

Board of Trustees Report
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Happy New Year! In considering this New Year, I started thinking about how many people I'd heard express the point of view that they couldn't wait for 2017, because 2016 had been so depressing.

One of the reasons is that 2016 saw a lot of celebrity deaths. In fact, it seemed like every week there was an announcement that another beloved actor, musician, or other famous person had died. It got so bad that there was a meme about it: an image of Gene Wilder resplendent in his Willy Wonka costume with the caption, "Oh, so Gene Wilder passed away? Please tell me how 2016 isn't the worst year ever."

But here's the real litmus test showing how people were affected by celebrity deaths last year: you can visit a Go Fund Me web page called "Help protect Betty White from 2016." If you do, you'll find that 834 people contributed over \$9,200 in one month to make sure she was safe from 2016! All proceeds went to a small theater in South Carolina, but I think it demonstrates the point that the number of illustrious people who died was remarkable, even to the point of mockery.

But what can we take from this? How can we look at this remarkable phenomenon and turn it positive? How can we pay tribute to those who are no longer with us, and celebrate their lives? I'm going to do so by offering an homage to them, through this report about the Senate's meetings in January.

Of course, I have to start by featuring a man I knew "IRL", or "in real life," a man many of us long-timers in the CSU knew, a man who Chancellor White acknowledged so gracefully during the recent Board of Trustees meeting: Chancellor Emeritus Charles B. Reed, affectionately known as Charlie. Charlie was known for his blunt, straightforward manner, such as when he said, "If you're poor and smart, you have a 15 percent chance of going to college in this country. If you're rich and stupid, you have an 85 percent chance of going to college in this country, and that needs to change." Charlie was one of a kind! In terms of Academic Senate CSU (ASCSU) action, I'm pleased to

announce that the Senate decided to make a contribution to the Charles B. Reed scholarship fund for CSU students.

I turn my attention now to other ASCSU actions, those taking the form of resolutions passed at our January meeting. The first one I'm going to feature spurred quite a bit of reasoned debate punctuated with passion. The discussion featured pragmatism as well as idealism. In the end, I think John Glenn's words might help me frame the Senate's action. He said, "If there is one thing I've learned in my years on this planet, it's that the happiest and most fulfilled people I've known are those who have devoted themselves to something bigger and more profound than merely their own self-interest."

I'm proud to say that faculty are unequivocally devoted to something bigger and more profound than their own interests, and that is student's interests. That's why the ASCSU voted in AS-3282-16 to join the students and others in opposition to the currently proposed tuition increase. The resolution further urges the California Legislature to provide adequate funding to the CSU, and pledges to continue working with partners across the CSU system on budget advocacy. This position on a tuition increase was not arrived at in a cavalier, knee-jerk manner, nor was it unanimous. But I believe the extensive debate, centering on things bigger and more profound than ourselves, would have impressed John Glenn.

The next resolution I want to discuss is AS-3281-17, and it passed unanimously. Arnold Palmer offers some sage advice that can help me explain it to you. He said, "Establish a system you have confidence in and rely on it when you get into tough situations." We have a system of hiring tenure track faculty, and we are undoubtedly in a tough situation in terms of state funding, graduation rates, the achievement gap, and so on. Unfortunately, in tough budget times, rather than relying on the hiring system we have confidence in, the practice has been to hire non-tenure track faculty instead. For instance, in 2009 tenure density was at 66%; by 2015 it had fallen to 55%, and on some campuses it's below 40%.

As you may remember, Chancellor White established a Tenure Density Task Force last semester. He asked them to give him recommendations by March 1, 2017, and AS-3281-17 offers advice to that Task Force before their work is done. We're advising them to recommend medium- and long-range targets for tenure density for the system, and to develop multi-year plans to improve the situation. We're also asking the Chancellor's Office to collect data on metrics related to tenure-track faculty capacity. We look forward to seeing the Task Force's report, and in particular Chancellor White's response

to it. I like to think he has confidence in the tenure system and can rely on tenure track faculty in tough situations.

The next resolution has to do with a topic I've mentioned in both of my prior newsletter articles, and here I'll turn to George Michael for framing: "It's important to me that I should be free to express myself."

Can you guess what AS-3276-16 is about? That's right, academic freedom! In this resolution we restate our unwavering and unanimous commitment to the principles of academic freedom and freedom of inquiry. We also offer our own draft policy and urge the CSU to adopt it as official system policy. We recognize that CFA and the CSU have to discuss the matter jointly, but we hope this resolution can move matters along.

We also passed a resolution that Muhammad Ali can help me explain. He said, "The service you do for others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth." Well, Executive Vice Chancellor Blanchard paid his rent this past summer, and AS-3274-16 unanimously commends him for it. That's because he provided funding for the Institute for Teaching and Learning to host a CSU-wide Summer Institute in 2016. As the resolution notes, it was quite successful, providing service to folks across the system. But this kind of service does cost money, so our resolution also urges annual and adequate funding for future summer institutes. We wouldn't want Dr. Blanchard to get behind on his rent!

