

General Faculty Meeting
May 5, 2017
California State University, Bakersfield

Presenters: D. Boschini/Chair Academic Senate, and B. Hartsell/Vice Chair Academic Senate

I. Announcements

The Academic Senate and ASI President called an emergency meeting with President Mitchell about Wednesday night's announcement of the addition of ticketing to the undergraduate commencement ceremony. The untimely restriction of five ticketed guests per student has a negative impact on students and their families, faculty, and staff when they had made plans based on earlier arrangements. Students were very responsive using social media. There was a report on the five o'clock news, and an article in the [Bakersfield Californian](#). The emergency meeting took place this morning.

There are still layers of discussions, but we expect an announcement later today. The solution that the faculty and student representatives advocated for was multiple ceremonies, because ticketing was not viewed as an acceptable strategy to manage the anticipated attendance. They have 18,000 RSVPs, and if you add faculty and guests, potentially it's 20,000 people (although we know there will be people who can't come). The numbers became evident as the students registered for Commencement in the last days before the deadline. When students learned that their families were going to watch the ceremony on a big screen—not in person—it was very disappointing, and too late to change their travel plans. ASI Executive members gave President Mitchell good counsel on what's important to students is to:

- Walk across the stage,
- To have their names called to be individually recognized, and
- To hear their entire group cheer for them in real-time and in person.

Alex Dominguez and Oscar Alvarez from ASI communicated that very well.

It's still a good idea to walk/bike/carpool to event as there will not be enough parking. The graduate hooding ceremony is still scheduled for 6 pm May 18; however, the printed announcements in the Bookstore still say 4 pm. This needs to be clarified. There was a lack of faculty involvement on Commencement Planning again this year, and this will be addressed for next year.

President Mitchell schedule to hold Budget Meeting May 11, 3pm at BDC. Reminder forthcoming. Purpose: faculty-oriented budget discussion about what occurred, role of faculty in budget process going forward, and the documentation we need to see available. We asked for faculty-focused budget meeting last fall. What took place earlier was not focused on instruction and did not meet our needs. We are clear that we want meeting between President and faculty about the investment in instruction and where we're going. Notes from Budget Forum to be posted on website.

II. Faculty Survey 2017 Results.

There was a similar survey in the fall. This Spring survey asked faculty members how their perception of those issues has changed. There are some limitations that should be noted in interpreting the data from this survey. Nonetheless, we can see some key issues:

Budget Transparency is bigger concern, and class size. Has anyone found that a semester is less work? Morale is a big issue. The issue over graduation and budget are examples of the concern over lack of

faculty's voice in governance. Workload is biggest issue. Faculty Affairs tried to address workload two years ago to discover the University had no reliable or consistent data on Assigned Time. The Administration asserted the only effective way to address workload was through Assigned Time. It's taken two years to get to the point to say we need to be transparent about what we mean by Assigned Time and who gets it. The qualitative component is consistent with what you seen quantitatively, such as administrative overreach in some areas, and administrative under-support in other areas. We are still looking at comments made in survey. The floor was open to comments.

D. Boschini noted that the most frequent responses are made bold, (handout and slide #2). People are more concerned about class-size and workload now. We have completed the transition to semester so this is something that faculty needs to work on now. Individual comments are important because they may represent not just qualitative aspect but have large related quantitative impact.

Survey results in bold are where our most recent, and where our strongest concerns remain. We still struggle to communicate. We need to get back to place where we can email colleagues faculty-to-faculty. For example, the invitation for this General Faculty Meeting went to "clutter" for some faculty members. There are wasteful work-arounds we have to do when that is not the best use of our time. There's a meeting scheduled with F. Gorham/Associate V.P. of ITS and CIO, and this issue will be addressed so we can identify a solution.

The Senate Executive Committee is meeting with President Mitchell on May 9. The suggestion from the floor: request the budget info ahead of time, targeting items most significant to faculty. The goal is to start next year with plan and not spend a semester talking about it. Budget transparency requests have been made at every meeting we've had with him. The fact that we are still where we're at, invites additional concern.

The Academic Senate will post notes from this meeting and data contained in slide presentation on its website. The quality of comments in survey were so specific and we are carefully reviewing them.

A faculty member said our concerns over budget transparency and misallocation of funds are valid. LA Times article, [Cal State hires too many managers, needs better budget oversight, state audit finds](#) summarized findings of the [California State Auditor report](#). The report found proliferation of MPP/Administrative positions without justification and for the amount and percentage of our budget being spent on those positions. We have seen on this campus - more administrators requesting more forms – yet we don't have more faculty members to match the increase in students. The auditor's report is compelling. This is a good starting point in our budget conversation. The California State Auditor's report is long, but there is a good summary on the webpage. The website also contains the CSU response (T. White) and the State Auditor's response to Chancellor White's response.

At the same time the UC system is asking for more funds and raising tuition, auditors discovered that they have [\\$175 million in budget reserve](#), according to the [California State Auditor's Report](#). Budget transparency and appropriate use of funds are big issue right now in California's public higher education systems. More discussion regarding CSUB budget transparency later.

