



California State University, Sacramento

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95819-6036

ACADEMIC SENATE



16 October 1996

TO: Academic Senators

FROM: Michael Fitzgerald, Chair *Mike Fitzgerald*

SUBJECT: Fact Finding Commission Report

Attached is your copy of the report issued by the elected University Fact Finding Hearing Commission. The report--and its 13 recommendations--will be the subject of a General Faculty Meeting, Thursday, November 21 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. in the Forest Suite of the University Union.

The report is divided into four major segments: Institutional Culture, Campus Life, Teaching Excellence, and Vision. Each section reflects the testimony given to the commission during the spring of 1996 in a series of public hearings, personal interviews--and even e-mails.

The discussions in the report and recommendations are provocative enough that I believe they will provide the basis for very interesting--and I hope positive--discussions at the General Faculty Meeting.

I have also forwarded copies of the report to School Deans and Department Chairs who I have asked to make the report available to faculty.

I look forward to any comments you might have, or suggestions for how the various points raised should be discussed during the General Faculty Meeting.

MF
Attachment

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

Report from the
Fact Finding Hearing Commission

California State University, Sacramento
6000 J Street
Sacramento, California 95819-6036

to the
Campus Community

OCT 2 - 1996

**Academic Senate Received
413**

The State of the University

Background.

During the Spring 1995 semester, a petition was circulated among the faculty which called for a referendum election to be conducted. The Faculty, in that referendum conducted between November 15 and December 1, 1995, decided

"To establish a Fact Finding Hearing Commission whose charge is to conduct public hearings at which students, current and emeritus faculty, alumni, staff, and administrators would be invited to testify about the state of the University, in particular as it regards the teaching and learning environment, the present structure of academic governance, and faculty rights and responsibilities. The Commission would be comprised of 5 tenured faculty, one from each School, nominated and elected by the University at large.

The Fact Finding Hearing Commission will report its findings at a general faculty meeting called for said purpose on or about April 1, 1996, but not later than the end of the Spring semester 1996."

The Academic Senate collected nominations for the Commission from the faculty, and the Commission election was conducted between February 20, 1996 and March 1, 1996. The following faculty members were elected:

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|----------------------------------|----------------|
| • Arts & Sciences | Greg Wheeler |
| • Business | Herbert Blake |
| • Education | David Raske |
| • Engineering & Computer Science | Donald Steward |
| • Health & Human Services | Robyn Nelson |

In fulfilling its charge, the Commission conducted three public hearings (April 24, 1996; April 29, 1996; and May 2, 1996) and two hearings with specific campus groups—Academic Senate (May 9, 1996) and Administrative Council (May 16, 1996). Additional testimony was submitted to the Commission by individuals via memoranda and e-mail. A relatively small number of people attended each of the public hearings, but in the aggregate, the Commission received input from more than seventy individuals from the faculty, administration, staff, and student body.

From the oral and written testimony, the Commission has derived this report on the State of the University. The collective thoughts have been summarized into five themes: Positiveness, Institutional Culture, Campus Life, Teaching Excellence, and Vision.

POSITIVENESS

From the beginning, the Commission has found a high degree of positiveness among the CSUS campus community. Many participants stated the thought that “we are better than we think we are.” There were many positive statements praising programs, administrators, faculty, and students. As we address the remaining themes with suggestions for improvement, please remember that we are generally starting from a positive base with the intention of making things better.

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

There are three widely perceived problems that we must address in order to improve the CSUS culture: Low Institutional Self-Esteem, Apathy, and Crisis of Identity.

Low Institutional Self-Esteem.

The perception widely exists among many constituents (off- and on-campus) that we are second-rate. One major source of this perception is the systemic differentiation made by the Master Plan; i.e., that the UC system is to accommodate the top 10% of high school graduates and that the CSU is to accommodate the top 30% of high school graduates. Further, UC's may offer doctoral-level programs, while the CSU's are constrained to the Master's level. The individual units of the UC and CSU systems are rarely differentiated from each other on their particular core competencies, such as the quality, value and/or uniqueness of programs offered at each campus. For most people, the major factor that distinguishes one campus from another is geographical location.

