

ASCSU Chair's Report
Board of Trustees
September 20, 2017

I'm pleased to provide a report on last week's meetings of the Academic Senate CSU. I've developed my report centered around a central theme: time.

If you think about it, time has many properties. We can think of time as motion, where it passes, marches, stands still, or flies when you're having fun. We can also think about time as manifest in objects, like time bombs, time machines, and time clocks. And, of course, we often talk about time as a commodity, which can be invested or wasted. It was easy to choose time as a theme for this report, because time dominated the Senate's discussions last week.

The first resolution we passed by acclamation illustrates the passing of time. Unfortunately, it commemorates the passing of Professor Emeritus Leonard "Len" Mathy, CSU Los Angeles Professor of Economics from 1950-1986. He was the first Chair of ASCSU in 1963-4. I was a toddler when he held my current position, but I and all other CSU faculty owe him a debt of gratitude. I'll just read one of the clauses in our resolution so you can see what I mean: "In his capacity as Chair of the ASCSU, Professor Mathy fought for effective and timely [emphasis added] consultation with faculty, the protection of faculty authority, and demonstrated his dedication to ensuring the independence of faculty in shared governance by helping to defeat a proposal that the Chancellor be chair of the ASCSU." What a different world this would be if that proposal had passed! I'm honored to carry on his legacy as ASCSU Chair, and the Senate sends its condolences to his family.

From time passing to the notion of investing time, the second resolution approved unanimously by the Senate is "In Support of the Preservation and Extension of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program." DACA is time well spent on a population of students whose education will pay dividends, and the CSU should continue to do everything it can to preserve and extend the program. The resolution articulates some specific steps to ensure that DACA students continue to have access to higher education opportunities in the CSU, it supports the actions taken by the central administration, the campuses, and the California State Legislature to do so, and it encourages U.S. Senators and Representatives to pass federal legislation that provides DACA protections. There are over 800,000 students in the State of California whose lives and livelihoods are affected by investing time in their education, and it's definitely time well spent.

While I'm talking about legislation, the statewide Senate also took a position supporting another bill we think is a good investment of time and resources: AB-19, which now sits on Governor Brown's desk. This bill allows community colleges to waive fees for first-time students enrolled in at least 12 units of classes for their first year. If this law can decrease student debt and increase access to education, then the Senate thinks it will certainly be time and money well spent.

Speaking of time, the last resolution I'm going to talk to you about has some history behind it. Because I know Board Chair Eisen is an avid birdwatcher, I'll reference a beautiful canary to explain the history. If you've ever heard the expression "canary in a coal mine," you know that miners used to take these cute little birds down into the tunnels with them, and if dangerous gases such as carbon monoxide collected in the mine, the gases would kill the bird before the miners, so they were an early indicator of danger or failure.

Well, for a few months now I've been calling myself the canary in the coal mine. I've been warning people that the faculty I represent are gasping for air, and that shared governance is suffering. I've been warning you, the Board of Trustees, too. In May when I developed my balance theme, I said this: "My plea is for time. Time to think, time to talk, time to respond appropriately. The single biggest complaint I've heard from faculty all across the system is that deadlines are way too short for the kind of thoughtful input they'd like to give. We can't even catch our breath! To cite just a few examples, between general education requests, Executive Order drafts, intellectual property policy review, and the breakneck speed at which changes to academic preparation are happening, faculty are asking a very important question: do you want it fast, or do you want it right?"

Then in July, remember those fidget spinners I gave you? I talked about how faculty are in danger of spinning out of control. I said if the direction of spin is the same and we are all going forward, in the same direction, everything will be fine. But if faculty think that shared governance processes are not being honored, the trajectory of the spin will change, we'll spin backward, and no one wants that. I told you when shared governance slows, or worse, when it stops and goes backward, students ultimately suffer, and students are why we are all here.

So, during the last academic year, I was your canary sending warnings. This year, I am the canary who has succumbed in order to warn you of danger and failure. In that capacity, I bring you AS-3304, "On the Development and Implementation of Executive Orders 1100 (revised) and 1110."

The subjects of this resolution, those Executive Orders, dominated, and I mean *dominated* Senate discussion last week. Beginning on Tuesday in the Chancellor's own General Education Advisory Committee and carrying all the way through Friday afternoon, senators debated what to say about them.

The Chancellor's GE Advisory Committee, which includes members from the California Community Colleges, unanimously supported a resolution directing their Chair to tell Chancellor White what they had discussed, and to request an extension of the implementation deadline for the EOs.

