

Board of Trustees Comments 10-10-12 (postponed from 9-25)  
Michael Steuer

Good evening. I am Michael Steuer, First Vice Chair of the Academic Senate. I asked to speak with you about Academic Affairs because the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate is very much concerned that there is no Academic Affairs Representation on the current cabinet of the college, since the office of Vice President for Academic Affairs continues to be vacant. We have discussed this with Dr. Saunders and with Executive Vice President Conzatti, and they have tried to assure us that the cabinet meetings would be well informed about Academic Affairs via Ms. Conzatti's office, since she will receive information from the area deans as well as from the academic department chairs. They also said that they would welcome Academic Senate input as well.

Nevertheless, when high level decisions are to be made, it is disturbing to know that while administrative officers responsible for finance, facilities management, legal affairs, and government and media relations will be present at the cabinet level, there will be no one who can speak directly for the academic integrity of the college and its service to students, no one who can relate these decisions to what actually transpires in the classroom, no one who can speak of curriculum innovations.

I would also like to observe that you are/will be initiating a search to fill the office of president. I served on the previous search committee three years ago and some of you may recall that I stood before this Board to testify and defend the integrity of the search process and our choice of the three finalists. We were working within the parameters set by the Board of Trustees and presented our candidates in earnestness and in good faith. Yet, looking back, I can see some fallacies in that search process, not in the way we carried out the mandate of the Board, but in the way that mandate was written.

I do not have the time to go into details; indeed some of this is confidential and I'd be happy to discuss that with you in confidence. But one of the rules was the requirement that search committee members could not check references, even from the three final candidates. This does not have to be the case. Many years ago, when I served on a search for the SUNY Chancellor we did just that.

I certainly do not expect to be on your new search committee. Indeed, after over 46 years serving NCC I anticipate retiring soon. Still, I offer you my advice and wish you the best of luck as you lead us into the future.