

July 25, 2014

Dear Trustees and Chancellor Serrano,

On behalf of the BC Academic Senate, I sent on July 9, 2014 correspondence to the KCCD BOT and Chancellor Serrano stating:

“The Bakersfield College faculty is requesting a tentative freeze on the district office's "position additions" identified in the approved tentative 2014-15 budget until transparent artifacts of evidence are produced highlighting public funds are being spent in the most effective way for the direct instruction of students.”

At the July 10, 2014 KCCD BOT meeting, I personally addressed the Board, reiterated the BC faculty request to freeze the hiring of the district office’s “position additions”. I also communicated concerns regarding the lack of public transparency with regard to the unequal treatment of the posting of employee contracts, as well as proper posting within the BOT meeting minutes of submitted written statements. Neither the Trustees nor the Chancellor addressed these issues at the meeting. The BC Academic Senate would like to know when and by whom will they receive a written response to their request and concerns. Meaningful and effective participation necessitates an open arena for dialogue followed with responses.

As you deliberate the BC Academic Senate’s request to freeze the hiring of the “position additions”, please consider these additional concerns related to the issue:

1. In KCCD’s “The Elements of Decision Making” it states, “Decisions affecting internal operations must be properly vetted to ensure an effective result.” (page 4) The BC Academic Senate does not believe these positions were properly vetted to ensure effective results. A review of the District Consultation Council minutes, as well as a review of the posting dates, and continued advertisement, of a few of these positions shows disregard for this initiative.
2. In KCCD’s “The Element of Decision Making” it states, “The members of the Council (District Consultation Council) ... should strive to ... accept diverse points of view while attempting to reach a consensus to best serve the District as a whole.” (page 9) The BC Academic Senate does not believe an effort was made to reach consensus. Request for formal job descriptions have not been vetted, none were initially provided and only a brief description was provided in the Chancellor's response to the BC Academic Senate's resolutions; the cost effectiveness of the positions requested have yet to be evaluated; and prioritization of these positions compared to those left unfilled at the college level have gone unanswered.
3. California State Education Code has consistently advocated that while the precise nature of the hiring process of administrators, faculty, and staff should be subject to local definition and control, each district should establish a hiring process which ensures:
 - a. Representatives of employee groups whose circumstances at work will be directly affected by the employment participate effectively in all appropriate phases of the process.

- b. Positions to be filled are normally identified through a well-defined, thoughtful process.
- c. Clear and complete job descriptions that include all job-related skills requirements are prepared for each position. (This would include employee group input.)

The BC Academic Senate believe they will be directly affected by these positions, both in the potential services to be offered and fiscally with the use of district wide reserves to fund the position additions. The faculty have not seen, nor participated in the development of, clear and complete job descriptions of many of these positions, and they were not identified in a well-defined process allowing faculty to participate effectively in all appropriate phases of this process.

The general consensus is a well defined process will include constituency groups utilizing data to drive decisions. As Bakersfield College, and hopefully the district office, emphasize data in planning and decision making, please note the following data recently released by KCCD Institutional Research and Reporting pertaining to the hiring of employees, and the providing of direct instruction to students, while balancing limited funding. Since the Great Recession of 2008 Bakersfield College has experienced a 12% reduction in total employees. In comparison, the district office has experienced a 4% increase in total employees. During this time span the ratio of students to employees at Bakersfield College increased 10.6% all the while the district office expanded. This is appalling. Is this truly the plan and priority of the Board? Additionally, the accepted tentative budget authorizing six (6) position additions, equal to 4.03 FTE, continues this disturbing trend of district office expansion at the expense of campus level student contact.

To bring excitement and power into the lives of students so diverse and needing so much, to serve the economy and society through its services of these students, requires a deep commitment from all who teach and learn, from those who administer and counsel and from those who fund and regulate. As the local governing agent, the Board of Trustees must be committed that the limited public funds are being spent in the most effective way for the direct instruction of students.

The Bakersfield College Academic Senate is committed to being an active participant in the meaningful and effective decision making process at the college, district office and district wide levels. Dialogue must be open, courageous and timely responded to. We look forward to your communication.

Regards,

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