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Open Letter to the Faculty

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OPEN LETTER TO THE FACULTY

Dear Colleagues,

I want to take the opportunity to write to faculty to explain the circumstances that led the Faculty Senate to take the very serious step of voting no confidence in the CSUSB President. The Faculty Senate approved this resolution on a 21-15 vote.

For those who have been following the Senate minutes and reports, this action will likely seem a logical step. I realize, however, that faculty are busy and some may not have time to follow what happens in the Senate, so this vote may have come as a surprise. Please be assured that the decision was not one we took lightly. This action is not personal: it is strictly about the administration's performance. We are animated by a sense of deep concern about the direction of our university.

There are two obvious questions. Why now? The campus climate survey a year ago highlighted serious questions about morale on campus and made a number of recommendations. We wanted to give the administration time to review them and respond affirmatively. We have seen little response.

What has the Faculty Senate done to try to influence the administration? We have requested meetings on numerous occasions. We have provided reports and data. We have raised questions in the Senate. Sadly, the President has not been listening. We concluded, with great reluctance, that we had no choice but to bring forward a motion of no confidence, as the only way to begin to remedy the problems CSUSB now faces.

While we acknowledge that President Morales has made some positive contributions to CSUSB, we have serious concerns in six substantive areas, as described in the accompanying pages.

- **Campus climate**
- **Erosion of shared governance**
- **Declining student success**
- **Insufficient numbers of faculty**
- **Inadequate enrollment management**
- **Irresponsible budgeting**

We take the letter from the Chancellor very seriously. We continue to invite the administration to share in a constructive dialog on how we can improve the campus for faculty, staff and students. If the faculty endorse the Senate's action, our plan is to develop several faculty working parties to consider recommendations on the issues we have identified related to student success, budget and faculty sufficiency, and enrollment management and student access. We will invite both supporters and opponents of the resolution to join together in common cause to craft recommendations that address these critical issues, as quickly as possible, so that the campus can move forward.

We respectfully ask our colleagues to join us in supporting the resolution. It is important for faculty to send a strong message to the administration, here and at the Chancellor's Office, that

we are deeply concerned about the current trajectory and future success of our university. It is also important that faculty affirm that your elected representatives do, indeed, represent the collective views of their constituents.

There has been a good deal of over-heated rhetoric on the subject of this vote. We are simply going to stick to the facts.

CAMPUS CLIMATE

The campus climate survey a year ago raised very serious issues. More than 750 faculty, staff, administrators, MPP's, and former employees responded to the survey. More than two-thirds of respondents stated that the morale had changed, with 89% saying that morale had gotten worse since they began working here. The survey also indicated concerns about intimidation, bullying, and favoritism among members of the CSUSB community. Although the President initially said he would implement the 20 recommendations in the report, after a year, there has been little progress. Efforts by senators to follow up on the recommendation for an anti-bullying policy have been ignored. The President has indicated mistrust of the survey data, requesting that the raw data be turned over to him (a request that has been conscientiously refused, as providing raw data would violate confidentiality and the terms of the CSUSB Institutional Review Board approval of the survey).

For the campus climate survey committee reports, presentations, and one-year progress report, please see:

- [Campus Climate Survey 2016 Part One](#)
- [Campus Climate Survey Part One Presentation 3/8/16 FS Meeting](#)
- [Campus Climate Survey 2016 Part Two](#)
- [Campus Climate Survey Part Two Presentation 5/10/16 FS Meeting](#)
- [FSD 15-22 Resolution in Appreciation of Professors Janet Kottke, Barbara Sirotnik, and Kathie Pelletier for their Exceptional Work in Producing the Campus Climate Study Report, Parts I & II](#)
- [Campus Climate Progress Report - One Year Later](#)

EROSION OF SHARED GOVERNANCE

One of the things that is to be expected when leadership changes is that a new president will bring a new vision. However, faculty deserve to know what that vision is, and to have a voice in subsequent decision-making as the university moves from what it was to what it will become. We do not expect that faculty will determine every decision made at the university, just that faculty opinions be respected and considered seriously.

Shared governance is a hallmark of university life. It is how ideas are vetted and policies and plans are put through the grist of collective consideration. The Senate and its committees are the bodies that do this work and ensure that the faculty perspective is represented. It is incumbent upon administration to consult these bodies as a normal part of the business of the university.

Since President Morales' arrival on campus, shared governance has eroded. Major decisions affecting the university have been made with little or no attempt to solicit faculty input. The shift of summer session to self-support was not discussed in advance with the Senate. The decision to shift spring commencement to a location outside of our home city of San Bernardino was made without Senate input. The adoption of Agent of Change, a required sexual assault prevention program for CSUSB students, was revoked after the administration learned that the program survey should have had Institutional Review Board approval for its data collection, a consideration the Senate could have warned them about had we been consulted. The development of Coyote First Step, a multimillion dollar residential summer program built on top of the mandated "Early Start" developmental program, similarly took place without Senate consultation.

Elected faculty representatives have substantially less opportunity for input in the current environment than under the previous administration. For example, prior to 2012, the four senators on the University Budget Advisory Committee used to participate in the process of proposing a budget to the president. That practice has been abandoned and we now receive the budget after it is approved. Similarly, three faculty used to serve on the Enrollment Management Committee, which met regularly and made recommendations on admissions. This committee now rarely meets, and the Senate is not informed of its meetings. This year, the Senate's Educational Policy and Resource committee investigated the division of summer session revenue and recommended that, in future, the administration consult on such decisions prior to making them. In its written response, the administration indicated that it would keep the EPRC informed of decisions via UBAC meetings and would provide information upon request. See

- [EPRC Recommendations on CEL Summer Monies Presentation 3/7/17 FS Meeting](#)
- [Full EPRC Report on Recommendations on CEL Summer Monies](#)
- [Administration and Finance/Academic Affairs Response to Report](#)

The Senate has tried to address faculty concerns with the administration. In fall 2015, the Senate charged an ad hoc committee to consider faculty and student needs given the increased workload demands of the semester schedule and the Strategic Plan. The committee produced a significant report and recommendations, which were adopted by the Senate. The President never acknowledged the report. Five months later, he invited the Q2S Steering Committee to consult with the VP of Administration and Finance and make a recommendation on teaching load. The Steering Committee's recommendation, which offered a more modest version of the Senate's recommendation, was summarily rejected by the President, suggesting that the committee had been expected to ratify a predetermined conclusion.

