

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

PHILLIP BEVERLY, et al.,)	
)	
Plaintiffs,)	Case No. 1:14-CV-04970
)	
v.)	Judge Joan B. Gottschall
)	
WAYNE D. WATSON, et al.,)	Magistrate Judge Sheila Finnegan
)	
Defendants.)	

**SUPPLEMENTAL DECLARATION OF ROBERT BIONAZ
IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION**

I, Robert Bionaz, declare as follows:

1. I am an associate professor of history at Chicago State University (“CSU”), and a Plaintiff in the above-captioned action. I provided a Declaration in Support of Plaintiffs’ Motion for Preliminary Junction in this case. This Supplemental Declaration provides further information regarding how speech on matters of public concern has been inhibited by fear of punishment by the Defendants under the policies challenged in the lawsuit, or by other means.

2. As noted in my original preliminary injunction Declaration, since its inception in 2009, I have contributed to the *CSU Faculty Voice* blog (<http://csufacultyvoice.blogspot.com/>), a forum that seeks to inform readers about events at CSU and to expose malfeasance perpetrated by the school’s administration. I have authored a number of web articles to advocate protecting the school’s academic integrity and exposing to public view the corruption of its administrators. Documentary evidence, often provided through Illinois Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) requests, but also from other sources, supports the *CSU Faculty Voice*’s stories about examples of administrative misconduct.

3. In my original Declaration, I outlined steps taken by the administration of CSU President Wayne Watson to stifle free speech on campus, including steps that appear to be

retaliation against me and other contributors to the *CSU Faculty Voice* for criticizing the administration. These included adoption of a broad Computer Usage Policy, an aborted Communications Policy, and a Cyberbullying Policy. The CSU administration used some of these policies, as well as baseless trademark claims, in an attempt to silence the blog.

4. For example, those contributing to the blog have learned from readers that they have been warned by co-workers that reading the *CSU Faculty Voice* on University computers is a violation of CSU policies. Ultimately, an email account was established for readers to contact the blog administrators without exposing themselves online in the comments section. This was to protect their anonymity given their fear of losing their jobs, or otherwise being subject to sanctions under CSU policies.

5. Significantly, I became the first person to be subjected to possible discipline under the Cyberbullying Policy, despite the fact that the incident giving rise to the disciplinary action did not involve online communication, but rather a brief in-person conversation. Even though that proceeding was closed with a letter stating that “[b]ased on the facts revealed in [] investigation, it cannot be determined that you ... violat[ed] of the Policy,” it also stated I could still “be found responsible for violating the Policy and subjected to disciplinary action” if my alleged “behavior continues.” *See* Bionaz Decl. (Dkt. 46) Ex. D. The fact that this letter and its admonitions regarding potential future disciplinary action issued well after the filing of a federal lawsuit over the policies and efforts to stifle speech at CSU made me even more cautious about exercising my free speech rights, including through the *CSU Faculty Voice*.

6. In contributing to the *Voice*, I have long been careful to avoid bringing issues to light without independent verification, such as documents obtained via a FOIA request, where the sources of information would likely face serious repercussions if the CSU administration

discovered they were leaking information to the blog. That President Watson and his administration threatened future enforcement action under, *e.g.*, the Cyberbullying Policy, has made me even more cautious in this regard. I must at all times remain concerned about further retaliation against me by the administration, or against others that the administration views as assisting in the dissemination of information critical to President Watson or the administration.

7. For example, out of concern for the CSU administration retaliating against me or against students or staff, I have refrained from publishing a number of pieces that would further demonstrate the misdeeds of the Watson administration. Unfortunately, some of this material has never come to light. Unless it is obvious that documents or information were available to me through FOIA or other public means, I always have to take care about publishing information the content or nature of which would point to a specific individual as the source.

8. Recently, for example, on April 12, 2015, I posted a blog entry describing the failure of the CSU administration to adhere to both contractual and policy obligations to notify in a timely manner probationary faculty going through the tenure process – an issue of considerable import to the University community – as it pertained to particular faculty members with whom I and co-Plaintiff Phillip Beverly spoke. However, my blog post refrained from providing the names of the affected persons or even the specific number of persons to whom I referred. This was done out of concern that more specificity would enable the administration to determine from whom I had received information and to retaliate against them. *Ex. G, How the Watson Administration Treats Chicago State's Tenure-Track Faculty: Use Them Then Screw Them* (April 12, 2015).

