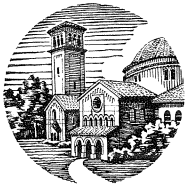




15 December 2015

Dear Trustees and Chancellor White,

On 10 December 2015, in an unprecedented event for CSU, Chico, the Academic Senate voted in favor of a Resolution titled *Senate Statement of No Confidence in the President, Interim Provost, and Vice President for Business and Finance* (separate document attached). After nearly four hours of deliberation and before hundreds of campus stakeholders, the final vote was 24 in favor and 8 in opposition. There are many on campus who are thankful for and validated by this final declaration, but let us be clear, there is no rejoicing about the cumulative circumstances that precipitated this vote.



To the best of our ability, this letter is intended to describe why the majority of faculty, staff, and student representatives of the CSU, Chico Academic Senate arrived at this resolution. As officers of the Academic Senate who have worked tirelessly to restore trust, transparency, and shared governance, it brings us no pleasure to write this letter. It is intended to contextualize and provide an accounting of the major points that precipitated the majority vote of no confidence. We acknowledge that the resolution vote was not unanimous and there were minority perspectives about adopting this measure. However, this is a conclusion drawn by a democratic body. The following is, necessarily, an incomplete story and represents our best faith effort to explain the reasons behind the majority decision. We have attempted to be as factually correct as possible and submit to you the following background (also see appended timeline):

We are dedicated to the well-being of our students which is at the heart of the academic mission of the university. Many feel that the last several years have been marked by executive administrator mismanagement of campus that has unnecessarily added obstacles to this fundamental work. As you may be aware from previous correspondence our campus has been in crisis for quite some time. Many campus stakeholders have said this resolution for a vote of no confidence has been “a long time coming.” Over the years, campus-wide trust in our ability to share in governing together has declined as a result of a lack of transparency and good-faith sharing during decision-making. Faculty, staff, and administrators also have indicated via campus surveys, forums, and other venues that they feel a sense of instability and fear here at CSU, Chico. Many feel this is attributed in large part to the pervasive dismissal of shared governance principles, civility, and good-faith collaborative decision-making.

Three Years of Excessive Turnover and Instability

In spring 2012, our then Provost suddenly resigned from her position. In spring 2014, our Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs quit in the middle of his contract. In fall 2014, three weeks into the semester, our new Provost abruptly resigned. Coinciding with those two years, we experienced the systematic departure of every college dean. The average length of service among all new and interim deans at the time of our last permanent Provost’s resignation was about seven months. In spring 2015, the Academic Affairs Vice Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies resigned. In summer 2015, our new Academic Affairs Vice Provost for Budget and Academic Resources was asked to resign after being on the job four months. In



fall 2015, our Associate Vice President of Faculty Affairs in Academic Affairs left. Many other senior staff and mid-level managers have departed from the university during the academic year. Leaders and talented employees do not do this with such frequency when working conditions and management are satisfactory.

Campus Morale and Pattern of Disrespect for the Campus Community

In spring 2014, in a spontaneous moment at the end of the Academic Senate meeting, senators expressed the concerns of their constituencies about the low morale on campus. Student representatives, retired faculty reps, staff reps, and college reps all said they felt burdened by what they were hearing. We learned at that time that faculty groups were forming to discuss how to take action. They had lost confidence in senior management.



The Academic Senate responded immediately and worked with the President to create and jointly issue a brief questionnaire that would be used to elucidate the depth and possible causes of low morale and to inform the creation of a more comprehensive annual campus morale survey.

Four hundred people responded to the questionnaire in the last week of the semester despite concerns over anonymity and retaliation. When the results came in, they were extremely negative. Instead of embracing this opportunity and challenge to reach out to the campus, the President called into question the methods, tools, and results of the questionnaire. It took months to distribute the results to the campus community (23 October 2014).

Many issues that were raised at the spring 2014 senate meeting were confirmed by the results of the questionnaire. Most egregious of all, staff at many levels repeatedly complained of the negative atmosphere of workplace intimidation and bullying. This has continued to this day.

