



Resolution Regarding the Chancellor's Communication Policy and Practices

For Consideration on April 7, 2020

Whereas, the chancellor announced during the January 17 District FLEX Professional Development day that the district administration¹ will eliminate the Faculty, Administration and Staff listserv (FAS) “within the next 30 days” and create a constituent-exclusive set of listserv permissions, stifling free speech and preventing constituent groups across the district from communicating and collaborating freely;

Whereas, the chancellor’s rationale for eliminating the listserv cited “vitriol” and a need to “create a sense of respect and belonging” at Peralta;

Whereas, the Laney Faculty Senate passed a resolution January 21², endorsed by the District Academic Senate on February 4³, urging collaboration and consultation with the chancellor and expressing concern about the notion of eliminating the listserv without consultation; the DAS sent a letter to the chancellor on February 5⁴ and members of DAS did not receive a response; the Peralta Federation of Teachers sent a letter to the chancellor on February 10 about the matter and did not receive a response;

Whereas the FAS listserv was eliminated on April 2, and the Laney Faculty Senate would like to voice their direct opposition to this latest example of the chancellor’s lack of consultation, undemocratic constraints on free-flowing communication at our public institution and several incidents of inappropriate, unprofessional communication that is tantamount to bullying—the opposite of creating “a sense of respect and belonging”;

Whereas the elimination of the FAS listserv compromises the effectiveness of participatory governance committee faculty chairs in the performance of their duties, limiting their ability to make announcements and disseminate meeting materials in accordance with the Brown Act;

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oee_4OWnVbw

² <https://laney.edu/faculty-senate/wp-content/uploads/sites/77/2020/02/Resolution-Regarding-Academic-Free-Speech-and-District-Electronic-Mail-Use-Policies-Final.pdf>

³ <https://web.peralta.edu/das/files/2020/02/200204DAS-minutes.pdf>

⁴ <http://laney.edu/faculty-senate/wp-content/uploads/sites/77/2020/04/Moore-Stanback-Stroud-Email.pdf>

Whereas district policy pronouncements that impinge upon intra-campus operations without input from said campus constituents is not concordant with best communication and decision-making practices as set forth in ACCJC Standards IV. A. 6 and IV. D. 4.⁵

Whereas, the chancellor intercepted an email thread of department chairs she was not part of on March 9, publicly berating part-time faculty member and department chair Michael Mejia that his questions and comments about the COVID-19 response from the district were “exhausting” and that his “role in the district” did not make him “any more virtuous or legitimate than any other employee in the district,” telling him that his questions and concerns did not model “teamwork” or the “common good” and that openly questioning the district’s response to the virus did not “decontaminate a culture of contempt.”⁶

Whereas, the chancellor has singled out and chastised 50-year faculty member William Lepowsky, who has worked for over 20 years to rectify district misinformation and lack of information by creating much praised one-page calendars he disseminated to all district employees;

Be it resolved, the Laney College Faculty Senate wishes to bring their concerns, dissatisfaction and dismay about the chancellor’s communication policies and practices to the urgent attention of the Peralta community, the Board of Trustees, all district stakeholders and the East Bay community that our district serves;

Be it resolved, the Laney College Faculty Senate reminds the chancellor that the sense of “respect and belonging” she cited in January should be modeled by everyone, including the chancellor, and that Peralta’s “culture of contempt” is further fueled by the chancellor’s caustic communication practices;

Be it further resolved, the same respect and standards of communication the chancellor expects from faculty, classified professionals and administrators also apply to the chancellor, and we demand a culture of collaboration, critical inquiry, collegiality and civility.

Approved unanimously on April 7, 2020

⁵ https://accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/Accreditation-Standards_-Adopted-June-2014.pdf

⁶ <http://laney.edu/faculty-senate/wp-content/uploads/sites/77/2020/04/Mejia-Stanback-Stroud-Email.pdf>