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COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT NO. 508
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Faculty Council Report

Pre-address Remarks:

Thank you to the Board and Harold Washington College for again supporting health equity in allowing me to present remotely as well as recognizing the importance of Suicide Prevention Month. I also want to thank the board for letting the public speakers go over the 3-minute timeframe. Adult education is very important to faculty council, and we appreciate the adult educators who participated in the faculty-based Hybrid Institute for Policy and Equity. Their projects ranged from “Cultural Equity and Co-Curricular Supports for Adult Education Completion & Retention” to “Acknowledging, Addressing, and Prioritizing Equitable Equity in Programming for the High School Stop Outs in the Community at Large as Priority in Adult Education.”

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. The following is an approximately 7-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:

If you navigate to City Colleges of Chicago’s undocumented student services page, you will read “Welcome! We are glad you’re here. This is a space where undocumented students and their families can find guidance and resources to pursue a college education, learn English, or earn a high school diploma—and feel supported as they do so.” The webpage later states that no one will ask you what your status is. Why? Because it is not our business. What is literally our business is supporting students having access to opportunities. While we have 50+ academic pathways, let us remind you that each CCC college’s mission is to support students academically, professionally, and personally. One way we achieve the latter is through what some might call pathways of dignity—which seems in contrast to where some court rulings fell short this week. At CCC, we make immigration a priority, and we are proud to do so. We are proud to assist undocumented students and their families—yes, their families as well because, as the goals-based saying goes, “if you want to go far, go together.” Therefore, faculty council would like to extend gratitude toward CCC’s shared commitment to meeting undocumented students and their families where they are at as well as helping them get to where they would like to go next regarding their aspirations.

To shift gears a bit, faculty council recognizes that CCC aims to meet all students where they are at and help them rise to the next level of their pursuits. However, we have noticed an opportunity for growth in this realm. Students who take classes at night should have the same

support as students who take classes during the day. What gave us pause as of late was learning that not all CCC colleges had libraries open each weekday during both the day and night. For instance, a faculty member teaching a research writing course on a Tuesday afternoon was shocked to find out that the campus library would be closed during their research course. This is an unfortunate equity issue for our students and creates obstacles to them achieving student learning outcomes in that course. Additionally, it further shines a light on the need for more full-time library faculty hires. Although there has been a discourse on possibly hiring a fully remote librarian who would only be responsible for the library chat, that does not resolve the gamut of equity issues that give us pause. Libraries and their respective library research computer labs need to be open to students in an equitable way. Moreover, libraries are considered by many to be symbols of equity, belonging, inquiry, and adventure—not just in serving our students but also in serving our communities. Our librarians have honored the association of libraries being safe spaces in a variety of ways—providing safe study spaces as well as, of course, the often much-needed unofficial nap and recharge spaces. CCC librarians have even created bookmarks for students that teach them healthy interpersonal skills (e.g., F.R.I.E.S. consent bookmarks: F - freely given, R - reversible, I - informed, E - enthusiastic, and S - specific). And, what about our students in the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice who benefit from the expertise of our librarians, some of whom also have prison librarianship experience—content experts of academic reentry bridges from one library-based space to another? To address the issue of libraries being closed at inequitable times, several colleges are working towards solutions. One solution proposed is to open libraries unstaffed. This is one of several solutions that are just to the left of the point. We need our libraries not only opened around the clock but staffed too.

Speaking of equity—specifically health equity—around the clock, we would like to thank Vice Chancellor David Anthony for being so diligent about communications with the Chicago Department of Public Health. As COVID cases are on the rise again, our faculty council health and safety task force emailed Vice Chancellor Anthony well after 5 p.m. earlier this week. By the following morning, we were provided clear next steps in addition to CCC continuing to encourage all students, faculty, and staff to be vaccinated and boosted. We look forward to the CCC Communication team sending out dates and locations of where to get updated COVID boosters and flu shots in the near future.

To end on a positive note of great pride, we are excited that today marks the first day of National Hispanic Heritage Month and that this week is National Hispanic-Serving Institute Week. Higher education institutions are uniquely positioned to organize a plethora of events that reflect on and celebrate past, present, and future endeavors of people of Hispanic heritage. Thank you to the faculty, staff, and students who are proud to be on panels to share their heritage as well as how they navigated obstacles on their journeys to success. Thank you to industry leaders who are joining us as guest lecturers as well as opening doors to professional opportunities for our students. Moreover, there does seem to be at least one common thread between the panels, guest lectures, and cultural showcases. They all seem to value that you should lift others up as you rise.

Thank you to the board of trustees for hiring award-winning President Daniel Lopez, who as he stated on Harold Washington College's social media page earlier this week, "Like so many Harold Washington College students, [he is] an immigrant, a Chicago Public Schools graduate, first-generation and former undocumented student." It is serendipitous that President Lopez leads Harold Washington College given that its namesake was key in helping eradicate much of the political, economic, and social gatekeeping that occurred against those of Hispanic heritage in Chicago—a commitment to building community and cross-solidarity. Former Mayor Harold Washington was known as the People's Mayor in part because he lifted others up as he rose. Present day, President Lopez is one of many exemplary embodiments of that sentiment—of course including award-winning and community-building Chancellor Juan Salgado as well. We thank our CCC community for recognizing and celebrating those of Hispanic Heritage, especially those who embody said sentiment. We also thank those of you who will be celebrating with us at the Mexican Independence Day Parade tomorrow. As the parade theme articulates: "Tu Mexico, Tu Chicago." In turn, my closing remark is an extension of that: "Tu Mexico, Tu Chicago[, Tu City Colleges]."

Respectfully submitted,

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