

**ACADEMIC SENATE
OF
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

AS-3405-19/FA (Rev)
November 14-15, 2019

**CREATING A HOLISTIC AND HUMANE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT
IN THE CSU**

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) requests the California State University System concentrate on the mission of educating students with an emphasis on holistic and humane educational environments, with a focus on faculty and staff as wholly integral to this mission; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU recommends the creation of a task force to develop specific actions that support holistic and humane educational environments; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU distribute this resolution to the CSU Board of Trustees, CSU Chancellor, CSU campus Presidents, CSU campus Senate Chairs, CSU campus Senate Executive Committees, CSU Provosts/Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, CSU campus articulation officers, California Faculty Association (CFA), California State Student Association (CSSA), CSU Emeritus and Retired Faculty & Staff Association (CSU-ERFSA), Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges (CCC), Academic Senate of the University of California (UC), California Community Colleges' Board of Governors, and the University of California Board of Regents.

RATIONALE: *It is imperative that the CSU focuses on our raison d'etre: educating students. This is particularly urgent in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, a crisis sweeping the globe, the U.S., California, and the CSU system simultaneously. But teaching and learning cannot happen in landscapes of fear¹—for students, nor for faculty. Racial, gender, religious, and sexual violence creates fear. Precarity in employment, food, and housing creates fear. Lack of transparency, particularly amid the backdrop of massive uncertainties, creates fear.*

A humane educational environment is antithetical to spaces of fear. While fear may not be wholly eradicated, humane educational environments are ones

¹ Tuan, Y.-F. (2013) *Landscape of Fear*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

that do not perpetuate or reinforce those fears. Yet fear, and the inhumane dynamics underpinning its causes, has become pervasive in the CSU system, across many different dimensions:

- *In recent years, there have been several incidents of hate crimes, hate speech, and other forms of violence, motivated by racism, misogyny, religious intolerance, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia across our campuses. In 2017, there were 10 hate crimes reported to the FBI across the CSU²; this is not wholly inclusive. One campus, not represented in those numbers, had 5 major incidents documented that same year by their ASI³. And the White nationalist organization Identity Europa has been active on several CSU campuses. These and several other examples of hate-based violence are occurring on our campuses amid a backdrop of “increased tolerance of violence, abuse of free speech and hate speech directed towards minorities or historically underprivileged groups⁴. ”.*
- *Recently, a CSU professor committed suicide, an externally caused individual act correlated with social isolation and alienation⁵. Afterward, his students believed they were not provided with the care necessary to deal with the trauma of this loss, perpetuating this pattern of alienation. They also believed that the university acted with insensitivity to the situation.*
- *These and similar tragic events have reminded us that our educational spaces are also our workplaces, and they are not healthy, nor safe.*
- *There has been an unceasing move towards the rationalization of everyday life through “accountability schemes,” assessment rubrics, “finish in four,” etc. In other words, the traps – the “seemingly impersonal changes” – that so concerned C. Wright Mills are being*

² Bauman, D. (2018) “Hate crimes on campuses are rising, new FBI data show.” 14 November. The Chronicle of Higher Education. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Hate-Crimes-on-Campuses-Are/245093> [Last accessed April 8, 2020.]

³ The Senate of the Associated Students (2018). Senate Resolution #2018-12, Whereas Clause 12. <https://www.asicsub.org/gov/documents/senate/resolutions/2017-2018/SR-2018-12-ASI-Against-White-Supremacy.pdf>. [Last accessed April 8, 2020.]

⁴ Sturm, S. (2018) “Campus crime reports more than double from 2013 to 2016.” Golden Gate Xpress, 29 August. <https://goldengatexpress.org/81778/latest/news/campus-crimes-double/>. [Last accessed April 8, 2020.]

⁵ Durkheim, Emile. 1951. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. New York: The Free Press.

reproduced such that the CSU is becoming what Max Weber termed, "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart.⁶".

- *These are signs that the CSU system is experiencing the post-political dynamic⁷ toward ever-increasing impersonal bureaucratization, at the expense of the humanity of its participants.*
- *Impersonal relations between faculty and staff, leading to isolation and a weakening of community.*
- *Increased discrimination and violence (both explicit and implicit) against students, faculty, and staff on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.*
- *Increased cultural taxation on faculty and staff that identify with historically-marginalized communities.*
- *The increase of students from historically-marginalized communities feeling unsafe and unwelcome on our campuses.*
- *The precariatization (adjunctification) of the majority of faculty, leading to an erosion of academic freedom.*
- *The entrenchment of deepening administrative hierarchies with an increase of executive, top-down orders at the expense of shared governance.*
- *Funding systems based on "responsibility centers" using strict formulas not aligned with the curricula patterns (e.g. funding based on majors, which constitutes roughly one-third of units completed for most degrees) that individualizes institutional costs.*
- *The increased workloads managed using neo-Taylorist practices⁸, which treats education as a commodity, rather than a public good.*

⁶ The dynamics discussed so far and many more discussed throughout the rationale are often given short-handed terms to signify their interrelationships, such as racism in its sociopolitical contexts and neoliberalism in its political economic contexts.

⁷ Wilson, Japhy and Erik Swyngedouw. 2014. *The Post-Political and its Discontents: Space of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

⁸ Levin, Morten and Davydd Greenwood. 2016. *Creating a New Public University and Reviving Democracy*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books. Levin and Greenwood define neo-Taylorism as converting services, such as higher education, into commodities that can then become extractive, producing profit through emphasis on efficiency (particularly economic efficiency) and accountability by administration. This leads to alienation of faculty and staff; redundancy in administrative tasks; and distancing of administration from the consequences of their decisions.