III. Semester Debriefing

Index cards were distributed with a request to write the three most difficult things about the semester system which you want the Senate to focus on. Ideally, we may ask the Department Chairs share this query with their departments and share those ideas upward, coming from those who couldn't be here today. We want a broad spectrum of ideas shared from all faculty including Part-Time about what was

different or difficult that we need to look at. We want to gather more data from wider faculty experience, and we will take what we've gathered here today. Comments from the floor ensued.

Students – we're getting increase in students: where do we put them, and how do we teach them all? It affects quality of education. We've talked about class sizes, and this is part of it. Our Student-Faculty Ratio (SFR) has gone way up; we are an outlier in the system and little discussion has happened recently on class size caps. If we don't even know what our ceiling is, how far are we going to go? Functionally speaking, Computer Science is impacted. No research space for Computer Science. No more office space, either. We're pushing students to take 15 units because we want them to graduate on time, so our numbers look better, but their GPAs are lower. GPAs are down because students are overloaded. There are prerequisite classes to get into Nursing but the classes are impacted; the number of classes and availability of times to get into major is narrow. This is a multi-layer issue, because now we're implementing two and four-year pledge (mandated). It prioritizes more students into priority registration, which creates more students with an advantage in registration, while other students are pushed farther down the list. What about our local students, of which a lot are remedial students? They won't get classes because they are automatically pushed down the list in this one category – being able to get the classes they need. The solution is more classes. There are conflicting values; what are our priorities? One week of enrollment already shows that two tiers of students have developed already.

What about student debriefing? There isn't a plan to address on campus level. Suggestion: have ASI survey students about what is different and difficult about semester term.

Faculty members shared their observations of a sharp drop in attendance, and it's not because students are adjusting to semester schedule. This semester is worse than the fall attendance.

The faculty feels administration's pressure to over-ride caps. Over-ridings caps matter to faculty. If the exceptions are put in place for one, then there isn't a reason why there can't be more. What are caps in PeopleSoft, how many students in Capstone, how many students in upper level writing-intensive course, how many students should be in those first-year seminar courses, and others? There's not a lot of agreement between schools, so these caps are set at department level. Sometimes at school level. We haven't had any campus-side discussion. If you have sixty students in an upper division writing-intensive class, what's to prevent us from raising it even more? If we don't know our ceiling, how can we make argument against it when we've gone above it, or when we're close and need to take action? We haven't really nailed anything down. Library hears that students are overwhelmed and they don't know where they should go to get help. Our student population needs extra help. Our SFR used to draw students from the all over the state, but we are becoming like the other schools. That doesn't work for our students. We're not going to have the success we're looking for because it's all connected. It's class size, student support, student/teacher ratio, etc. CSUB is unique and we don't want to be like everyone else, but we need to equip ourselves with the right arguments and present them to Administration to help them. We come from a system that needs to improve graduation rate, but each campus is unique with its own problems, where we need to present a solution from CSUB point of view.

In some courses, students are failing even though teaching methods and teacher availability didn't change. They're failing because they don't show up for class. Example: five students have missed four weeks of class. If participation/attendance points were applied, half the class would fail.

Last year, we worked hard getting caps set, going through the right process up to the Academic Senate to get class-size cap at 26 students. When faculty returned it was up to 30. The caps were changed during summer 2016 without faculty input, so when there was push-back, we were told we don't have enough people and let's see how it goes. What happened was students were failing. We've gone another semester, and more are failing. Who do I tell, "It's not working!"

When the GE program was first designed, class size caps were part of the model. One of the ways that fell away in the implementation – departments that offer upper division GE courses said “We don’t have money to offer more small sections of GE courses unless you increase our budget.” Back when the budget was being managed down to the chair level, some chairs made the decision we cannot participate in General Education if caps are going to be so low, because we’re going to have to cut our major courses. Apparently, that conversation never got resolved.

One of the worst things we can do, given our student population and their lives, is to force students to take 15 units per semester. The solution is not going to come from Academic Affairs. Part of complaint with Grad Initiative is that it’s top-down, from Chancellor’s Office.

Faculty is all for students’ success and graduating when they’ve met academic requirements to earn a quality education. We need grass-roots effort from faculty stating these are the things that need to be done. It’s not about graduating in four years; it’s to have success every day – showing up for class and engaging with good, challenging material. Top-down initiatives can be problematic, but if we’re going to do bottom-up, we need to be organized, through general faculty or through DLDC. Departments need to talk about it. What works for some students may not work for other majors.

Semester change has changed teaching techniques in some classes. For example, writing is one of the most important skills to teach, but faculty can’t assign as much writing because students are overwhelmed and the time it takes to grade has increased due to class size. There are concerns that the Graduation Initiative could result in decreasing quality of students’ education.