On Wednesday, each one of the statewide Senate's four committees wrote at least one resolution opposing the Executive Orders, so on Thursday the chairs of those committees did outstanding work blending them together into one resolution. On Friday, senators had an extremely thoughtful, respectful, reasoned, and passionate debate on whether to request that the EOs be rescinded entirely, or just held in abeyance for a year. When all was said and done, we chose the latter course of action. More on that in a moment.

First, I want to give you more history which explains why I resemble the canary who lies at the bottom of the cage. You should know that ASCSU has adopted a theme for its work this year, and that theme is "collective voice." In that spirit, I want you to hear what campus senate chairs are saying about EOs 1100 and 1110. So, it's not just statewide senators who are upset by these EOs and their timeline, it's faculty on the campuses, too.

These quotes represent the idea of time travel. Senate chairs say:

- The timeline is a problem, as changes need to be made quickly, without full discussion and reflection. This will negate any improvements that campuses have made in recent years.
- It took us years to devise our policy. The CO is now asking us to change it in a matter of weeks. The pushback is not as much about the required changes, but about the timeline, which is impossible.

The first quote says the timeline negates forward progress, and the second says it's impossible to construct in weeks what took years to develop. There are no time machines to fix this.

A time bomb seems to be an appropriate characterization for these comments by senate chairs:

- The tight time frame for faculty feedback is a mockery of a consultative process.
- This has a potent destabilizing effect and interferes with every step of our process.
- The ordered changes really upend our curriculum. The changes will touch nearly every department.
- The revisions will impact every area of GE and the careful integration of major and GE requirements

You can tell these chairs are frustrated.

They are also worried, which captures several of the campus comments. They say:

- Not only do the revisions affect every GE area, but cascading resource and programmatic effects will impact a majority of majors and minors.
- There are potential implications for lecturers (who teach the lion's share of GE courses) including loss of work, effects on entitlements, and increased workload to revise existing courses.
- There will be a great deal of infrastructure work: updating advising materials for all departments, updating websites, rewriting policies, etc.
- These EOs could significantly harm morale and the working relationship between faculty and campus administration.

Remember, I'm your systemwide canary. Please don't discount what the campus canaries are saying about morale and working relationships. In addition, please notice they are all singing the same tune: they need more time.

I offer you this last comment because it provides a useful reminder about how clocks can stop. This chair notes, "In the EO 1110 FAQs, the response to the timeline is that 'it would be difficult to justify delaying the benefits afforded by these policy changes.' But by delaying a year, the worst scenario for students is that they would have to petition to change their catalog rights if they like the new version better. That's not a big burden if it means getting things right. I would add that this can be done very easily with just the check of a box. You see, time *can* stand still for students. If they benefit by the new rules, they can ask to follow them. In the meantime, with a new deadline faculty will have the time they need to get things right.

That's why the statewide senate is asking Chancellor White to call a time out.

We point out in our resolution that the shared governance which took place surrounding these EOs was severely time-constrained and flawed, contrary to the practice of joint decision making mandated in HEERA, so we request a time out until at least Fall 2019.

In addition, we think before restarting the game clock again, the Chancellor and his team should engage in data-driven and genuine consultation with faculty, which would include the following:

- analysis of the costs of modifying GE and academic preparation curricula;
- analysis of the effect on campus-level resource allocation and its impact on specific programs such as ethnic and cultural diversity studies;
- reinstating the recently lifted moratorium on changes in ethnic studies programs until at least Fall 2019;
- ensuring that multiple measures are used to assess foundational quantitative reasoning proficiency
- collaboration between the Chancellor's Office and the ASCSU to develop a plan for monitoring the efficacy of changes in GE and academic preparation curricula.

These requests are entirely consistent with what the editorial board of the LA Times called for on Monday. They wrote, "In the end, it can be easy to raise graduation rates, if that's the only goal: Just lower the standards. Cal State trustees should insist on regular, independent audits of these new policies to ensure that the education they're providing isn't being cheapened." We agree with these sentiments, and stand ready to engage in data-driven decision making and genuine consultation about them.

Speaking of what the media is saying about all this, an article in *EdSource* says faculty are rebelling. However, to quote one of our senators, "I think calling this a rebellion is a stretch. We are not rebelling. We are asking for the time and resources to do the job entrusted to us."

So, Chancellor White has heard calls for a time out

- from his own GE Advisory Committee
- from the CSU Academic Senate
- from faculty in Ethnic Studies
- from the President of the Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association
- and from you, indirectly, in the form of a request by Trustee Stepanek to discuss it at your November meeting.

I really hope, though, that he blows the whistle now, *before* November. If he doesn't, I urge you seriously to consider taking action yourselves to call a time out.

Time is of the essence.