Another symptom of our low self-esteem is reinforced by our perception of our place in the community. It seems to be nearly impossible to get anything positive about CSUS into the local newspaper—*The Sacramento Bee*. Neither the campus nor the local community is proud of our University symbols—from the school colors, to our mascot, to our logo (do we have one?). Even the name of our University is a problem. **Sac-ra-men-to** has too many syllables—so our name is continually shortened to Sac State (Sack State? Slack State? Has anyone ever heard SFSU called “Frisco” State?) With no differentiation, we are just another “cookie cutter” institution.

Finally, there is the comfort of mediocrity and conformance. We have some outstanding programs that compete with the best in the country, but their merits are submerged in the overall reputation of the campus. We rarely celebrate excellence among ourselves. We seem to prefer to ignore programs and faculty at both extremes

of the quality spectrum: we are unwilling to take actions that recognize excellence and achievement and to punish inappropriate actions and behaviors. There is an institutional unwillingness to undertake activities that lack consensus. Thus, many (if not most) of us are quite content to be inconspicuously located in the conforming, mediocre middle.

Recommendation 1. To raise our self-esteem, we need to celebrate excellence within the campus community, and we need to make a concerted effort to gain positive external publicity. We need to devote resources to marketing and promoting the University, its programs and its activities. The benefits in University prestige, increased enrollment, and development funds will far exceed the costs.

Recommendation 2. Our University name should portray a positive image. And, we need to reexamine our school symbols (mascot, colors, logos). Because of the unattractiveness of our names, we should seriously consider changing the formal and/or informal names of California State University, Sacramento (Sac State). Here are some suggestions: **Sacramento University, Northern California State University, The State University of Sacramento.**

Apathy.

We are an institution that lacks excitement. We study everything to the ultimate degree, but after the study little action results. The University leaders need to encourage innovation and risk-taking, even when complete consensus has not been achieved. Among our faculty, administration, and staff there is great untapped potential which has been frustrated by lack of encouragement to try new things. The result is apathy. Our governance structures (University, School, and Department) are overwhelming; and each tends to resist innovation while reluctantly accepting token incremental change. Discouragement and a feeling that little will change reinforce the existence of apathy among those who should be seeking change. Our culture smothers those who have idealistic visions of improving our systems.

Recommendation 3. To cure apathy, we must place power at the major program level (School or Department). To the extent that Schools/Departments can plan and implement new ideas and initiatives, they will gain pride of ownership and morale will improve. Schools/Departments should be critically reviewed, and results of these reviews used to celebrate and reward successes and to spotlight problems for correction.

Crisis of Identity.

CSUS has recently been likened to a teenager who is unsure of who he is and what will be his life's direction. Our University has continued to struggle throughout its relatively brief history in defining an image or, better yet, in conveying its reputation as a truly comprehensive, regional institution of higher education. After nearly fifty years, CSUS is a University still searching for community respect, identity, and definition.

There are several facets of our identity crisis which, if resolved, can turn to our advantage. One is our commitment to intercollegiate athletics. We have a tremendous opportunity to change the perception of CSUS if we can be successful in Division I athletics. Success on the playing field can be parlayed into success in recruiting students and in earning recognition and rewards from the surrounding community. Another is our need to find a strategic niche. Many doubt that the "Capital Campus" concept has created a significant strategic advantage for CSUS. While many departments have benefited from our location in California's capital city and our ties to (particularly) state government, can these benefits be generalized to a motto and symbols for the entire University?

Finally, our recent inability to attract sufficient numbers of students is of great concern. Our "Celebration of Diversity" has been overdone; now many prospective students do not apply because they think CSUS only wants to recruit certain categories of students. Curricula structures also turn off potential students: consider the massive General Education structure, the inability to apply AP credits, and the foreign language and writing requirements. Many high school and community college counselors routinely advise their students not to choose CSUS. Thus, despite the good intentions of actions to diversify the student body, to strengthen desirable educational outcomes, to increase our international focus, and to manage enrollments, the result has been enrollment losses.

Recommendation 4. The remedy for the crisis of identity is commitment to long-term strategies to meet the University's long-term teaching and research goals. If our long-term strategy is to succeed at the Division I level of athletics, then we need to commit talents and resources (including financial) to ensure successful athletic endeavors.

Recommendation 5. Another long-term strategy should be to build and maintain plant and facilities that are appropriate to ensuring the best teaching and learning environment. Run down buildings, peeling paint, and dirty hallways are depressing to inhabit, and they are embarrassing to be seen by visitors. Facilities Management should have sufficient budget to clean and repair buildings.