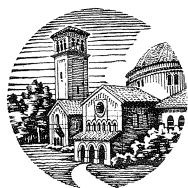
Questionnaire results also reinforced frequent complaints received from all areas of the campus by senate officers regarding the Vice President of Business and Finance's interpretation and implementation of EO 1000 with respect to the allocation of space and facilities on campus. The guidelines that the VPBF developed to implement EO 1000 excluded community members, dissuaded faculty from using campus space for innovative projects, and was prohibitive to student groups needing space for their gatherings.

Additionally, policies that affected staff and faculty were being written and distributed with little, or in some cases, no consultation. For example, a new EM 13-078 Policy for University Facilities Allocation and Use was posted in February 2014 with no consultation. It replaced a previous policy and gave complete and total jurisdiction over every space on campus, centralizing all control into the hands of the Cabinet, with no faculty input.

Human resources, travel reimbursement, campus security, conflict of interest, and other policies and internal MOUs with auxiliaries have been developed and interpreted by the VPBF in the most stringent and fiscally conservative fashion with too little consideration for the mission of the university and student success. The actions were taken without consultation and consistently suggest penurious motives and a spirit of distrust for faculty and staff.



The pace of staff, faculty, and management replacement has been inadequate and has contributed significantly to loss of morale. For example, in spring 2014, the Director of Research and Sponsored Programs had given six months' notice of (early) retirement and there had been no efforts to replace her. In June 2015, the Vice Provost for Budget and Academic Resources was asked to leave. To date, neither of these critical positions have been filled and the immense workload has been shouldered by already overworked staff. In both of these cases controversial reorganizations were developed. Since these positions remain vacant, it appears that reorganization has been prioritized above workload considerations and the associated damage to morale and the central mission of the university.



The attempt to reorganize Research and Sponsored Programs occurred without faculty or staff input. The proposed reorganization of Academic Affairs met wide-spread resistance from the campus. An immediate pause to reorganization and associated hold on the posting of the budget position was requested by elected campus leaders to allow for further analysis and consultation. In early fall 2015, the campus was told the search to fill a modified budget position would be held (as requested) pending further consultation, leading many to believe that reorganization also was deferred. However the current Academic Affairs organization chart indicates changes have been implemented including the removal of Academic Senate as a support unit reporting to the Provost. Other reorganizations of divisional units have occurred with no consultation. Examples include the relocation of Enrollment Management and Human Resources.

A few years ago, when a former Provost proposed shortening winter intersession it sparked campus-wide debate over the effect on the campus mission. At that time, the interests of students prevailed and the proposed changes to the Academic Calendar were rejected. Two years later, without consultation nor warning, the President unilaterally reversed this decision and shortened intersession at the expense of the mission of the university, citing the benefits of not holding commencement on Memorial Day weekend.

Approximately, two years ago, a subset of Cabinet instigated a policy unique among the other CSU campuses by implementing probationary, rather than immediate, retreat rights in administrative contracts. This effected associate deans, deans, and other upper level administrators for the first several years of their contracts and further eroded morale, security, and trust.

Despite the Campus Climate Questionnaire results and subsequent pronouncements by the administration to address consultation and shared governance concerns, the President in October 2014 appointed an Interim Provost with little or no campus consultation. The wisdom of the President's selection was called to question, because the appointee lacked the minimum qualifications required in the previously established Provost job description. Other concerns were expressed. These concerns were never properly addressed by the President.



Resolution to Avert Vote of No Confidence

In fall 2014, our permanent Provost unexpectedly resigned three weeks into the semester. It was a blow that catalyzed a chorus of protest in the academy. Action was being demanded and several groups on campus began calling for a vote of no confidence. The senate officers felt there were management problems that could not be solved without outside assistance from the Chancellor. The officers of the Academic Senate took preemptive steps to avoid a no confidence vote and authored a resolution. When this resolution was considered by the Academic Senate, it overwhelmingly passed as *Request for Review of and Assistance in Strengthening Campus Shared Governance, Communication, and Morale* (25 September 2014) and hopes were raised.



At that time, the campus was anticipating the appointment of an Interim Provost. The senate officers were concerned about campus morale as well as a commitment to consultation and shared governance during this process. There was significant concern and anxiety about the stability of Academic Affairs and despite concerns regarding qualifications, everyone wanted the Interim Provost to succeed. The resolution requesting assistance passed promptly in part to ensure that the new appointee would not be causally associated with the deteriorated conditions.

