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# Wilbur Wright College

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FCCCC President's Address  
CCC Board of Trustee's Meeting  
Thursday, March 4, 2004

Chairman Tyree, Chancellor Watson, members of the Board, Officers of the District, faculty, staff and all others present, Good morning!

Both Committee A and the Faculty Council have been busy with curriculum approvals and larger issues concerning control over curriculum and prerequisites. First, let me outline the curriculum approvals. The committees approved a new Associate of Arts in Teaching for Secondary Math; for this degree we also approved three new courses. We anticipate reviewing and approving similar AATs for Secondary Science and Special Education. These degrees encourage minority students to enter fields in which they are underrepresented and desperately needed and reflect a push by the state to rectify this absence. We also approved an Associate in Fine Arts in Studio Art and an AFA in Art Education. In conjunction with those degrees, we approved changes to 28 200-level studio art courses, in order to rationalize the system for transfer. Finally, the committees approved prerequisite changes to two criminal justice courses.

These approvals reflect the collaboration of these departments across the district. And, although we have some difficulty determining this, we now require that new curriculum must be shared and discussed by all faculty who may be involved in the curriculum changes. This should help alleviate some problems in the future.

The primary focus of Faculty Council, however, was a discussion with Vice Chancellor Deidra Lewis about the Quality Enhancement Review Process. In previous meetings, faculty voiced concerns about this process and the intentions of the District Office with this initiative. Vice Chancellor Lewis was very candid in her remarks to the Faculty Council, and, although we still have a number of skeptics on the committee, her answers to our probing questions, I think, will contribute to the greater dialogue between faculty and administration. We thank Deidra Lewis for coming to our meeting, and we hope that we can continue this collaborative process.

There are a number of other issues that are beginning to bubble to the surface: tenure policy, faculty qualifications, and the tension between district wide initiatives and the academic autonomy of individual colleges. I just want now to address a couple of points.

First, tenure policy. Faculty are concerned about apparent inequities across the system with regard to the granting of tenure and renewal and the quality and quantity of work associated with determining tenure. We have already begun a discussion with Deidra Lewis about some of these issues, in particular, the need to sustain rigor without compromising the push for a diversified and qualified faculty. Tenure is not about now; it's about the future, and, as such, it is a very serious business and will be the subject of further discussion.

Second, qualified faculty. What does this mean? I think that we need to think of qualifications in an elastic and flexible way. For example, by the time an individual has completed a PhD, qualifications are no longer determined by course work but through research, publications and presentations. Alternatively, qualifications may be assessed through outside accrediting agencies, such as through taking the Bar exam or the Nursing boards. Finally, how do we assess qualifications in newer fields such as computer graphics without imposing outdated judgments on innovative fields? Let me be clear: no faculty wants unqualified faculty to be teaching, but assessing qualifications requires more than counting credit hours and degrees and there is some concern about the rigidity in this regard.

Third, district wide initiatives versus academic autonomy of the individual colleges. This issue has surfaced in a variety of areas, such as the Math 112 fight, the humanities discussion and now nursing prerequisites. The District has framed this conflict as one about standards, that we are doing a disservice to our students if we don't require certain concomitant skills for college-level courses or degrees. Again, I would reiterate that there is not one faculty member who wants his students to fail because they do not have the requisite skills to complete the course. But the faculty is in the trenches, not the administrators and not District Office; we see our students; we grade the papers and assess the exams. And decisions about curriculum, prerequisites, and standards that are imposed on the faculty do not work and will not work if they come from without. Changes in curriculum must come from the faculty, even if the process is slower and not standardized across the district. This issue is another that will not go away.

That concludes my report.

Respectfully submitted,



Polly Hoover  
FCCCC President