

Statement at 7 August 2014 meeting of the Board of Governors of Colorado State University

My name is Jane Fraser. I am president of the CSU-Pueblo chapter of the AAUP, the American Association of University Professors.

I begin with two quotes from the 1966 AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities.¹

The variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship calls for adequate communication among these components, and full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort. (page 136)

The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty. It is desirable that the faculty should, following such communication, have opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president or board. Budgets, personnel limitations, the time element, and the policies of other groups, bodies, and agencies having jurisdiction over the institution may set limits to realization of faculty advice. (page 139)

Recent events at CSU-Pueblo have undermined appropriate faculty participation in decision making concerning academic matters. Faculty members are uncertain about the reasons for some recent decisions, and about whether these decisions represent the wishes of the Board of Governors.

In particular, the recent decision by the CSU-Pueblo administration that all faculty members will teach 12 credits per semester is having serious repercussions.

First, the reasons for this decision have never been clearly articulated. Various faculty members have been told that there will be over \$200,000 in savings, that the decision was made "for political reasons," and that the Board demanded it. Some faculty members believe the change is punitive.

Second, the mission of any university is teaching, research, and service and that work is done by the faculty. Most faculty members already work far beyond a 40-hour work week during the academic year, and then put in additional work in the summer. Increased time spent by faculty on teaching assignments will mean that other activities must decrease.

Third, contrary to the statements I started with, many faculty feel that their requests for further consideration have been thwarted. Grievances filed according to handbook procedures have stalled.

By making this statement during the Public Comment period, I intend to bring the attention of the Board to this situation. I ask that the Board consider creating mechanisms for regular communication with faculty at CSU-Pueblo.

A recent AAUP statement on best practices in faculty communication with governing boards² concluded:

In sum, effective faculty-board communication is a critical component of shared governance. Its absence can result in serious misunderstanding between campus constituents and in significant governance failures leading to flawed decision making. The present report has thus recommended the following:

1. Every standing committee of the governing board, including the executive committee, should include a faculty representative.
2. New faculty representatives to the governing board should participate in orientation for new trustees.
3. Direct communication between the faculty and the governing board should occur through a liaison or conference committee consisting only of faculty members and meeting regularly to discuss topics of mutual interest.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to me.

Notes:

1. AAUP. "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities." *Policy Documents & Reports*. 10th edition, 2014, pages 135-144 (prepublication copy).
2. AAUP. "Faculty Communication with Governing Boards: Best Practices." February 2014.