CAMPUS LIFE

A common theme voiced by many students (irrespective of their degree of involvement in traditional campus organizations and activities) is the lack of a sense of campus community. For far too many students, the primary on-campus life experiences are limited to their interactions in the classroom. Many students do actively participate in campus activities such as clubs and organizations, but athletic events are poorly attended, and there is no residential/commercial/social core to solidify student links to campus. Indeed, many students are also employed, they are older than traditional students, and they take more than four years to graduate. This is a student profile not uncommon to many large public universities across the United States. But many of these same Universities also have a well established "campus life."

The notion that CSUS is a “commuter” campus is widely held. While it is true that a relatively small proportion of CSUS students live in the University residence halls, a very large proportion resides in apartments and rental homes near the campus. Some students, especially those involved in social organizations, have expressed a continued interest in group housing. Other students have expressed an interest in housing that differs from the traditional dormitory, e.g. apartments. Both groups contend that alternative types of housing configuration would enhance the campus image for current students, prospective students and their parents as well as provide a magnet gathering place that would draw students to the University for various occasions as a true campus community. Housing committees have been meeting and planning for years with limited progress and results.

Recommendation 6. Seriously commit to designing and building a residential/commercial/social core that will become a magnet to attract and keep students involved in the life of the campus.

Students, and the campus professionals who work with students, complain that there is a general sense of indifference towards students whether they are involved in traditional campus activities or disconnected from non-academic endeavors. This indifference continues to reinforce feelings that the campus is unfriendly and that it lacks a community atmosphere. Students are the primary consumers of our educational programs and experiences. The student body is also the largest marketing and outreach group of any university. What images do they convey to their family members, friends, associates, and neighbors? These images become perceptions which may not be real; but if all that one has are perceptions, those perceptions become reality.

Recommendation 7. Expand the “learning community” concept. Other campuses have created Freshman Colleges, University Colleges, cross-disciplinary core curricula to more tightly connect the student with other students, and with the campus and its academic programs. These models are intended to improve learning and increase student retention rates.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE

The CSUS Mission Statement identifies teaching and the creation of an active learning environment as the primary responsibilities of the faculty. One of the supporting goals is “To achieve excellence in teaching and learning.” Throughout its [nearly] 50 year history, CSUS has been known as a teaching institution. While concerns about our teaching excellence were more numerous than reports of strengths, there was agreement that a student at CSUS is more likely to be taught by a doctorally-prepared faculty member—even at the undergraduate level—unlike the UC system. The importance given to the role of teaching is seen as one of our greatest strengths.

Faculty Development.

Despite the teaching mission, some faculty feel that little attention is paid to the faculty responsibility to be a good teacher. There is a sense that the commitment to better teaching should include formal processes for developing teachers. How many CSUS departments have as a criterion for appointment that the applicant has completed coursework in curriculum and instruction and a teaching practicum in graduate school? A Ph. D. does not necessarily equate with an ability to teach. Where does a new faculty member acquire pedagogical theory and teaching methods? As faculty members at CSUS, we teach for a living, but we rarely talk to teach other about how we teach. Teaching may be the only craft where practitioners do not see what others are doing.

Recommendation 8. The campus needs to set criteria, or minimum standards, for effective teaching so that we can know when good teaching exists.

Recommendation 9. Our Appointment, Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (ARTP) and Post-Tenure policies and procedures should support good teaching. We should design a program to enhance teaching skills for all new faculty hires, giving release time to accommodate participation. Classroom observation of teaching should be required for tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review. The post-tenure review process should be strengthened to ensure effective teaching and currency in the discipline.

Comfort of Mediocrity.

Historically, CSUS has been unwilling to recognize excellence and achievement in teaching; only recently have there been campus awards for outstanding teaching. There has almost been pride in NOT participating in the system-wide recognition of outstanding teaching. One faculty member noted: "Our notion of equality prevents our acknowledging or following the lead of outstanding faculty. Simply, you upset the system by being outstanding." Does an egalitarian culture serve the University well?

Some feel that there is an institutional unwillingness to take actions that lack "consensus." The post-tenure review process is in serious need of revision: one colleague felt that teaching skills tended to decline during a career of teaching, and another faculty member felt that current experience was essential to being a good teacher. Yet, the faculty did not approve a Senate referendum proposing strengthened requirements for maintaining teaching excellence among the tenured, full professors on campus. Will this lead to mediocrity? Some might say that mediocrity is better than incompetence, but it avoids the expectations that accompany excellence.

