

DAS President's Report to the PCCD Board of Trustees for October 11, 2011

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Thank you Mr. President. Good evening trustees, chancellor, district administrative center staff, college presidents, colleagues and members of the public.

Tonight you've received a report from FCMAT (Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team) that provides "an assessment of current and past practices that have or may have caused an imminent threat to the fiscal integrity of the District." (Source: PCCD Board Agenda for 10/11/11, Item 7)

As you probably know, this assessment is directly relevant to recommendation #5 in the June 30, 2011 letter from the ACCJC advising us of the Commission's action to remove the colleges from probation and issue a warning.

Recommendation #5 is primarily directed to the colleges and our response to this section of the March 15, 2012 report should be driven by how the colleges address this concern, that being: "Specifically, the District/Colleges do not demonstrate the fiscal capacity to adequately support quality student learning programs and services. Therefore, in order to meet Standards and Eligibility Requirements, the District/Colleges must evaluate the impact of financial decisions on the educational quality and implement actions to resolve any deficiencies."

Because the FCMAT report was just delivered for board approval tonight, we have not had any time to assess those findings in light of the preceding ACCJC recommendation. Without adequate knowledge of its contents, it would be purely speculative for me to comment on most of what it states. Suffice it to say for now...

It is certainly true that one reason for the ongoing adjustments in our colleges FTES targets, and receipt of the state allocation that relies on meeting them, is due to ongoing state-mandated "workload reductions." It is also true that Peralta has made (or avoided making) several financial decisions related to OPEB investments, fiduciary oversight, and employee benefit plans over the past 2-5 years that have resulted in an ongoing need for budgetary accommodations to enable the necessary course corrections. In the Peralta colleges' world, those accommodations have resulted in fewer course sections and services to students.

Rather than pointing solely to the state's reoccurring allocation adjustments, starting now, it is appropriate and helpful to include an honest reflection of the impact of those board decisions in all official and unofficial messages to students and the larger public that attempt to explain why we are cutting and/or consolidating classes, programs and services.

Probably most, if not all, California community colleges are having experiences similar to ours, however, I think it's safe to say that not all of the community colleges are feeling the pain as much as we are, primarily because they do NOT have the same set of precursor conditions that are driving our general fund expenditures. I include in those conditions having four separate college structures within a 7 mile radius for a local population of fewer than 1 million residents with surrounding areas that also have 1, 2, or 3 colleges with comparable programs.

Changing focus now, and in closing, I wish to express my personal and professional appreciation to those four faculty colleagues who have accepted the joint DAS/PFT presidents' nomination to serve on the Chancellor search committee. On all our behalf, Drs. Bielanski and Goldstein and Professors Black and Popal will be engaged in a difficult and challenging task that will be time-consuming and demanding. We believe they are well suited to the task and have confidence that they will discharge their duties well.

That concludes my report for tonight. Thank you for receiving it.