I almost hate to transition from the sublime imagery of Muhammad Ali to the target of our next resolution, but I must. Janet Reno said, "Donald Trump will never be president in my lifetime." Sadly, this was true: she died on November 7, and the election took place the next day. No matter whether one supports our new President or not, there is no disputing that he has the power to influence the CSU. One means of doing so is presidential action related to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program. The Senate is on record in AS-3279-17 as unanimously supporting a letter of opposition sent jointly by Chancellor White, Chancellor-Designate Oakley, and President Napolitano. Another means of influence is through Trump's most recent executive order on immigration, and I am extremely gratified that the Senate was included in the joint statement of opposition issued at the end of January. We must continue to stand for the free exchange of ideas globally, and for justice. Janet Reno would insist on it.

The next resolution offers a reaction to another means of presidential action that affects the CSU: appointment of the US Secretary of Education. The Senate met while Betsy DeVos's committee confirmation hearings were taking place, and AS-3280-17 allowed

us to express our opposition to naming her to this cabinet position. Even though our resolution didn't help block the nomination, the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee, helps me explain why I'm still glad our Senate acted. She said, "Real courage is when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what." The Senate didn't just pass up the opportunity to take a position even though some thought it might be too late or wouldn't do any good. Yes, maybe we were licked before we began, but we did it anyway, and we saw it through. We may need to keep Harper Lee's words in mind for the next few years.

Prince is another source who can inspire us. He said, "Compassion is an action word with no boundaries." Isn't that a wonderful sentiment? I thought it fit well to explain AS-3277-16, which urges the CSU to be compassionate about lactation resources for faculty, staff, administrators, and students. The resolution asks campuses to review existing policies on lactation resources, or develop them if they don't exist. We think a systemwide policy on the number of lactation stations deserves consideration, as well as where they're located, how they're equipped, and how information about them is shared.

So, John Glenn, Arnold Palmer, George Michael, Muhammad Ali, Janet Reno, Harper Lee and Prince have all helped me explain the resolutions passed by the Senate in January, but that wasn't the end of our work. As Carrie Fisher said, "There is no point at which you can say, well I'm successful now, I might as well take a nap." Let me assure you, the Senate is not napping. We have several issues we began discussing in January to which we will return during our March meetings. Those first reading resolutions were on job security for contingent faculty, librarians, coaches and counselors; ending the Entry Level Math exemption if a student completes GE Area B4; saving California's Master Plan through tax reform; support for graduate education; and support for DACA students. My next newsletter article will follow up on these matters.

Finally, there are two other things the Senate is focused on, and Florence Henderson helps me frame the first one. Her character Mrs. Brady said, "No problem was ever solved by crawling into a hole." I think I can safely say that the Senate is not crawling into a hole when it comes to examining general education. As a matter of fact, the Executive Committee finalized the details for getting under way with the GE Task Force I've mentioned in a prior article, and the call for membership has been distributed. Hopefully the group will be able to convene soon.

Another thing the Senate is focused on is moving forward with the recommendations made by the Quantitative Reasoning Task Force. I think David Bowie's words

characterize those efforts. He said, “If you feel safe in the area you’re working in, you’re not working in the right area. Always go a little further into the water than you feel you’re capable of being in. Go a little bit out of your depth. And when you don’t feel that your feet are quite touching the bottom, you’re just about in the right place to do something exciting.”

There are some exciting ideas contained in those recommendations on quantitative reasoning, and the deadline for feedback by campuses and others has come and gone. So, everyone has been treading water for a little while, waiting for that feedback. The Senate is worried, though, because the Chancellor’s Office is not open to our suggestion on how to proceed with advising them on implementation of the recommendations. We favor the model used in envisioning the Graduation Initiative, where an advisory group put the Chancellor’s Office in David Bowie’s right place to do something exciting. We think our suggestion would move the discussion along more quickly, and importantly, it would include student voices where they are not included now. All in all, we look forward to helping advance the conversations about quantitative reasoning—c’mon in, the water’s great!

I want to leave you with one last thought as I conclude this article. At the Board of Trustees meeting a very wise and articulate student stood at the microphone and argued against a tuition increase. His name is Patrick Dorsey, and he is the ASI President at Sacramento State. He made the point that students want to tell their stories, and clearly we should listen. I think maybe he was channeling actor Alan Rickman, who said this: “And it’s a human need to be told stories. The more we’re governed by idiots and have no control over our destinies, the more we need to tell stories to each other about who we are, why we are, where we come from, and what might be possible.”

Let’s tell the CSU story. Let’s tell everyone who will listen who we are, why we are, where we came from, and what might be possible. Let’s tell others, and let’s tell ourselves. Let’s listen to Patrick, and to student Trustees Maggie, and Jorge, and to all of the other students who are brave enough to tell their story to us. Let’s let their stories guide us in the days ahead.