

## **Board of Trustees Report**

July 19, 2016

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In this, my first report to the Board, I looked for a theme. If I were in my classroom I would probably work in a reference to pop culture, but this doesn't seem like a "Pokemon Go" kind of crowd. So I turned instead to my discipline of Communication Studies, and I cut my academic teeth on Aristotle. He said something that has stuck with me since the first time I read it. He said, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

I'm exceedingly proud to represent the Academic Senate of the CSU, whose abiding focus is academic excellence. That is our habit. It goes beyond any specific act we do, but our habit is to pass resolutions. We repeatedly speak in the form of resolutions—that's who we are, how we roll. Our resolutions promote academic excellence, so it is our habit to express our well-considered point of view and hope that our habits of mind are accepted by Chancellor White and others in spirit of shared governance.

Unfortunately, we haven't heard a response to our most recent habitual communication: our resolutions offered two months ago have not yet received a response. Former Chair Filling summarized them for you at your last meeting, so I'll only touch on them briefly here. The ones of the most interest to you would be our resolutions on evaluation of online teaching, more funding for research, scholarship & creative activities, response to a coded memorandum from the Chancellor's Office on C-grades, and a call for a Center for the Advancement of Instruction in Mathematics. I look forward to hearing the reactions to those resolutions, and hopefully late responses won't become a habit.

One thing I hope does become a habit is the true shared governance that has characterized the Quantitative Reasoning Task Force. That Task Force came about as a result of a resolution from the statewide Senate and it's been chaired by Drs. Filling and Stevenson and drafted by members of ASCSU. They are on their thirtieth draft of that report, and it's been very capably staffed by the Chancellor's Office. Their meetings

have concluded, and the outcome is that they have reached agreement on four recommendations: 1) the need for an updated definition of quantitative reasoning, 2) the need to revise quantitative reasoning requirements in the CSU, 3) the need to adopt policies that advance quantitative reasoning skills, and 4) the need to create a CSU Center for Math Instruction. The two chairs of the Task Force and I met last week with Executive Vice Chancellor Blanchard and several others regarding next steps for the Quantitative Reasoning Task Force's efforts. The final draft of report will be completed in the next couple of weeks, and the Senate will be discussing it in September, while the CSU Math Council will take it up in October. The overall purpose of the Task Force was to promote excellence in math education, and it may become a habit this year and future years to talk to you about what the Task Force has recommended. You will hear more from me in September on this topic.

Speaking of task forces, the Ethnic Studies Task Force report was released last week, and I look forward to the conversations the Report will inspire. Personally, I hope the conversations explore the ways in which curricula & decision making can prepare our students for a globalized world. As national, racial and ethnic borders become more permeable, as boundaries between peoples become less fixed and more fluid, I hope the conversations resulting from this Task Force's work can transcend physical, virtual and conceptual boundaries. Now more than ever we have a moral obligation as stewards of public education to advance the public good, and Ethnic Studies programs and faculty are central to that obligation. As Chancellor White said in his letter accompanying the release of the Task Force report, "The issues it addresses are central to how the CSU fulfills a portion of its mission, inasmuch as we are committed to preparing students for a global, multi-cultural society." To paraphrase then, Ethnic Studies is mission-critical. Hopefully the Task Force report will advance that mission.

Two other things Chancellor White mentioned in his letter that accompanied the Task Force report also caught my attention. One is his reference to the Academic Conference related to inclusive excellence, and I'm pleased to tell you that we've been working on conference planning. It will take place on Feb 9-10, 2017, at the Maritime Academy. Please save the dates, Board members as well as presidents are clearly invited, and I hope you'll be able to attend. We're working on getting speakers under contract and finalizing other details, but I can tell you that the theme of the conference is closing the achievement gap. This theme comports well with the notion of inclusive excellence, and hopefully the conference will move us further toward our "moon shot", as discussed by Chancellor White in his State of the CSU address.

The second thing in Chancellor White's letter that caught my attention was his reference to speaking with presidents about increasing tenure density and faculty diversity. In November of last year ASCSU spoke in the form of a resolution, asking for a joint task force on tenure density, and we're still waiting for that to happen. A month ago I asked whether the group could be convened, then I contacted the faculty and identified two dates that they were available to meet in August, a little less than a month from now. The responses I've received have not been definitive, to say the least. So we need to move the needle on that important work, and I look forward to partnering with the Chancellor & Vice Chancellors toward that end, in true shared governance style.

Let's make shared governance a habit.