



BERKELEY STAFF ASSEMBLY

Governing Council Meeting Notes

Thursday, September 22, 2011, 12:10 to 1:00 PM

706 Barrows Hall

Members Present: Karen Denton, Rochelle Niccolls, Kate Benn, Greg Ryan, Sharon Miller, Michael Combs, Kathy Mendonca, Camille Fernandez, Tom Schnetlage, Tyson Nagler, Maty Corral-Avila

Guest Attendee: Steve Garber (System-wide CUCSA), Penny Ismas

Guest Speakers: CNR Dean Keith Gilles & MPS Dean Mark Richards

The Deans came to speak with the GC about how to best carry on a dialogue on campus about the current crisis in public Universities. The Deans are aware that the budget cuts will cause unease. The cuts approach 40% over the last 2 years.

There are 20 deans on this campus. All of them are getting together with various constituencies across campus and speaking plainly with them about how they feel regarding the current crisis. The discussions taking place are about financial aid, tuition and a host of other topics. Questions that are being asked include: What is happening with financial aid? What decisions are being made?

Dean Mark Richards made it clear that the deans do not want to be in the business of messaging. What the Dean's committee proposes is to convene 4 forums on the "crisis" topic. These will be campus events open to staff, faculty and students where they can learn more about what is being done by leadership, and what can be expected down the road. The first forum is scheduled for **October 25th, 2011**.

There is an excellence side to this crisis. We need to figure out how to maintain access to excellence in education as well as affordability of that education. Publicly supported universities are under threat. The Dean's day jobs are to manage the crisis. The Dean's committee wants to encourage respectful dialogue. The Deans are trying to diffuse the situation we are all faced with. Often Deans can say things that the Chancellor's office can't. In general they are out and about throughout the campus to encourage Instructive Dialogue instead of Destructive Dialogue.

Deans discussed how we are not in a usual state on campus right now and that we are very much in a transition period. We must all consider where we are going as a campus, and what might be the expectations. The message is that the “Sky is not falling”, and that the Deans are trying to put Berkeley’s problems in perspective. All of the proposed forums should have one focal point.

Deans want to know what information do we as staff representatives want, and are we actually getting it?

GC Members Questions and Comments:

A GC member commented that we are missing “Esprit de Corps” among staff.

“What will the BSA of the future look like?” asked one GC member. The hope is that Staff of the future will have a political identity. We need to challenge our legislators at the campaign level to address the needs of higher education and hold them accountable.

We are a land grant university. Why are we defunding the University of California? Dean Richards answered that it is because we are not a threat to Sacramento.

We are losing community. What is needed is a way for staff to be connected that would give them a reason to become involved.

There hasn’t been a lot of push on this campus to have upward communication. We are receiving communications from the top down. There is much more focus on top down communication including your Dean’s forum which is a few Deans coming together to speak with a larger audience. We need more of a connection with less emphasis on top down communication.

The meeting ended with our guest speakers commenting that it would be very valuable for the staff assembly to weigh-in on some of the very important decisions that are being made on campus at this time. There is still a lot of discussion that needs to take place, and a lot of decisions still to be made. They are reaching out to the different campus constituencies to encourage dialogue and feed-back.

Meeting adjourned.