BCCFA Emergency Membership Meeting
Minutes of Meeting of Thursday, June 3, 2010
2:00-3:20 PM
TEC-128

Quorum Present

This was an emergency meeting of the BCCFA, called to discuss the actions and behavior of the college administration, especially those of the college President.

The chair of the Nominations and Elections committee confirmed that there was a quorum.

The meeting was called to order by Peter Helff, President, BCCFA, at 2:05.

1. Professor Helff explained the purpose of the meeting. He talked about actions taken against the faculty, and the dispiriting tone of the college. There is a strong sense among the members, especially the senior faculty, that the tone of the college, set by the administration, has never been worse. One faculty member said that we work at a great college, and have fine jobs, but it is miserable to come to work these days. Another member called the atmosphere at the college “negative, hostile, unpleasant.”

2. A number of faculty members shared their concerns: nursing faculty spoke about the disrespectful way they have been treated by the President, who, for example, during a meeting about the administration of the Nursing Program during his first year at the college, refused to remove the Director despite a preponderance of evidence that she was not doing her job and was harming the program. At one meeting, the President said to the Nurses that if you did not do what you were told to, “I’ll bring some women in here to do it.” The situation was not rectified for several months, during which time the BCCFA executive officers attended numerous meetings with members of the Nursing Department and the administration, particularly the AVP and the
President. Finally, after overwhelming evidence unequivocally showed that the complaints of the Nurses were accurate, the Director was begrudgingly removed.

Members of the WEX faculty spoke of threats made to them, about harassment. One member of the department reported that this college has become “a cash-cow rather than an educational institution.”

A sample of other criticisms, of which there were many: Support Staff members are “being treated like dirt”; Lois Marshall was threatened on an ongoing basis by the administration, was told that she was making too much money; one faculty member, at a meeting of the Faculty Senate which the President attended, and at which he took questions from Senators, was insulted after asking a question about a holiday party; room S-319, the Dental Hygiene Lab, has still not been upgraded.

There were faculty who reported what they regarded as attacks on the academic integrity of the college: academic divisional deans have been appointed who have neither academic training nor experience; three-week courses are being offered in areas where the faculty believe such offerings are academically unsound, such as English Composition.

3. There was discussion of a grievance being filed on behalf of an academic department chair, who the administration has refused to reappoint after she was re-elected according to the rules of the Academic Chairs’ Memo of Agreement

4. President Helff spoke about the college-wide Promotion and Sabbatical Leave Committee, which is chaired by the Academic Vice President and which the President is not, and never has been, a member of: the committee has existed for decades, always under the veil of confidentiality. Only with confidentiality can the members of the committee do their work fairly and without fear of retribution. Under the current administration this confidentiality has consistently, regularly been violated by the administration. In one instance the President called to his office a member of the committee who made a comment during a meeting that disturbed the President. Helff called the behavior of the AVP, as committee chair, and the President, in his intrusions into the work of the committee, “unseemly.”

5. Throughout the meeting, there were questions about a vote. One member said, we came here to vote. The mood in the room was one of anger toward the actions of the administration. Professor Helff explained that the purpose of the meeting was informational, that many members have not been aware of how others have been treated and of what has been taking place throughout the college—and that the meeting was intended to provide information to members and to afford members the opportunity to share their concerns. There was some disappointment, and consternation, that no vote was taken.

6. A proposed vote of no-confidence in the Academic Vice President was considered by many members to be unnecessary and inappropriate since he will shortly be leaving his position and assuming a new position as Associate Professor of Chemistry.
The meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm, as members were encouraged to attend the BCEA meeting outside the Technology building.

Alan Kaufman
Secretary, BCCFA