Resolution Response Team

Our resolution requested that the Chancellor provide support to the campus to help us restore transparency and shared governance. His response instead charged us to work with our administration and he did not provide the requested assistance. In order to move forward in good faith, the senate followed the Chancellor's instructions and attempted to solve these problems on our own. We formed the Resolution Response Team (RRT) in fall 2014. In phase I of the process, faculty and staff members of the team worked tirelessly to thoroughly investigate, query constituents, and interview departed leaders to determine the causes of our campus sense of crisis.

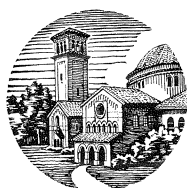
In the second phase of our work, meetings began between Cabinet and the faculty and staff members of the team. It proved difficult to find times to meet that were acceptable to the administrative membership. When we did meet, often Cabinet members would arrive late and sometimes not at all. Meetings would typically begin with another half hour or more addressing Cabinet concerns about the synopsis or the agenda. When sharing the results of our investigations with our executive leadership in the RRT meetings, we were met by demands from our President to provide transcripts, names, and departments of people who talked to us. The faculty and staff team members refused due to fears of retaliation against these individuals, many of whom were still employed at our campus. It was primarily during our President's emergency medical absence (March-June 2015), and the subsequent tenure of Acting President Richmond, that we were able to move forward and complete a preliminary progress report for the campus. Although the RRT continued to meet sporadically for a year, additional issues kept arising making the limited progress seem futile.



The following is a direct quote from the 30 April 2015 RRT progress report. We believe the sentiment still stands:

“As a campus, we have been addressing critical concerns regarding campus morale and shared governance. To understand the issues, we have examined the results of our campus climate questionnaire, reflected upon recent and historical events, held discussions with the Senate, and gathered information by talking with current and former administrators, faculty, staff, and students. These conversations reveal a campus community stressed by the rapid turnover of its leadership and the lack of good faith efforts to engage campus and community constituents in decision-making, information sharing, and shared governance.

A widely held perception is that decisions are made without adequate consultation and therefore the quality of decisions has suffered. Furthermore, the high level of grievances on campus, public statements, and the climate questionnaire indicate that employees at many levels feel bullied, marginalized, and fear retribution.”



Although it is true that some progress has been made toward goals stated in the 30 April 2015 RRT progress report, many feel it has not been swift enough and decisions continue to be made with insufficient or no consultation. The administrative missteps have, in the balance, continued to affect the stability of Academic Affairs and its integral connections throughout the University. Many stakeholders have now clearly lost faith in the RRT process.

Creation and Implementation of Campus Climate Survey

In the middle of the 14/15 academic year, the Interim Provost assembled a new task force and charged them with creating a comprehensive Campus Climate Survey. Concerns were raised about a shift in ownership from a collaborative venture between the senate and the President to a singular initiative controlled solely by the Interim Provost. The Campus Climate Survey was subsequently constructed by the task force and informed by the Campus Climate Questionnaire results. As with the Questionnaire, the timing of implementation for the Survey again overlapped with the tail end of spring semester. Despite the distractions at the end of an academic year, 1200 of the 2000 eligible faculty, staff, and administrators responded to this very lengthy and comprehensive instrument. The results again pointed to a lack of confidence in our senior management. Again the methods were challenged by the President and the distribution of the results delayed at his insistence until after his retirement announcement at Fall Convocation.

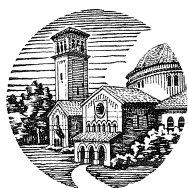
Continued Dismissal of Consultation and Shared Decision-Making

In June 2015, without warning nor explanation, the permanent Vice Provost for Budget and Academic Resources was forced from office by the Interim Provost after only four months on the job. This dismissal was seen by many as negating the results of a national search that followed legitimate campus policy ensuring shared governance protocols. As previously mentioned the post remains vacant and so far the Interim Provost has publicly refused to consider even a temporary replacement. Instead, she then began efforts to reorganize Academic Affairs. The consensus of elected campus leaders was (and is) that such major



reorganization should not be implemented by an executive holding an interim position. Disturbingly, the currently published Academic Affairs organization chart indicates a vacant Budget Director position in place of the former Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. This new and official Academic Affairs organization chart indicates other important changes that have not been vetted. These decisions represent a dismissal of shared decision-making and due consultation.