9. Just before posting the *Tenure-Track Faculty* item, I met with another tenured CSU professor, Dr. Janet Halpin, who asked to speak to me in my capacity as a member of the

Faculty Senate Executive Committee. During our conversation, Dr. Halpin produced a substantial amount of documentation that detailed irregularities in the creation of a CSU degree program, and expressed concern about potential financial violations. Given our current provisional status for financial aid due to previous violations of Title IV, this revealed dishonesty, gross negligence, and incompetence on the part of the Watson administration. However, I refrained from publishing anything about this story myself, out of concern it could lead to retaliation against Dr. Halpin. Instead, I invited Dr. Halpin to write a blog post about the issue, which after some delay for discussion and careful consideration, she recently forwarded me for posting. Even then, certain details were left out due to fear of repercussions. Ex. H, *If Going Through the Proper Channels Doesn't Work, Open up the Floodgates: The Hopelessly Incompetent Watson Administration Puts Chicago State at Risk Again* (April 17, 2015).

10. At the end of March 2015, the *CSU Faculty Voice* was furnished with an audio recording of a conversation between former CSU student Jokari Miller and President Watson and Defendant CSU Vice President and General Counsel Patrick Cage, in which Watson pressured Miller to cease his own activism, and to drop his support of CSU students Willie Preston and Brittany Bailey, who have alleged constitutional violations by CSU's administration. The recording and the Preston/Bailey case also involve claims of false disciplinary charges brought to squelch political opposition to the CSU administration. I instantly saw the value of the recording in exposing tactics of intimidation and abuse employed by both Watson and Cage to silence administrative critics. Ex. I.

11. However, fearing retaliation if I posted either the recording, or even a transcript of it, to the *CSU Faculty Voice* blog, I refrained from even revealing the existence of the recording, or disseminating information about it anywhere. Only several days later, after Willie

Preston's attorney sent me a press release that had been issued publicly revealing the recording and describing it, did I feel comfortable referring to it on the blog. Even then, I posted a blog entry that included the press release, and added only a brief and perfunctory segment that expanded slightly on the contents of the press release. Ex. J, *Wayne Watson Unscripted: Press Release From Willie Preston's Attorney* (Apr. 3, 2015). I continue to refrain from publishing on the *Voice* both the tape and transcript for fear of reprisal.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed April 21, 2015.



Robert Bionaz

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EXHIBIT LIST

- G. *How the Watson Administration Treats Chicago State's Tenure-Track Faculty: Use Them Then Screw Them* (April 12, 2015).
- H. *If Going Through the Proper Channels Doesn't Work, Open up the Floodgates: The Hopelessly Incompetent Watson Administration Puts Chicago State at Risk Again* (April 17, 2015).
- I. Audio Recording of Jokari Miller, CSU President Watson and CSU Vice President and General Counsel Patrick Cage.
- J. *Wayne Watson Unscripted: Press Release From Willie Preston's Attorney* (Apr. 3, 2015).

EXHIBIT G

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Thanks to Heki Madhabuti
"1. He/she must be a scholar of national note, with significant peer review publications and books in his or her field. There must be no doubt as to his/her standing in the community of scholars. This would also include a history of the candidate's participation in the appropriate professional organizations.
2. He/she must have served with distinction as the administrative head of a major unit within an institution of higher learning or at the important position of Provost and/or Dean. Of course, prior service at the presidential level is preferred.
3. He/she must have a documented history of raising significant monies from the private and public sectors. At most major and research one universities it is not unusual to expect the president to come with a plan to raise in excess of half a billion dollars or more in the first few years.
4. The prospective president must have a consensus buy-in from the faculty, students, administration and staff, therefore, arriving with a unity mandate to lead by joining a University community that has bought into his or her vision for the future."

Sunday, April 12, 2015

How the Watson Administration Treats Chicago State's Tenure-Track Faculty: Use Them then Screw Them

On of the administrative practices that has basically escaped examination is the Watson gang's contempt for personnel action deadlines. Even a cursory look at how they perform their duties in this area reveals again the utter incompetence of this administration. We already know that it took a grievance last year to force the administration to honor its contractual obligation to grant sabbaticals, but their failure to give even lip service to personnel obligations mandated by the contract and their own policies starkly sketches the contours of their disdain for our tenure-track colleagues. Our administrative motto might be: "use them if you must, screw them when you can."

As many of you know, contrary to customary practice and in contravention of its own personnel action policies, the administration last year apparently failed to notify in advance of the May board meeting any faculty who had earned tenure. As this year's deadline for administrative notification of tenure recommendations approaches (April 21, 2015), there seems little reason to expect that the administration will act differently this year.

In addition, this year for tenure-track faculty in the midst of their probation, the university has, for at least several faculty, failed to provide status notification for either promotion or retention. Despite a December 15, 2014 date for retention announcements, faculty have still not been notified. Despite a January 21, 2015 date for promotion announcements, faculty have still not been notified. These unwarranted and inexplicable delays are simply unconscionable.

