

Dear Trustees,

I would like to begin by reading a statement prepared by one of my colleagues on AFT-Washington's College Council, a consortium of union presidents from local colleges who meet once a month. Of great concern lately has been the roll-out of CTCLink, a concern I know you share. In an effort to partner with college trustees in jointly lobbying for our concerns to be addressed, we are all sharing this statement, or something similar to it, with our trustees.

We have been following the CTCLink rollout experience for TCC and the Spokane schools this past year. As you know, it's been rough. We have deep reservations about the plan to continue the rollout on schedule for subsequent schools before the core issues get resolved. Especially give that we are slated for implementation this Fall, we wanted to share the scope of our concerns for your immediate consideration.

We see three interrelated issues that give us greatest pause. The first is the immediate problem. TCC and Spokane have experienced significant problems registering students, distributing financial aid, paying faculty and staff, calculating leave, and tracking health benefit coverage. In fact, both school systems report that new problems are still cropping up nine months into its implementation.

This has contributed to unplanned secondary expenses including staff overtime to address the problems, writing paper checks to track and cover compensation, and even paying for food and water to students standing in line for hours at the beginning of each quarter. Students are fed up and there is evidence they are voting with their feet and going to other schools. The public relations around these issues was embarrassing at first, but hasn't gotten much better in subsequent quarters. All schools in the CTC system have been paying 3% of their tuition revenues into this project for a number of years now, but there doesn't seem to be a system fix on the horizon to make this functional yet.

The third issue seems tangential at first. The SBCTC is implementing its new allocation model this upcoming fiscal year. It is structured to examine FTE counts and distributions during each of the first four years to establish a new baseline for funding among schools. We are concerned that the continued problems with the CTCLink rollout will cause students to change where they attend to avoid experiencing the same issues that TCC and Spokane have. This would in turn skew any accurate measures of where the FTEs are distributed in the system and compromise the allocation plan before it gets started.

We ask you, as our Board of Trustees, to examine the implications of the ongoing CTCLink problems for its potential economic and relational impacts for us as a school and community. We request that you share these concerns among your peers and with the State Board. We think it is reasonable to request the SBCTC suspend its scheduled rollout until the most egregious of these issues are resolved.

Thank you for considering these points among yourselves.

To follow up this statement, I would like to add that the healing and growth that needs to happen at Green River can only occur through mutual investment in that process. I have been before you a number of times this year asking that we work together, growing stronger through the differences of perspective and experience we bring to the opportunities and challenges presented to the college rather than more divided and splintered by those differences.

I hope that our future brings us together, therefore, both to discuss and seek healing generally, but also to make our intentions manifest through real partnership in advocating for the best for our College. The statement I have read regarding CTCLink outlines one such opportunity for partnership. The upcoming budget season in the legislature will certainly present several others.

I must also add that withdrawing the erroneously proposed Reductions-in-Force and discontinuing improper use of the RIF process to instigate superficial and truncated reviews of programs for closure or reduction is hopefully another such area where we can agree. The faculty at this college have always been willing, even eager, to review and assess the health of their programs. We take the matter of program closure or reduction very seriously, however. The consequences for the community, institution, current and future students, and indeed for the individuals employed within those programs are very serious and often without remedy should the decision to close or reduce a program prove to be a mistake.

We ask, nay, we insist, therefore, on serious and appropriate processes that approach those questions with the thoroughness and gravity they merit. The Collective Bargaining Agreement protects such processes. It is an agreement between the United Faculty and you, the Board of Trustees. Let us work together to protect the integrity of our agreement.

For all that has occurred here in the last year, or in the last five years, I still refuse to believe that our interests are so far apart. Nor do they need always to align in order for our relationship with you to become and remain positive and healthy. While our present may be fraught with questions that will take time to answer and about which we may not always agree, I am hopeful that we can arrive at answers together. I am optimistic for our future, and I look forward to building it with you.

Thank you.