even virtually--to one college, the chances of them returning to their home college are questionable. This is potentially disastrous for many of our colleges, particularly those that are still suffering the loss of programs and students that Reinvention imposed upon them. Decisions like these not only disrupt our students' sense of stability and hinders their momentum, it also removes the ability of a college to fully serve its community.

Chancellor Salgado recently publicly praised CCC on WBEZ for moving from offering 10% of our course offerings online to 95%. This work didn't happen at the District Office, nor was it led by the Online Learning team at Harold Washington; it was the heavy lifting of individual faculty across the district in collaboration with each other and with their respective local administrations with support from the District. Faculty have been asking for the opportunity to teach online coursework at each of the colleges and have arbitrarily been told that the individual college cannot offer their own courses online. Though what we are currently doing is not desirable nor perfect, it shows that the individual colleges have the capacity to oversee their distance learning when they have the license to do so and the infrastructure support from District. Moving online coursework to the colleges would bring a college's offerings in alignment with the philosophical beliefs held by the respective academic departments at each college. This shift would also be in alignment with our individual accreditation guidelines which stipulate that:

- The institution's plans for developing, sustaining and, if appropriate, expanding on-line learning offerings are integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes.
- On-line learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.
- Curricula for the institution's on-line learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.
- The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its on-line learning offerings, including the extent to which the on-line learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals. (HLC, "Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)")

We are confident that with support from district, our respective colleges can build upon the work we are currently doing and look to the models developed at Harold Washington to offer our students high-quality online options through the individual colleges that are commensurate with the vision and standards of each college. A student at one of our colleges could truly be a full student of that college--even in the online space--and have seamless access to the resources and faculty of their college.

We look forward to building upon the promise of what this unfortunate moment has revealed. Faculty would like to reiterate their commitment to being active and thoughtful participants in crucial decision making of our colleges through the shared governance that both our Chancellor and Provost espouse.

Respectfully,

Prof. Keith Sprewer, upcoming FC4 President after May 2020 (*added by Dr. Tápanes-Inojosa*)

Faculty Council of The City Colleges of Chicago