Recommendation 10. We should affirm to internal and external constituents that we are committed to excellence in teaching. This priority is stated in all CSU (System) and CSUS (University) goals, and we must continually demonstrate that we are committed to this charge. We should put money and release time into excellence in teaching. Future Performance Salary Increase (PSI) awards should reward those who are singled

out for teaching excellence. Recipients of Outstanding Teaching Awards should be used as mentor teachers; with release time awarded to make them available for classroom observation, practicums, etc.

Academic Simplification.

With regard to the fundamentally important General Education (GE) program, it was said that “the parts do not add up to what anybody perceives to be the whole.” The current GE model is seen as a real problem from several perspectives. The distributive model lacks cohesiveness, and GE is seen as responding to various special interests. One question raised was “Is there any group we have NOT included in the [GE] program?” Why are the GE requirements for CSUS and UC not the same? How does the need to articulate with community colleges restrain or restrict a successful GE program?

Some feel that the GE program is being driven by FTES (full-time equivalent students); i.e., that some departments develop and teach GE courses to deliver FTES rather than meeting a coherent curricular need. If the GE program has been used to sustain low-enrolled programs, this would support the idea that the goals for GE are random and not directed solely at imparting the knowledge, skills, and abilities of an educated person. There are also concerns about the changes in Academic Affairs: the faculty person who will be responsible for GE may lack appropriate authority. Additional concerns included a sentiment that faculty assigned to teach GE classes received less favorable ARTP reviews.

Recommendation 11. CSUS should develop a standardized, sequential GE model to replace the distributive model that currently exists.

Subsumed under the General Education discussion were two other issues: the Writing Proficiency Examination (WPE), currently under review by the Academic Senate, and the Foreign Language requirement. With respect to the WPE, there appears to be a weak association, if not an inverse relationship, between passing the test and competence in the required composition course. While writing competence is seen as essential, the campus can only say that our graduates are “average” in comparison to students from comparable universities. (Source: accreditation self-study data) Is “average” good enough?

The Foreign Language requirement was described by one colleague as “foolish,” being only a requirement at CSUS and viewed as a means to salvage the Foreign Language department. In light of the need for internationalization and the changing demographics of the State, possession of dual language competence seems essential for success after graduation. However, requirements above and beyond those of comparable institutions can severely damage recruiting and retention efforts, and may help to explain recent enrollment declines at CSUS.

Environmental and Structural Impingements.

Can excellent teaching and learning occur in classrooms with poor ventilation, the clutter of too many desks, noisy blowers, dirt, inoperative (or missing) blinds, etc. ? (See Recommendation 5.) A large number of senior faculty will be retiring soon; does a plan for replacement exist? Can excellent teaching and learning occur if we just use more part-time faculty? To increase productivity, class sizes are being increased. Can excellent teaching and learning occur when (to many) it seems that FTES is driving course offerings, rather than quality or curricular need? Resentment may increase in areas with over-enrolled courses which are supporting more expensive programs, and among faculty in over-enrolled course who feel that the burden is not being equally distributed.

It has been said that promoting excellent teaching is harder than you think and progress isn't quick. Apparently after 50 years we still have work to do. Excellence in teaching must originate from a shared mission, mutual goals, common values, and a clear definition of quality teaching. From there the next step is to determine if learning has occurred—the task for the next 50 years?

VISION

Both the University and the outside world are encountering dramatic changes as we approach the 21st century; we are moving through a now very mature *information* revolution and beginning to enter the *knowledge* revolution. Knowledge has taken on a new role in this coming age as a form of capital along side land, labor, and investment [Drucker]. The University has, for the first time in its history, become a major producer of one of the most important forms of capital wealth.

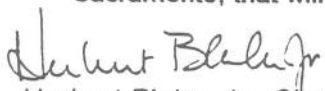
Many participants observed that there does not seem to be a clear focus on where the University is headed. Yet we do not seem to share a sense of direction that CSUS will take to successfully enter this new age nor of the potential effects of that direction on the University and its faculty. This confusion contributes to many of the symptoms of the problems discussed above. Establishing a common vision that we can seek in concert can provide us with a sense of identity, a sense of community, and a basis for pride.

Recommendation 12. A campus-wide discussion should be held, leading to a shared vision of where we are headed. Such a vision should be succinctly stated so that the entire campus community can have it in mind as we proceed with our various activities. The vision should provide the direction that will help us to resolve issues in institutional culture, campus life, and teaching excellence.

