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**ADOPTED—BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NO. 508**

**NOVEMBER 2, 2023**

**Faculty Council Report**

**Thursday, November 2nd, 2023**

*Pre-address Remarks:*

Reiterating a past sentiment, thank you to the Board and Harold Washington College for again supporting health equity in allowing me to present remotely as I navigate injury, ability, and the privilege of aging. Again, thank you to the all-star team that made these remote logistics possible: Juan Ortega, Greg Williams, Emma Mims, Bonnie Phillips, and Steve Saba. I also want to give a shout-out to the board meeting’s safety professionals James Anderson, Ronnie Burge, Milton Owens, and Bernessa Tate.

The following is an approximately 9-minute-long report.

*FC4 President’s Address at CCC Board of Trustees Meeting:*

Chairperson Massey, Board of Trustees, Chancellor Salgado, Provost Potter, Student Trustee Yehuda Goldbloom, officers of the district, faculty, staff, students, community members, and beyond, greetings.

To begin with, I want to thank the spectrum of stakeholders, from faculty to a variety of staff and administrators, that weighed in on the new book adoption policy (Section 10.37 Faculty Book Assignments). Earlier iterations of this newly proposed policy seemed unintentionally at odds with faculty’s academic freedom, especially in cases where there may be a change of instructor or a system error. The resolution to the policy’s language is a point of pride in regards to shared governance as well as CCC’s commitment to supporting academic freedom. Beyond that, this board report invites further conversations between faculty and administration regarding the following—both preventatively and responsively.

On Tuesday, October 24, 2023, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) published “Academic Freedom in Times of War.” In that statement, AAUP stressed the importance of institutions defending faculty members academic freedom rights, asserting that “At the heart of academic freedom is the protection of free and open inquiry, including expression of controversial ideas that some may consider wrong or offensive. Academic freedom not only protects faculty speech in teaching, research, and institutional decision-making; it also protects the right ‘to address the larger community with regard to any matter of social, political, economic, or other interest’ (AAUP, Protecting an Independent Faculty Voice: Academic Freedom after Garcetti v. Ceballos).” So far, City Colleges of Chicago has not imposed sanctions on faculty members for the latter part of said academic freedoms.

course, there is a lot of nuance in how to achieve that. Still, despite being very involved in the equity-based *Achieve the Dream* conferences and programming that visibilize the needs of some students, let us not invisibilize the needs of other students with our silence, which would in turn compound and achieve the nightmare for the latter students. Where are the special announcements and resources for our students, faculty, staff, and community overall impacted by anti-Arab, anti-muslim, and anti-semitism experiences? Where is the acknowledgment that a genocide is happening and may be creating barriers to students' learning and livelihood? Maybe we do not feel confident in how to show up in this time of unrest because, even in the best of times, we have not centered Middle Eastern experiences in our equity work. Shouldn't that change? We have not acknowledged that the first higher education iterations originated in the Middle East and we would not exist without them. Shouldn't that change? We have not acknowledged the systemic issue of nearly exclusively canonizing Whiteness in many disciplines whose first academics were of Middle Eastern descent, as is the case with the earliest named author Enheduanna—the first author in the discipline of literature. Shouldn't that change? One of our namesakes Malcolm X posited, "The only way we'll get freedom for ourselves is to identify ourselves with every oppressed people in the world." Let us not succumb to "over-there" logic, and remember that "over-here" wouldn't exist without the Middle Eastern people that we have a critical opportunity to center and support.

In isolated impromptu ways that we need more of, we have made space for collective learning, personalized grieving, and communal healing. For instance, FC4 facilitated a space for acknowledging the plurality of suffering and finding care and healing in community. Faculty and administrative representatives were present, but our titles did not matter as we shared, cried, and tried to envision life-affirming next steps together. How we embodied community together underlined a popular lesson from another one of our namesakes at CCC, Martin Luther King, Jr. He proclaimed, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." Given that quote and if luxocracy is defined as administrating by light, how will CCC express luxocracy to address the issues in focus? How will the administration express that we are capable of embracing all life? In terms of cross-cultural consciousness and given that this is National American Indian Heritage Month, what lessons can we learn and embody to support the eradication of all forms of settler-colonialist violence that impacts our students?

Circa 2016, faculty at Harold Washington College led an assessment regarding where students feel safest. In comparison to home, work, and a variety of other places, students significantly felt safest and a deep sense of belonging on campus. What did we do so well to produce those results? Are we still doing that? How can CCC's administration and beyond learn from that assessment to support empathy-centered and life-affirming efforts?

Although this report has some big asks of administration, we are ready to be part of the solution and not just the problematizing. We have resources from internal and external academic departments and other entities, which include but are not limited to consciousness acquisition and other educational resources. Besides academic departments, students have proven to be

empathy content experts in their own right. Have you recently had a conversation with students about what is happening in the world?

In my *Introduction to Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies* course yesterday, we watched a brief video about solving violence at the grassroots level and fostering various forms of mutual aid. When students were asked to share what they found most relevant in the video, one student said "I liked what they said about how 'not everybody has to do everything, but everybody has to do something.'" The other students thereafter clapped, poetry-snapped, and Zoom-hearted that comment, which became the most celebrated comment of the semester thus far. With our commitment to centering insights from student voice, we are reminding administration that you don't have to do everything, but you have to do something.

Penultimately, I want to acknowledge that today is the second day of a very important observance, Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). Aisling Moloney writes that many see this observance as a day to celebrate life as well as acknowledge that life is short and children should not fear death. Yet, life is not supposed to be as short as war is making it. For the CCC campuses with ofrendas (offering altars), we thank you and wonder what might be possible regarding integrating the Day of the Dead traditions in a culturally sensitive way that holds space for additionally remembering and honoring the lives lost in the Israel-Hamas war and its impact on our CCC community.

Lastly, I want to leave you with insights from the third and final CCC namesake of this report followed by memoiric insights from Chairman Massey. Harry S. Truman declared, "Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better." Truman was definitely on to something that underscores the urgency of addressing tragedy. Moreover, we are fortunate to have administrative leadership that are no strangers to addressing crises of national and global proportions. As our very own chairman, Dr. Walter E. Massey, wrote in his memoir themed around the 2008/2009 financial crisis, he "managed a crisis in a leadership role that was neither sought, nor expected, but rather, was thrust upon him" and that he hoped readers would "take away some lessons to apply to their own lives." Chairman Massey et al., our administrative requests may not be sought nor expected, and may seem thrust upon you. However, we would not ask if we did not think you were all capable of the skillful leadership that leads to life-affirming progress and an array of applicable life lessons. We are willing and ready to have care-centered conversations about next steps regarding all of the above when you are. Thank you for your time and attention to holding space for these remarks.

Respectfully submitted,

Viggy Alexandersson on behalf of the Faculty Council of City Colleges of Chicago