In fall 2015, the President in violation of former promises, common practice, acknowledged imperatives of the RRT, and his own Executive Memorandum (EM 04-043) announced his decision to appoint the Interim Provost as permanent without a national search. Following an eruption of protest from the campus community, this egregious decision was reversed but the campus uproar continued. The unilateral actions and subsequent campus turmoil prompted the officers of the Academic Senate to invite the Chancellor and the CSU Statewide Academic Senate Chair to an *Open Forum on Shared Governance and the Campus Climate Survey* scheduled for 27 August 2015. The Chancellor responded by dispatching two CSU Vice Chancellors who joined the CSU Statewide Academic Senate Chair at this event. The next morning (28 August 2015) after the open forum, due to widespread concerns regarding retribution for speaking out, senate officers facilitated a meeting of only elected leaders of campus constituencies. At this meeting, the results of the forum and survey were condensed into a preliminary list of recommended actions that could signal to campus that concerns were being heard. The two CSU Vice Chancellors attended this meeting as well. The senate officers communicated these recommended actions to the Chancellor, campus, and Cabinet on 3 September 2015. Instead of support, the officers received a reprimand from the Chancellor that included claims of incivility and personal agendizing.



Calls for Assistance

Our efforts to secure outside assistance from the Chancellor have been insufficient. Our first request for assistance on 26 September 2014 was met with a charge to work things out with our local executive administrators. Our second request extended an invitation to the Chancellor to attend our 27 August 2015 Open Forum. We were pleased that the Chancellor responded by sending top level representatives to attend. This positive response was communicated widely and precipitated enthusiastic expressions of hope and optimism from a stressed campus community who felt that concerns would finally receive appropriate attention. Our third request on 3 September 2015 was surprisingly met with condemnation. The Chancellor wrote in his 15 September 2015 response, "This letter and list of recommended actions are in conflict with the principles of civility, respect and shared governance". Upon sharing this last message, campus constituents conveyed a sense of despair and loss of hope.

The Catalyzing Budget Crisis

The most recent example of deficient consultation, that has caused many to question the competency of our executive administrators, centers on the Academic Affairs budget allocations for the 15/16 academic year. The campus received its state budget allocation in August 2015. In the wake of the dismissal of the Vice Provost for Budget and Academic Resources, senate officers repeatedly expressed deep concerns about the ongoing vacancy in this critical budget analysis position within Academic Affairs. The Interim Provost



consistently responded that everything was moving forward “just fine” and that a new allocation model for colleges was being crafted by a team of Deans. Colleges and support units in Academic Affairs were assured that their budgets would be essentially the same as the 14/15 academic year and that rollover dollars would be returned. When the final budget allocations were released, shortly before Thanksgiving break and with only a few weeks remaining in the fall semester, Deans and support unit managers were clearly caught off guard and some instructed their chairs to begin planning severe cuts for spring. Rollover funds that had been budgeted were reduced for nearly all units and in some cases, completely eliminated. Many departments received news of cuts up to 20%.



The impact of these budget reductions represented a severe threat to the academic mission. On the Friday before Thanksgiving Break, the very day that registration closed for students, department chairs were being forced to decide whether or not to cancel classes and eliminate hundreds of seats for students, thereby also deciding to lay off or reduce the work load of many part-time faculty and student workers who had the expectation of employment in the coming year. Impacts communicated to the senate officers and other managers included the potential disruption to timely degree completion, the potential loss of financial aid if students dipped below 12 units, and severely reduced funding for part-time faculty and student workers. Library managers, to accommodate the cuts, reported they would be forced to lay off student workers, close during the week at 6:00 pm, and severely reduce weekend operating hours. There were many concerns and questions.

On that same Friday our Interim Provost was out of town and our President was out of the country. In the morning, at the regularly scheduled Executive Committee meeting the only member of Cabinet available was the VPBF, who also serves as the University CFO. She communicated that she could not answer many questions about the Academic Affairs budget, but affirmed that there was no statewide budget crisis.