Recommendation 13. The President, after appropriate consultation, should proclaim a vision for California State University, Sacramento, that will provide the focus for us to move together into the future.

On the eve of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of California State University, Sacramento, we set forth the following thirteen recommendations:


1. To raise our self-esteem, we need to celebrate excellence within the campus community, and we need to make a concerted effort to gain positive external publicity. We need to devote resources to marketing and promoting the University, its programs and its activities. The benefits in University prestige, increased enrollment, and development funds will far exceed the costs.
2. Our University name should portray a positive image. And, we need to reexamine our school symbols (mascot, colors, logos). Because of the unattractiveness of our names, we should seriously consider changing the formal and/or informal names of California State University, Sacramento (Sac State). Here are some suggestions: **Sacramento University, Northern California State University, The State University of Sacramento.**
3. To cure apathy, we must place power at the major program level (School or Department). To the extent that Schools/Departments can plan and implement new ideas and initiatives, they will gain pride of ownership and morale will improve. Schools/Departments should be critically reviewed, and results of these reviews used to celebrate and reward successes and to spotlight problems for correction.
4. The remedy for the crisis of identity is commitment to long-term strategies to meet the University's long-term teaching and research goals. If our long-term strategy is to succeed at the Division I level of athletics, then we need to commit talents and resources (including financial) to ensure successful athletic endeavors.
5. Another long-term strategy should be to build and maintain plant and facilities that are appropriate to ensuring the best teaching and learning environment. Run down buildings, peeling paint, and dirty hallways are depressing to inhabit, and they are embarrassing to be seen by visitors. Facilities Management should have sufficient budget to clean and repair buildings.
6. Seriously commit to designing and building a residential/commercial/social core that will become a magnet to attract and keep students involved in the life of the campus.
7. Expand the "learning community" concept. Other campuses have created Freshman Colleges, University Colleges, cross-disciplinary core curricula to more tightly connect the student with other students, and with the campus and its academic programs. These models are intended to improve learning and increase student retention rates.
8. The campus needs to set criteria, or minimum standards, for effective teaching so that we can know when good teaching exists.
9. Our Appointment, Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (ARTP) and Post-Tenure policies and procedures should support good teaching. We should design a program to enhance teaching skills for all new faculty hires, giving release time to accommodate participation. Classroom observation of teaching should be required for tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review. The post-tenure review process should be strengthened to ensure effective teaching and currency in the discipline.
10. We should affirm to internal and external constituents that we are committed to excellence in teaching. This priority is stated in all CSU (System) and CSUS (University) goals, and we must continually demonstrate that we are committed to this charge. We should put money and release time into excellence in teaching. Future Performance Salary Increase (PSI) awards should reward those who are singled out for teaching excellence. Recipients of Outstanding Teaching Awards should be used as mentor teachers; with release time awarded to make them available for classroom observation, practicums, etc.
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David E. Raske
Education


Donald V. Steward
Engineering and Computer Science


Gregory R. Wheeler
Arts & Sciences



California State University, Sacramento

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ACADEMIC SENATE



16 October 1996

Dear Colleagues:

The CSUS Fact-Finding Hearing Commission--established by a Faculty Referendum in the fall of 1995--has issued its final report, which will be the subject of a General Faculty Meeting, **Thursday, November 21 from 3:00- 5:00 p.m. in the Forest Suite of the University Union.**

A copy of the nine-page report--including 13 recommendations from the commission's members --is attached for your review.

The report is divided into four major segments: Institutional Culture, Campus Life, Teaching Excellence, and Vision. The discussions in the report and recommendations are provocative and it is my hope they will provide the basis for some positive discussions at the General Faculty Meeting.

Comments about the report--or suggestions for structuring our discussion about the recommendations--can be directed to the Senate Office (x6593) or to one of the authors of the Fact Finding Commission report:

Herbert Blake, Jr., Business Administration, (committee chair)

Robyn M. Nelson, Health and Human Services

David E. Raske, Education

Donald V. Steward, Engineering and Computer Science

Gregory R. Wheeler, Arts and Sciences

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. Fitzgerald".

