

CSU Faculty Leadership Group Statement on President Ojakian's "Students First" Proposal

On April 3, 2017, CSCU President Mark Ojakian dropped a bombshell — the "Students First" Plan — into the hands of the employees of the CSCU System. Three days later, the Board of Regents approved that plan with little discussion or questioning: a plan that will change the lives and traditions of thousands of students, faculty, and staff across the system. Surprisingly, BOR Chair Matt Fleury merely recited the resolution without providing advance written copies to the public, and a vote followed. The CSU Faculty Leadership Group, while acknowledging the need for change, is concerned about the process by which this plan was developed and by which it will be implemented. More specifically, we:

- acknowledge that the CSCU system is facing the severe consequences of many years of shrinking state appropriations;
- understand that the plan purportedly will accomplish a \$41 million savings via a two-pronged strategy that would "eliminate redundancies" in certain "back office" functions and "operationally consolidate 12 community colleges into one;"
- commend the fact that the plan is intended to protect learning, teaching and student services and to allow for an increase in the number of tenure-track faculty across the system;
- are greatly dismayed, however, that deliberations creating the plan were not public and were essentially clandestine;
- are deeply concerned — as professors and professionals in higher education — that the likelihood of sweeping changes to our system is based on a 15-page PowerPoint Presentation, completely lacking in details regarding how such savings would be achieved.

The plan calls for Implementation Teams to flesh out all those missing details. The deadline for that work to be completed — an implausible 84 days away (July 1, 2017), will prevent these teams from conducting the careful information gathering, strategy development, and solicitation of community input necessary to ensure a thoughtful, prudent, and reasonable implementation process. Despite our misgivings, we

- will exercise our right to shared governance and will participate in this process and expect that faculty will have substantial representation on all Implementation Teams;
- insist that we determine the manner in which the CSU faculty representatives are selected;
- agree to participate on the condition that our colleagues in other higher education unions in CSCU also be on the Implementation Teams; and

- expect that the work our members do on the teams be of substance, be recognized by the BOR as having true influence and given fair consideration, and that our participation not be window-dressing in the guise of shared governance.

The CSU Faculty Leadership Group

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Daniel Barrett (Psychology), Senate President, WCSU

Jay Brower (Communication & Media Arts), Faculty Advisory Committee to the BOR, WCSU

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April 7, 2017