In March 2016, in response to the first part of the climate survey, the President's email to campus said: "there has been a clear disconnect with my relationship with some members of the Faculty Senate. This must be addressed. I will continue to reach out to the Senate leadership so we can best determine how to correct the difficulties as perceived by faculty. This will be an ongoing dialogue."

We have repeatedly attempted to engage in discussions with the president about these widespread concerns. He has met with the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate only once this year. The negotiation of an acceptable topic was a pre-condition for that meeting, and the meeting was

largely taken up by a presentation. The EC has also been told that the president will not meet with us unless all vice presidents are available to attend. No rationale for this position has been offered.

CSUSB Presidents, including this one, have traditionally held open meetings for faculty. These no longer take place. When asked, in an open senate meeting, to reinstate the quarterly open meetings with faculty, the President declined.

DECLINING STUDENT SUCCESS

We agree with the President that student success should be our top priority, but we have become concerned about our ability to ensure that priority.

First year retention rates have dropped in each year of this administration. In 2013-14, FY retention rates were 88.6%; they are 85.1% for the most recent year. They fell particularly sharply for African American students this past year, from 90% to 83%. These are a leading indicator of student success and presage declining graduation rates, at precisely the time when the system's Graduation Initiative requires the campus to increase these rates.

Student success is contingent on having adequate numbers of faculty to teach, advise, and mentor. Increasing the number of tenured faculty is essential if we are to improve the quality of the student experience at the university and implement the high-impact practices that are essential to enhancing the quality of the student learning environment.

INSUFFICIENT NUMBERS OF FACULTY

The Strategic Plan sets a goal of 23.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) students per FTE faculty by 2020. The ratio in Fall 2016 was 28.4 (according to the IR website). We are thus 19.3% above the goal in the third hiring year of this plan. We will need to hire another 134 FTE faculty over the remaining years of the plan to reach our goal, and any additional growth in enrollment will increase that number. The budget forecast suggests we will add only a further 16.

The strategic plan also promises to restore the tenure density to 64%. (This is the ratio of tenured and tenure-track faculty FTE/ total faculty FTE). We started the Strategic Plan at 60% and we are now at 57%. With the current complement of lecturers, we would need to add an additional 122 tenured and tenure-track faculty over the next three years to reach the density target in the Strategic Plan.

- Please see the [Strategic Planning Progress Report](#).
- For SFR and tenure density data, see <https://dashboard.csusb.edu/idashboards/html5/?guestuser=idashguest>
Click on campus metrics, then on faculty metrics.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

We are currently 5.1% over our target enrollment, putting pressure on faculty who are forced to teach bigger classes and on students who struggle to gain access to courses. It is also above the threshold permitted by the CSU system. The President at a recent budget forum made the

statement that will need to “suppress” enrollment next year. Elsewhere, the administration has suggested that reducing enrollments will allow CSUSB to be more selective. While “suppression” may lead to the admission of a more “college ready” incoming class, it will do so at a cost to CSUSB’s commitment to access and equity.

IRRESPONSIBLE BUDGETING

Budget is obviously a critical element in reaching our goals and we have concerns about the effectiveness of its management since 2012. When the president arrived, the budget was completely balanced with a small base budget reserve. By January 2015, it was reported at a budget forum that we had a structural deficit of \$5M. That year we were bailed out by additional state funding. For next year, 2017-18, we are expecting to receive \$11.275 M in revenue, yet we will have a shortfall of \$675K in the base budget. The current plan is to use one time funds to cover the gap next year. This, however, leaves the structural deficit unaddressed. Had the tuition increase for students been voted down by the BOT, the campus would be in much worse shape.

Moreover, according to Budget Office data, since 2010, the annual base budget distribution to the Academic Affairs division has decreased by 3.6%. Notably, the decrease between 2010 and 2012, which followed on the heels of the furlough year, was 1.0%. Between fall 2012 and 2016, under the current administration, that percentage has decreased again, by another 2.6%. Given increasing enrollments, the need for tenure stream faculty, and the centrality of the academic mission to student success, we are alarmed at the underfunding of Academic Affairs.

The decision to switch summer session from state- to self- support has the ability to produce significant additional revenue. However, its cost recovery requirement allows much of that revenue to be delivered directly to the divisions, privatizing decisions about spending priorities outside of Faculty Governance channels. This year nearly \$1 M from summer session revenue will be diverted to Coyote First Step to subsidize housing and dining services.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The vote of no confidence is not binding, but it is a strong symbolic statement. We expected that the Chancellor’s public response would be supportive of the President, because that is what has happened in previous votes of no confidence in the CSU system. It is quite possible that an entirely different conversation is happening behind closed doors. In previous votes of no confidence within the CSU, eventual consequences have ranged from the president stepping down to the president making major positive changes that eventually led to a vote of confidence.

Regardless of the result of the faculty referendum, I believe I am speaking for the entire Faculty Senate in committing to heal our divisions and move our university forward.

Sincerely,

Karen Kolehmainen
Professor of Physics
Chair, Faculty Senate