Michael J. Fitzgerald, Chair
Academic Senate

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The notion that CSUS is a “commuter” campus is widely held. While it is true that a relatively small proportion of CSUS students live in the University residence halls, a very large proportion resides in apartments and rental homes near the campus. Some students, especially those involved in social organizations, have expressed a continued interest in group housing. Other students have expressed an interest in housing that differs from the traditional dormitory, e.g. apartments. Both groups contend that alternative types of housing configuration would enhance the campus image for current students, prospective students and their parents as well as provide a magnet gathering place that would draw students to the University for various occasions as a true campus community. Housing committees have been meeting and planning for years with limited progress and results.

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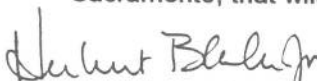
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Recommendation 13. The President, after appropriate consultation, should proclaim a vision for California State University, Sacramento, that will provide the focus for us to move together into the future.

On the eve of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of California State University, Sacramento, we set forth the following thirteen recommendations:

1. To raise our self-esteem, we need to celebrate excellence within the campus community, and we need to make a concerted effort to gain positive external publicity. We need to devote resources to marketing and promoting the University, its programs and its activities. The benefits in University prestige, increased enrollment, and development funds will far exceed the costs.
2. Our University name should portray a positive image. And, we need to reexamine our school symbols (mascot, colors, logos). Because of the unattractiveness of our names, we should seriously consider changing the formal and/or informal names of California State University, Sacramento (Sac State). Here are some suggestions: **Sacramento University, Northern California State University, The State University of Sacramento.**
3. To cure apathy, we must place power at the major program level (School or Department). To the extent that Schools/Departments can plan and implement new ideas and initiatives, they will gain pride of ownership and morale will improve. Schools/Departments should be critically reviewed, and results of these reviews used to celebrate and reward successes and to spotlight problems for correction.
4. The remedy for the crisis of identity is commitment to long-term strategies to meet the University's long-term teaching and research goals. If our long-term strategy is to succeed at the Division I level of athletics, then we need to commit talents and resources (including financial) to ensure successful athletic endeavors.
5. Another long-term strategy should be to build and maintain plant and facilities that are appropriate to ensuring the best teaching and learning environment. Run down buildings, peeling paint, and dirty hallways are depressing to inhabit, and they are embarrassing to be seen by visitors. Facilities Management should have sufficient budget to clean and repair buildings.
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7. Expand the "learning community" concept. Other campuses have created Freshman Colleges, University Colleges, cross-disciplinary core curricula to more tightly connect the student with other students, and with the campus and its academic programs. These models are intended to improve learning and increase student retention rates.
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Business Administration


Robyn M. Nelson
Health & Human Services


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Engineering and Computer Science


Gregory R. Wheeler
Arts & Sciences

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

Report from the
Fact Finding Hearing Commission

California State University, Sacramento
6000 J Street
Sacramento, California 95819-6036

to the
Campus Community

OCT 2 - 1996

Academic Senate Received
413

The State of the University

Background.

During the Spring 1995 semester, a petition was circulated among the faculty which called for a referendum election to be conducted. The Faculty, in that referendum conducted between November 15 and December 1, 1995, decided

"To establish a Fact Finding Hearing Commission whose charge is to conduct public hearings at which students, current and emeritus faculty, alumni, staff, and administrators would be invited to testify about the state of the University, in particular as it regards the teaching and learning environment, the present structure of academic governance, and faculty rights and responsibilities. The Commission would be comprised of 5 tenured faculty, one from each School, nominated and elected by the University at large.

The Fact Finding Hearing Commission will report its findings at a general faculty meeting called for said purpose on or about April 1, 1996, but not later than the end of the Spring semester 1996."

The Academic Senate collected nominations for the Commission from the faculty, and the Commission election was conducted between February 20, 1996 and March 1, 1996. The following faculty members were elected:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| • Arts & Sciences | Greg Wheeler |
| • Business | Herbert Blake |
| • Education | David Raske |
| • Engineering & Computer Science | Donald Steward |
| • Health & Human Services | Robyn Nelson |

In fulfilling its charge, the Commission conducted three public hearings (April 24, 1996; April 29, 1996; and May 2, 1996) and two hearings with specific campus groups-- Academic Senate (May 9, 1996) and Administrative Council (May 16, 1996). Additional testimony was submitted to the Commission by individuals via memoranda and e-mail. A relatively small number of people attended each of the public hearings, but in the aggregate, the Commission received input from more than seventy individuals from the faculty, administration, staff, and student body.