Through the President’s Chief of Staff the senate officers electronically communicated the sense of crisis to the Interim Provost. The Chief of Staff reported that the Interim Provost said she was working with the deans to allocate additional funds, implying there was no cause for alarm. Senate officers then requested immediate reassurances be provided by noon that day to the Deans and department chairs to reinforce this. Distribution of this reassurance did not go out until after 2:00 pm, leaving only three hours of the workday for deans and chairs to respond. By this time, many courses had already been cancelled. This also meant that many student and faculty workers in our community went home for the holiday break with the notion they may be losing vital income and employment.



Resolution of No Confidence

The eleventh hour delivery of budget allocations that were apparently devoid of consultation, as evidenced by the response of the college deans, publically illustrated a depth of mismanagement that once again catalyzed our campus into action and culminated in this vote of no confidence. Senate officers responded by holding an open forum on the budget to collect concerns, questions, and suggestions and to model a civil response to these dire circumstances. Cabinet was provided advance notice of the forum together with an invitation to attend. The concerns, questions, and suggestions were tabulated and widely shared, particularly with Cabinet.

Two days after the forum at the regularly scheduled 3 December 2015 meeting of the Academic Senate, a proposed resolution *Senate Statement of No Confidence in the President, Interim Provost, and Vice President for Business and Finance* was added to the senate agenda as an introduction item by a senator who was acting on behalf of his constituency. The Academic Senate agenda is typically set by the Executive Committee, and while the addition of an item on the day of a senate meeting is unusual, senators have that right. The addition was approved by majority vote of the senate following normal procedure. After extensive discussion, the resolution also was approved as an introduction item by a vote of 29 to 3 by secret ballot. This vote meant that the majority of senators found the resolution to be worthy of further debate at the next meeting, thus solidifying its inclusion on the next senate agenda.

One week later, on 10 December 2015, the issue was thoroughly debated in front of hundreds of campus stakeholders. Debate included prepared statements and petitions from senators, Cabinet, and members of the gallery that were both in favor and in opposition to the resolution. Senators expressed that they would be voting to represent their constituents, and some stated that many academic departments were in unanimous support. Others articulated their added responsibility to vote in support of former provosts, community members, staff, faculty, students, and other administrators who were believed to be casualties of the current administration and who had made heartfelt requests for help. Senators also voiced that many in support of this vote of no confidence could not speak for themselves for fear of retribution. A motion to eliminate two executives from the resolution was offered and defeated. Another motion to postpone the discussion definitely also did not pass. In the end the Academic Senate voted by secret ballot to pass the no confidence resolution as an action item with a strong majority of 24 in favor and 8 in opposition.

This action represents a call for new competent, committed, and inspired leadership and is a report card on the performance of current key executives. It should be emphasized that the vote of no confidence is in no way motivated by personal antipathy or feelings of vengeance. It is instead the reasoned conclusion of educators about the performance of specific administrators, which unfortunately has been deemed markedly unsatisfactory by the strong majority of senators. With resolve and hope, we look forward to the new leadership ahead and will heartily welcome a new administration on this campus that recognizes and embraces the spirit of engagement which characterizes our campus community and frames how we collaboratively decide to best serve our students.



Academic Senate Office
530-898-6201

We remain as dedicated as ever to the purpose and meaning of the charge the people of California have entrusted us with to educate its citizens to meet the challenges of the future. We have been given a public trust and will endeavor to remain faithful to it.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth "Betsy" Boyd
Chair, Academic Senate



Rick Ford
Vice Chair, Academic Senate

Joe Crotts
EPPC Chair, Academic Senate

Ann Schulte
Statewide Academic Senator

Tim Sistrunk
Secretary, Academic Senate

Jennifer Meadows
FASP Chair, Academic Senate

Paula Selvester
Statewide Academic Senator

cc: President, Paul Zingg
Interim Provost, Susan Elrod
Vice President for Business and Finance, Lori Hoffman
CSU Statewide Academic Senate Chair, Steven Filling
CSU Campus Senate Chairs

CSU, Chico Academic Senate
Vote of No Confidence Historical Timeline

Spring 2012 – Permanent Provost unexpectedly resigns.

2013 to present – Academic Affairs begins filling vacancies after systematic resignation and retirement of all seven college deans.

Spring 2014 – Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs resigns.