The CSU system is in the throes of these cultural, economic, and political trends, and it's doing harm to the students, faculty, and staff within the CSU system – and to the CSU system as a whole.

The CSU System is part of the Commons - a public good whose purpose is to benefit all of society including civic, individual, community, etc. As the CSU System has embraced and allowed for a deeper entrenchment of an impersonal model of education, it has moved away from the concept of education as a public good and toward a service to be consumed, with students as consumers (or worse, numeric products in terms of degrees completed) and faculty/staff as purveyors of a consumable product⁹.

As faculty and staff became costs to be managed, the language spoken about faculty and staff changed, and the humanity of faculty and staff became compromised. Such a shift also moved the system to embrace the free market ideologies of flexibility and efficiency, where just-in-time production rules the day, moving away from faculty and staff as integral to the mission of education to a labor cost amongst all other costs of running this “business.”

When faculty and staff are no longer seen as intellectual human beings integral to the educational mission of the common good, administrators are able to reduce the number of us as permanent employees – and divide us into statuses that can be manipulated and nurture a deep dehumanization in all of us. This allows for the increasingly thoughtless utilization of contingent faculty and temporary staff who are employed when needed and cast aside when there is the possibility of cutting a class to save money.

Overarching these, are the vastly uneven impacts this dynamic upon our students and colleagues, particularly based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion. As we become increasingly devalued, we become more thoughtless about our colleagues (and students); as we become more thoughtless we become more alienated; as we become more alienated we become unable to see, care for, or empathize with the struggles faced by our most vulnerable – the numbers of which continue to increase in this bureaucratic model of education.

To add insult to injury, this is amplified when the majority of contingent faculty and temporary staff – the positions arguably most disempowered in

⁹ Giroux, Henry A. 2014. *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education* (2nd ed.). Chicago: Haymarket Books, p. 176.

the CSU system, and the most excluded in decision-making processes – are people of color, women, and additional historically-marginalized groups. As Kimberlé Crenshaw stated, “The way we imagine discrimination or disempowerment often is more complicated for people who are subjected to multiple forms of exclusion ¹⁰. ” In the impersonal education model, this imagination is itself often erased in favor of a mythic, yet dominant, monolith that impersonally defines who our colleagues and students are – or should be – within the CSU system.

Because of the ever-increasing levels of alienation in the CSU System, to the extremes of explicit/implicit acts of violence (in some cases, ending in the death of faculty, staff, and colleagues), over the last few years the ASCSU has spent considerable time and energy working to uphold the values of healthy educational and workplace experiences – working diligently to ensure everyone, including the most marginalized and vulnerable among us – are afforded the best opportunities to succeed in life. Here are just a small number of resolutions the ASCSU has forwarded on the Chancellor over the years:

- [AS-3123-13/AA \(Rev\)](#) Enhanced Support of Student Mental Health and Counseling Services
- [AS-3246-19/EX \(Rev\)](#) Preventing Workplace Bullying Within the CSU Community
- [AS-3317-18/FA/AA \(Rev\)](#) Counseling Support Services and Student Success
- [AS-3283-17/FA \(Rev\)](#) Establishment of a Task-Force to Explore Models of Employment Security for Contingent Faculty, Librarians, Coaches, and Counselors
- [AS-3379-19/FA/AA](#) Fostering a Welcoming and Safe Campus Climate for Black/African American Students

The problem is not that we don’t have thoughtful resolutions, the problem is there is little to no implementation. The problem is the inhumane bureaucratization has become a deeply integrated normalized set of processes, policies, and rules within the system, promoted and enforced by people who have become accustomed to this way of doing things. To be humane is to show

¹⁰ Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams. 2017. “Intersectionality in One Minute.” Plenary at Netroots Nation, Atlanta, GA, August 11. https://www.netrootsnation.org/nn_events/nn-17/friday-morning-plenary/ [Last accessed January 22, 2020.]

authentic compassion and care for all of our community – to act in ways that show our genuine valuing of and empathy for each other.

If we wish to see a reduction in stressors and triggers that cause the levels of stress, anxiety, and pain that cause students, faculty, staff, administrators to internalize or externalize their pain, we need the leadership of the CSU System to provide genuine leadership and resources to ensure our educational spaces and workplaces are not alienating iron cages. We need to ensure our workplaces are safe and inclusive of ALL students, staff, and faculty. We need to ensure our workplaces do not represent a “world of pseudo-satisfactions that is superficially exciting but hollow at its core.¹¹” We need to ensure our workplaces do not treat our students as products or consumers, and do not treat our staff and faculty as disposable and mere numbers ripe for dispossession.¹² We need workplaces that focus less on “narrative[s] of individual freedom and responsibility [that are] constructed through the false notion of unlimited choices delusionally detached from any realistic material constraints¹³” and more on collaborative shared places of community. We need workplaces that deconstruct the traps of seeing socially-produced problems.¹⁴ as having only individual solutions, placing an undue onus on those members of our community with the least power to achieve individual change within the CSU institution.

We need a genuinely-humane educational environment in the CSU.

Approved - May 7-8, 2020

¹¹ Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford UK: Oxford UP, p. 170.

¹² Hill, Dave and Ravi Kumar (eds.). 2009. *Global Neoliberalism and Education and its Consequences*. New York: Routledge, p. 2.

¹³ Giroux, Henry A. 2014. *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education* (2nd ed.). Chicago: Haymarket Books, p. 169.

¹⁴ Mills, C. Wright. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford UP.