

BOT 11-15-2016

Last September Pam Horiszny announced that she was quitting the Board of Trustees.

In making that announcement she said:

“I believe that Dr. Bellanca has made strong efforts to build a positive relationship with organized labor since things veered off track early in her administration. Similar efforts from organized labor have not been evident.”

Let me repeat that: “Similar efforts from organized labor have not been evident.”

And yet we HAD communicated to the Board, both privately and in our public comments, our significant efforts to work with the president. One can only conclude, therefore, that Ms. Horiszny believed we were not being truthful.

That’s a fascinating verdict. Not once in the past almost 5 years has any member of the Board of Trustees reached out to the faculty leadership in an official capacity to get more details than we could make available in a few minutes each month.

Not once. And so not having done what any elected legislative body ought to have done—to have investigated the concerns thoroughly—this board, as clearly stated by Ms. Horiszny, has laid all blame for the current circumstance on organized labor. And it is worth noting that neither the Chair of this Board nor the president of this College have publicly stated their disagreement with Ms. Horiszny’s judgment. One must assume, therefore, that they agree with her assessment.

This past March the faculty elected me to be the president of the WCCEA, an election, I might add, that was marred by the administration’s meddling. Despite that interference, from my very first Board meeting as president, I painted a positive picture of the relationship between the faculty and the administration. And it is clear that the members of the Board *believed* those reports. Why not? They were good news!

But the reports I rendered were incomplete. I saw little value in publicly airing the College’s dirty laundry at that time:

We needed to conclude negotiations on the adjunct contract

We needed agreements for tuition reimbursement for adjuncts and for full-time faculty who have fallen afoul of the HLC qualifications.

And the College needed the millage to pass in August.

And so I publicly put on a positive face. And all of you were VERY happy to hear that.

*Privately* I had communicated to you my concerns about continuing problems at the College.

And, yet again, not a single official reply from the Board about that communication. Not one.

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One can only conclude from this behavior that good news is welcomed and treated as the truth while bad news is dismissed while also being blamed on the faculty.

And so let me raise an issue with you publicly, since private correspondence is not even acknowledged, much less responded to in a meaningful way.

On July 20, 2015, in the regularly scheduled Contract Implementation meeting, the faculty leadership were briefed for the first time on the HLC Guidelines regarding faculty qualifications. On July 28 then-WCCEA President Maryam Barrie and I met with President Bellanca, then IVPI Abernethy, and Julie Morrison about those guidelines. In that meeting President Bellanca clearly stated that she wanted the WCCEA involved in establishing the process by which faculty credentials were evaluated.

That never happened. Never. We were not asked. We were not engaged. Not once.

In the “process” as it moved forward, faculty were lied to, circumstances were misrepresented, deals were cut with individual faculty, some of which subsequently were reneged upon. Faculty in one discipline have cleared the bar when faculty in another discipline, with equivalent and better educational backgrounds, have not. And nowhere in this process by which faculty had their employment status changed was there anything remotely close to the required due process.

Just this past week I was informed that the letters that all of us received stating our qualifications have no validity whatsoever.

None.

So, we have taken Chairman Landau’s advice and we have grieved this process. That grievance has been turned down. Next week I will present that grievance to the WCCEA Board and recommend that it go to arbitration.

This is where we are 16 months after first being informed of the HLC guidelines. In other words, we have barely moved off Square One.

I could go on.

Bad news? Yes.

Lies or misrepresentations? No.

Will you investigate and in the process contact members of the staff and faculty to get a fuller story from a different point of view from that of the administration?

I hope so. If not, you are doing a disservice to the taxpayers of the county who elected you and who fund the College’s operation.

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It is time to honor, to respect, and to respond to the efforts and the continuing concerns of the hundreds of dedicated faculty and staff who come to campus *every day* to do their jobs.