It may or may not be related to change to semesters, but there are continuing problems with getting work orders processed to have facilities fix our learning environments. Between labs and a classroom with leaking faucet and sink that hasn’t worked for weeks, it’s hard to run classes when things aren’t working. It took four weeks to get a light bulb changed in stairwell, which put us in violation of safety code, especially for those here at night. Facilities should have a back-up system so faculty doesn’t have to go to the Dean to get involved. However, it’s important to note that Facilities doesn’t have enough resources either.

More on workload: We have lecturers working 15 units without break who will be worn out and they need to instruct students who are worn out. That’s not a good match. Student Success was put together without much faculty input.

IV. Budget Transparency

The two issues we are dealing with: 1) Budget transparency and 2) Faculty participation in financial decision-making.

We need to be involved in the conversation from beginning. As learned individuals, if we understand what we need, we can understand the budget. The American Association of University Professors website recommends how faculty can be active in pursuing information. They offer resources. They share philosophy of higher academia role, “To participate meaningfully in decisions about institution’s direction and priorities. This principle applies equally to the basic financial decision-making”. Shared governance just doesn’t apply toward decisions; it applies to the resources behind the decisions. Meaningful participation requires complete information. Information should be available before decisions are made. Information is most useful when trends can be examined. They recommend a minimum of three years historical data.

We need to look at trends because it’s relevant to the conversations that we need to have. We need access to both budget working documents and actual financial reports on what was officially done. What you see on the [Budget central](#) page are links to pages with little useful data for shared governance.

The budget for 2016-2017 is one page with large categories; this doesn't give us information about how we're doing, what our priorities are, where we're shrinking, and where we're growing. None of that is available. Instruction isn't even on this year's report. This does not give us useful data for shared governance.

The Library hasn't received a hard copy of the budget since 2012. As a public institution, a hard-copy should be available in Library for anyone to see. It has always been a struggle to get a hard copy of the budget.

In terms of budget transparency and balanced resource allocation, CSUB is so much an outlier compared to other CSU campuses. [Humboldt State budget details](#) gives us perspective for what we're asking for. It offers several reports from different directions. As you're looking at each division, such as Administration FTE, total of salaries, Staff FTES and salaries amounts, and number of positions. So if you were concerned about MPP proliferation, you would be able to identify how many administrators they have now, how many staff, they are hiring more advisors, etc. This would be useful information. It's important to separate benefits from salary. We should be able to easily see whether increased spending for faculty is related to higher salaries, more faculty positions, or just the increased costs of benefits. Humboldt's budget site shows Academic Affairs; how money is allocated for every department.

There is mandate to have info available. We have made it clear that what we've wanted all along was detailed reports. We want information on what's being spent and why. And some CSU campuses explain their reasons why they spend as they do. There should be no part of the budget which is invisible. The volume of info on Humboldt is an example of what we'd like. Many CSUs also have a column for "% change," so that differences are immediately visible to readers.

D. Boschini showed table constructed from available CSUB info and there are blank cells because information not available (slide #19). We don't know the amount and percentage spent on instruction. Instruction has been left off, so we don't know trend. But if you look at the amount spent on instruction and divide it by FTES, you get a simple line graph (slide #20). It's clear that we are serving more students with fewer dollars. The crisis of the budget happened in 2010. Then, when the rest of the university budget was increasing, we were spending *less* on student instruction. Look at slide #19 for amounts contributing toward CSUB's ten-year trend. Focus on Net Operating Budget. (The Gross Operating Budget includes grants going directly to students, so should not be considered in our analysis.) The table shows we are recovering as a campus but not so for instruction. This is not a trend we want to continue. Salaries, donations, dorms...it's all important.

There is tentative 2017-2018 budget, yet the faculty hasn't been involved in the discussions. We are ending our school year and we haven't been involved. T. Davis has agreed to make presentations and answer questions with the Academic Senate and the Budget and Planning Committee. We need to convey to him the detail that we need to be able to see, and that he should not be concerned about information overload. What we are concerned about is lack of budget information and transparency. Sharing accurate information in a timely manner so that faculty can participate meaningfully in financial decision-making is the goal.

Links to key documents:

L.A. Times (4/20/17):

Cal State hires too many managers, needs better budget oversight, state audit finds

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-cal-state-audit-20170420-story.html>

Sacramento Bee (4/20/17):

California State University cannot justify administrative growth, manager raises, audit says

<http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article145776119.html>

California State Auditor (April 2017):

California State University: Stronger Oversight Is Needed for Hiring and Compensating Management Personnel and for Monitoring Campus Budgets

<https://www.auditor.ca.gov/reports/2016-122/summary.html>

L.A. Times (4/25/17):

University of California administration is paying excessive salaries and mishandling funds, state audit says

<http://www.latimes.com/politics/essential/la-pol-ca-essential-politics-updates-university-of-california-administration-1493137774-htmstory.html>

Sacramento Bee (4/25/17):

UC kept secret \$175 million reserve as it raised tuition, state audit finds

<http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article146660529.html>

California State Auditor (April 2017):

University of California Office of the President: It Failed to Disclose Tens of Millions in Surplus Funds and Its Budget Practices Are Misleading

<https://www.auditor.ca.gov/reports/2016-130/summary.html>