

Board Speech March 23

Good afternoon, Board of Trustees!

I know that I'm supposed to come out here and say that now that we are in the middle of our \$200,000 institutional review, we are at a turning point, and all will be well. I wish that is the case, and I hope it will be the case.

I have had recently some good interactions that give me some hope that this campus can turn itself around – and hence working conditions and compensation improve for faculty and others at our college. For example, I found refreshing that once the district realized that the list it had provided to us to negotiate pay for SLO assessment, the list we based our negotiations on for weeks, turned out to be inaccurate, Kiran immediately called me, told me about it, and we went from there. Not only was MPCTA quickly informed, the period of pay for these assessments was expanded, too. I found the conversation I had with Kiran a good one. I felt there was listening and communicating happening.

This was great on a personal level.

But, unfortunately, there is still much dissatisfaction that I'm hearing from faculty. Here's an email from a faculty member describing what he's observing on campus: "...we [faculty] are tuning out and turning off. Looking for other work and biding time until retirement have become the conversational norm around here. Not exactly the hallmark of a healthy, growing organization." I can't tell you how many conversations I've had where faculty tell me they are so frustrated that they "are abandoning ship."

At the last general meeting, one faculty member expressed that she was looking for work elsewhere; there was several nodding of heads as these faculty indicated that they too or others they knew were looking to get out. This is sad.

Why do faculty feel this way? The scheduling process, for one, involved series of actions and decisions based on little analysis, and certainly what appeared to be no analysis to many of us in the trenches. This disruption of basic working conditions has certainly been one cause for faculty upset. Some faculty in my division are still not sure what they are going to be teaching in the fall, and we're in March. That's unheard of!

You know, there's a meme that has come up in a couple of administration powerpoints. It shows a grumpy looking cat, and it says "Two things I hate: Change and the way things are." Is that what admin thinks we faculty are? Just these emotional faculty who hate change or who are whiners that are always complaining? Just grumpy faculty, like that cat, never trying to improve our school? Really?

This insulting meme misses the point. Faculty do not resist change; faculty want change – but change based on evidence, research, data, not change for change sake, not

change to just show something is changing, not change made with minimal forethought, not change done simply to copy what is done at other colleges. I believe we are learning that very lesson from CBT – at least one of you attended the enrollment management meetings where Pam said enrollment management begins with analysis.

Yet, we changed our scheduling, which directly changes our working conditions, with little to no analysis. We didn't even have a target FTES. Cap is not a target. I remember when Dr. Kinsella came here last year, he mentioned that Gavilan had an FTES target above cap when the State cut community college caps a few years back. Instead, we at MPC, against faculty advice, just aligned ourselves with the then lowered cap number. We did so by cutting classes. Now, we are suffering because of that hasty decision. Faculty are tired of seeing attempts at change that are not well-thought out.

So...When faculty complain, it isn't a complaint about change. It's a complaint about illogical and evidence-lacking decisions that affect our work.

But I don't want to belabor this. I think, hope, enrollment management and scheduling attempt two will be done better. I just hope that we did not make any permanent damage this time around.

Another issue I want to bring to the board's attention has to do with our salary adjustment formula, Article 16.8 of our contract. MPCTA is greatly disheartened that the district is not follow clear contract language and past practice in order to implement that article. MPCTA would like to remind the district that Article 16.8 is a contract obligation. There are codified steps to implementing that salary adjustment formula, yet we have been asked to do different steps and to use the IBB process instead. MPCTA would like to let you know that implementation of contract is outside of the negotiation process.

To implement the salary adjustment formula, Article 16.8, the Association has emailed the district and asked for the required information and to meet – per contract language and past practice. The Association has received no email response, not even one of acknowledgement of receipt of our first email dated February 26 nor of our second dated March 11. Also, we have not received the needed budgetary information that is necessary for implementation of Article 16.8. The only responses we have received have been a brief discussion in the March 9 negotiations meeting (12 days after our first email), in which the district told us the formula looks to them not applicable, and a brief exchange yesterday (13 days after the March 9 email) in which I asked if the district had received our email and planned to meet with us and provide us with the budget information we requested. The answer was brief, simply that the district wants to speak with in negotiations this week.

So... In short, the district is not following past practice nor contractual language at this point on this contract obligation. The matter is simple; the language is clear; past practice is clear.

This is feeling like déjà vu from last year as we battled then for our restoration pay. The Association hopes that is not the case. We request that the district simply implement a contract obligation. We hope the Board will look into this matter, so that faculty (and others with their “me, too” clauses) will receive the retroactive salary adjustment due them.

A reminder: If we have any financial issues at this school, it is not coming from the faculty compensation package. In 2014-15, the latest actuals we have, costs for employees were only 76.7% of total expenses, when the California Community College average is more like 82-85%. To fight us needlessly on the salary adjustment formula implementation is a futile and wasteful fight, as it was last year when the district fought us on restoration pay and the retroactive pay that came from that restoration clause. I want to remind the district that in 2012-13, our legal fees (Object Code 5710) in actuals were \$21,200; in 13-14, it was \$63, 762; in 14-15, it was \$199, 783. Let’s not make this year another high legal fee year.

Listen, play fair, and follow the contract rules. That will make for better working conditions – and a happier workforce, not a workforce that seems to want to jump ship.