From the oral and written testimony, the Commission has derived this report on the State of the University. The collective thoughts have been summarized into five themes: Positiveness, Institutional Culture, Campus Life, Teaching Excellence, and Vision.

POSITIVENESS

From the beginning, the Commission has found a high degree of positiveness among the CSUS campus community. Many participants stated the thought that “we are better than we think we are.” There were many positive statements praising programs, administrators, faculty, and students. As we address the remaining themes with suggestions for improvement, please remember that we are generally starting from a positive base with the intention of making things better.

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

There are three widely perceived problems that we must address in order to improve the CSUS culture: Low Institutional Self-Esteem, Apathy, and Crisis of Identity.

Low Institutional Self-Esteem.

The perception widely exists among many constituents (off- and on-campus) that we are second-rate. One major source of this perception is the systemic differentiation made by the Master Plan; i.e., that the UC system is to accommodate the top 10% of high school graduates and that the CSU is to accommodate the top 30% of high school graduates. Further, UC's may offer doctoral-level programs, while the CSU's are constrained to the Master's level. The individual units of the UC and CSU systems are rarely differentiated from each other on their particular core competencies, such as the quality, value and/or uniqueness of programs offered at each campus. For most people, the major factor that distinguishes one campus from another is geographical location.

Another symptom of our low self-esteem is reinforced by our perception of our place in the community. It seems to be nearly impossible to get anything positive about CSUS into the local newspaper—*The Sacramento Bee*. Neither the campus nor the local community is proud of our University symbols—from the school colors, to our mascot, to our logo (do we have one?). Even the name of our University is a problem. **Sac-ra-men-to** has too many syllables—so our name is continually shortened to Sac State (Sack State? Slack State? Has anyone ever heard SFSU called “Frisco” State?) With no differentiation, we are just another “cookie cutter” institution.

Finally, there is the comfort of mediocrity and conformance. We have some outstanding programs that compete with the best in the country, but their merits are submerged in the overall reputation of the campus. We rarely celebrate excellence among ourselves. We seem to prefer to ignore programs and faculty at both extremes

of the quality spectrum: we are unwilling to take actions that recognize excellence and achievement and to punish inappropriate actions and behaviors. There is an institutional unwillingness to undertake activities that lack consensus. Thus, many (if not most) of us are quite content to be inconspicuously located in the conforming, mediocre middle.

Recommendation 1. To raise our self-esteem, we need to celebrate excellence within the campus community, and we need to make a concerted effort to gain positive external publicity. We need to devote resources to marketing and promoting the University, its programs and its activities. The benefits in University prestige, increased enrollment, and development funds will far exceed the costs.

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Apathy.

We are an institution that lacks excitement. We study everything to the ultimate degree, but after the study little action results. The University leaders need to encourage innovation and risk-taking, even when complete consensus has not been achieved. Among our faculty, administration, and staff there is great untapped potential which has been frustrated by lack of encouragement to try new things. The result is apathy. Our governance structures (University, School, and Department) are overwhelming; and each tends to resist innovation while reluctantly accepting token incremental change. Discouragement and a feeling that little will change reinforce the existence of apathy among those who should be seeking change. Our culture smothers those who have idealistic visions of improving our systems.

Recommendation 3. To cure apathy, we must place power at the major program level (School or Department). To the extent that Schools/Departments can plan and implement new ideas and initiatives, they will gain pride of ownership and morale will improve. Schools/Departments should be critically reviewed, and results of these reviews used to celebrate and reward successes and to spotlight problems for correction.

Crisis of Identity.

CSUS has recently been likened to a teenager who is unsure of who he is and what will be his life's direction. Our University has continued to struggle throughout its relatively brief history in defining an image or, better yet, in conveying its reputation as a truly comprehensive, regional institution of higher education. After nearly fifty years, CSUS is a University still searching for community respect, identity, and definition.

There are several facets of our identity crisis which, if resolved, can turn to our advantage. One is our commitment to intercollegiate athletics. We have a tremendous opportunity to change the perception of CSUS if we can be successful in Division I athletics. Success on the playing field can be parlayed into success in recruiting students and in earning recognition and rewards from the surrounding community. Another is our need to find a strategic niche. Many doubt that the "Capital Campus" concept has created a significant strategic advantage for CSUS. While many departments have benefited from our location in California's capital city and our ties to (particularly) state government, can these benefits be generalized to a motto and symbols for the entire University?

