From the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

As the news broke of President Napolitano’s decision to put Chancellor Katehi on administrative leave, I found myself reading every recent news article I could find. I have taken the time to reflect on all of the support the Chancellor has provided to Staff Assembly as well as took a hard look at the last conversation I had with her. During my tenure with Staff Assembly, the Chancellor has always been receptive to our suggestions and has been supportive of virtually all of our requests.

When Chancellor Katehi and Provost Hexter met with Staff Assembly leadership on Thursday, April 14, I felt that we were being shielded from what was really going on in Mrak Hall. They may have been trying to protect us, but this came across to many of us as dishonesty. As I reflect on the articles I have read and the conversations I have had with colleagues across campus and the UC system, the following questions come to my mind:

- Why did the Academic Senate receive a personal email from the Chancellor expressing her commitment to this institution, but we did not?
- Why did the Chancellor choose to spend $175K on cleaning up her personal image and the image of the university? Why wasn’t this money used to learn from our mistakes and to train our leaders how to handle future protests?
- Why was the Strategic Communications budget almost doubled, but communication across campus got worse? The 2015 CUCSA Engagement Survey confirmed a decline in communication to staff.
- Why has the number of FTEs in Mrak Hall grown, while so many other units across campus are barely getting by with their staff resources?
- Why do managers struggle to obtain 10% salary increases for hard working and deserving staff while select staff have received over $50,000 in increases over 2.5 years?
• Why has the budget improved in Mrak Hall, but units all across campus are still struggling to make due after the five rounds of budget cuts which ended in 2011?

• Why are administrative units under the VC-CFO required to give up their IT and business staff and the associated funding for these positions to newly formed centralized units without discussion, notice, or consideration of long term ramifications?

• How can we ensure transparency and proper separation between various parts of the organization to ensure sound budgetary, academic, and human resource decisions are being made?

• Do the various budget models support the core university mission?

If you haven’t had the opportunity to read the administrative leave letter that President Napolitano sent to Chancellor Katehi, I urge you to do so. The letter can be found here. It is my hope that the current investigation will result in better and more accurate information. Staff are the gears that make our great institution run and we deserve to be included in campus communication. If we learn anything from this it should be to:

• Openly voice our concerns in the way we empower students to voice theirs;
• Not be afraid to ask questions;
• Challenge ourselves and our colleagues when something doesn’t feel right;
• Demand transparency from all levels of the institution; and
• Play a more active role in decision making.

I accepted the role as Staff Assembly Chair because I love my job; I love UC Davis; and I want other staff to feel the same sense of pride I feel each day when I come to campus. Staff do matter and working together we can help the institution move forward, toward an even better and brighter future.

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