May 2014 – President and Academic Senate jointly administer a Campus Climate Questionnaire to assess concerns regarding campus morale and to inform the future creation of a more comprehensive Campus Climate Survey.

September 11, 2014 – Permanent Provost abruptly and unexpectedly resigns citing family and health issues.

September 25, 2014 – Academic Senate adopts a Resolution: [Request for Review of and Assistance in Strengthening Campus Shared Governance, Communication, and Morale](#). The resolution with a [cover letter](#) are sent to the Chancellor.

October 23, 2014 – Results of the [Campus Climate Questionnaire](#) are released to campus.

October 14, 2014 – Chancellor [responds](#) to the senate request for review and assistance.

Late Fall 2014 to Present – Cabinet and senate join together to form the Resolution Response Team.

April 30, 2015 – Resolution Response Team issues year-end [progress report](#).

Spring 2015 – Interim Provost's Campus Climate Survey Working Group implements a campus-wide climate [survey](#) for faculty, staff, and administrators.

June 2015 – Academic Affairs Vice Provost for Budget and Academic Resources resigns four months into contract. As of 14 December 2015, this position remains vacant.

August 20, 2015 – During [Fall Convocation](#), the President announces his retirement, effective at the end of the 2015-16 academic year.

August 21, 2015 – President unilaterally appoints Interim Provost as permanent Provost, in violation of his own [EM 04-043](#) and precipitating severe campus unrest.

August 24, 2015 – The [Preliminary Report on the Campus Climate Survey](#) is released to campus.

August 24, 2015 – Under the delegation of duties and responsibilities authority in the [Constitution of the Faculty of CSU, Chico](#), the Senate Executive Officers rename the scheduled retreat an Open Forum on Shared Governance and Campus Climate for August 27, 2015 and invite all campus stakeholders.

August 24, 2015 – Senate Executive Officers write Chancellor, inviting him or his representative to attend the *Open Forum on Shared Governance and the Campus Climate Survey*. [\[Invitation to Attend Open Forum\]](#)

August 25, 2015 – President announces to the campus that Interim Provost declined the appointment to the permanent Provost position.

August 27, 2015 – The Open Forum is held, with several hundred campus employees (staff, administrators, and faculty) and students in attendance. The CSU Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs and CSU Vice Chancellor for Human Resources attended the forum at the Chancellor's request. The CSU Statewide Academic Senate Chair also attends and [presents overview on shared governance](#) in the CSU.

August 28, 2015 – An Action Council, comprised of many elected representatives on campus, met to discuss the results of the Open Forum, and prioritized the issues facing the campus. This meeting also was attended by the CSU Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs and the CSU Vice Chancellor for Human Resources.

September 3, 2015 – The results of the Action Council (a list of actions to be taken, as well as a list of requested actions) were sent to Chancellor. It was then distributed, first to Cabinet, and then to the entire campus community. [\[Request for help and Recommended Actions\]](#)

September 15, 2015 – Chancellor [responds to the letter of 9/3/15](#) indicating disappointment and urging reconsideration of approach.

October 2, 2015 – President issues an [Administrative Update](#) independent of the Resolution Response Team.

November 2015 – Interim Provost releases the Academic Affairs budget allocations to the Deans. Some Deans notify their chairs of the need to cancel sections reducing available work for lecturers.

December 1, 2015 – Senate Officers host an *Open Forum on Academic Affairs Budget - Comments, Concerns, and Suggestions* to hear concerns, questions and suggestions from the campus community. The [presentation](#) and [results](#) were distributed to the Academic Senate. [\[Concerns, Questions and Suggestions\]](#)

December 3, 2015 – A senator moves to modify the agenda to add a resolution titled *Senate Statement of No Confidence in the President, Interim Provost, and Vice President of Business and Finance* as an introduction item. The motion to amend the agenda passes. The Interim Provost also [presented the Academic Affairs budget allocations](#). The resolution, as an introduction item, is approved by secret ballot. [\[December 3, 2015 Senate Meeting Minutes\]](#)

December 10, 2015 – Academic Senate deliberates for nearly four hours and passes by majority the Resolution: [Senate Statement of No Confidence in the President, Interim Provost, and Vice President for Business and Finance](#) with a final vote of 24 in favor and 8 in opposition.