Finally, our recent inability to attract sufficient numbers of students is of great concern. Our "Celebration of Diversity" has been overdone; now many prospective students do not apply because they think CSUS only wants to recruit certain categories of students. Curricula structures also turn off potential students: consider the massive General Education structure, the inability to apply AP credits, and the foreign language and writing requirements. Many high school and community college counselors routinely advise their students not to choose CSUS. Thus, despite the good intentions of actions to diversify the student body, to strengthen desirable educational outcomes, to increase our international focus, and to manage enrollments, the result has been enrollment losses.

Recommendation 4. The remedy for the crisis of identity is commitment to long-term strategies to meet the University's long-term teaching and research goals. If our long-term strategy is to succeed at the Division I level of athletics, then we need to commit talents and resources (including financial) to ensure successful athletic endeavors.

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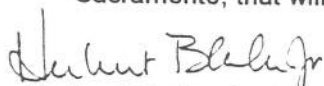
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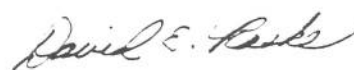
Recommendation 13. The President, after appropriate consultation, should proclaim a vision for California State University, Sacramento, that will provide the focus for us to move together into the future.

On the eve of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of California State University, Sacramento, we set forth the following thirteen recommendations:


1. To raise our self-esteem, we need to celebrate excellence within the campus community, and we need to make a concerted effort to gain positive external publicity. We need to devote resources to marketing and promoting the University, its programs and its activities. The benefits in University prestige, increased enrollment, and development funds will far exceed the costs.
2. Our University name should portray a positive image. And, we need to reexamine our school symbols (mascot, colors, logos). Because of the unattractiveness of our names, we should seriously consider changing the formal and/or informal names of California State University, Sacramento (Sac State). Here are some suggestions: **Sacramento University, Northern California State University, The State University of Sacramento.**
3. To cure apathy, we must place power at the major program level (School or Department). To the extent that Schools/Departments can plan and implement new ideas and initiatives, they will gain pride of ownership and morale will improve. Schools/Departments should be critically reviewed, and results of these reviews used to celebrate and reward successes and to spotlight problems for correction.
4. The remedy for the crisis of identity is commitment to long-term strategies to meet the University's long-term teaching and research goals. If our long-term strategy is to succeed at the Division I level of athletics, then we need to commit talents and resources (including financial) to ensure successful athletic endeavors.
5. Another long-term strategy should be to build and maintain plant and facilities that are appropriate to ensuring the best teaching and learning environment. Run down buildings, peeling paint, and dirty hallways are depressing to inhabit, and they are embarrassing to be seen by visitors. Facilities Management should have sufficient budget to clean and repair buildings.
6. Seriously commit to designing and building a residential/commercial/social core that will become a magnet to attract and keep students involved in the life of the campus.
7. Expand the "learning community" concept. Other campuses have created Freshman Colleges, University Colleges, cross-disciplinary core curricula to more tightly connect the student with other students, and with the campus and its academic programs. These models are intended to improve learning and increase student retention rates.
8. The campus needs to set criteria, or minimum standards, for effective teaching so that we can know when good teaching exists.
9. Our Appointment, Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (ARTP) and Post-Tenure policies and procedures should support good teaching. We should design a program to enhance teaching skills for all new faculty hires, giving release time to accommodate participation. Classroom observation of teaching should be required for tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review. The post-tenure review process should be strengthened to ensure effective teaching and currency in the discipline.
10. We should affirm to internal and external constituents that we are committed to excellence in teaching. This priority is stated in all CSU (System) and CSUS (University) goals, and we must continually demonstrate that we are committed to this charge. We should put money and release time into excellence in teaching. Future Performance Salary Increase (PSI) awards should reward those who are singled out for teaching excellence. Recipients of Outstanding Teaching Awards should be used as mentor teachers; with release time awarded to make them available for classroom observation, practicums, etc.
11. CSUS should develop a standardized, sequential GE model to replace the distributive model that currently exists.
12. A campus-wide discussion should be held, leading to a shared vision of where we are headed. Such a vision should be succinctly stated so that the entire campus community can have it in mind as we proceed with our various activities. The vision should provide the direction that will help us to resolve issues in institutional culture, campus life, and teaching excellence.
13. The President, after appropriate consultation, should proclaim a vision for California State University, Sacramento, that will provide the focus for us to move together into the future.


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Addendum
Academic Senate Agenda
November 14, 1996

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

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