During my probationary period at this university, the administration scrupulously adhered to the personnel action deadlines. When the time came for the board to vote on my tenure, I already knew that the administration had made a favorable recommendation. The timely notification did much to reduce the understandable anxiety associated with the probationary process.

For those unfortunate faculty who are in the current tenure process, no such relief is forthcoming. Imagine waiting three or four months past the deadline to learn your fate—will you be retained on a terminal contract? The utter lack of qualifications of anyone in this administration to judge any faculty member's performance notwithstanding, failure to notify persons of administrative personnel decisions creates unnecessary anxiety and in the case of those faculty not retained, the late notification may put them at a distinct disadvantage in the job market.

As far as our administrators are concerned, the only reason for the existence of staff, faculty and students seems to be the furtherance of the interests of Wayne Watson and his regime. As little more than props, staff, faculty and students frequently wait for incompetent administrators to make other important decisions, often with necessary paperwork languishing in an office waiting for nothing more than a signature. In the past few years, Wayne Watson has centralized operations under his control with the result that almost no one else can make a move without his approval. As a result, ignorant, capricious and often disastrous administrative decisions abound.

The scorn with which our administration treats all Chicago State's faculty is magnified in the case of our tenure-track colleagues.

Here is the personnel action timetable for 2014-15:

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From an open letter to the CSU Community, 2009.

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Administration's Lies. Here is What Transparency, Accountability, Responsibility and the Commitment to Academic Rigor Really Look Like at Wayne Watson's Chicago State University



After the Streisand Effect— All Quiet on the Midwestern Front?



Hot off the presses...

Is it a Machiavellian or Orwellian world at CSU?

President (and/or Provost) *Units by which decisions are announced*

- Dec. 12, 2014 Provost approves Summer Rotation Plans and Returns to Department Chairs
- Dec. 15, 2014 Announce 2nd & 3rd Year Retention Decisions (12/15 -- Contract Date)
- Dec. 19, 2014 Announce Research Cues for 2014 - 2015
- Dec. 19, 2014 Act on Sabbatical, Administrative Educational & Retraining leave requests
- Jan. 21, 2015 Acts on Promotion & PAI Recommendation
- Feb. 02, 2015 Notify Unit B-ASPs of non-retention (2/1 -- Contract Date)
- Apr. 01, 2015 Notify faculty of 1st Year retention decisions (Contract Date)
- Apr. 10, 2015 Notify faculty of results of their Annual Tenured Faculty Evaluation with remediation plans
- Apr. 21, 2015 Notify faculty of Tenure Recommendation to Board of Trustees (May meeting)
- May 05, 2015 Announce Faculty Excellence decisions
- May 07, 2015 May [tentative date] Board of Trustees meeting, decision reached on Tenure [Decision no later than June 1 - Contract Date]
- May 15, 2015 Notify faculty of 4th & 5th Year retention decisions
- May 20, 2015 Unit B-lecturers (full time) letters of appointment for rehiring
- June 01, 2015 Provost approves Unit B-ASP and Unit C Work Plans (6/1 -- Contract Date)
- June 01, 2015 Notify faculty of Board action on tenure (Contract Date)
- June 02, 2015 Announce chairperson appointments
- June 15, 2015 Unit B-ASP and Unit C retention notification letters (6/15 -- Contract Date)

Posted by Robert Blonaz at 3:32 PM

+1 Recommend this on Google

7 comments:



Teacher Apr 12, 2015, 4:46:00 PM

This story just keeps getting worse. What would happen at CSU to a faculty member who missed a couple of deadlines in getting renewal, tenure, or promotion materials to committees? My guess is that the motley crew in administration would flex their power and squash that faculty member like some peee squash bugs. They, however, have nobody to fear and violate any policy at any time--or so it seems from documentation presented in this blog. Unbelievable.

Reply



Volced Apr 12, 2015, 7:27:00 PM

If they didn't violate processes and policies, they would, respond to FOIAs, and incompetent paramours wouldn't get 6 figures when they lied on resumes and can't do job. The only thing admins fear is getting, exposed on local news. Remember how he threatened to fire anyone who goes to media? (illegal of course).

Reply



Eric L. Peters Apr 12, 2015, 11:46:00 PM

I'm not at all surprised at how things have gone. It was pretty obvious from the moment this kakistocracy was installed what the plan was: to shut down this University. It had to be done under the aegis of an African American President and "educational leader", so that it would be more palatable for everyone to wash their hands of it. The fact that Watson got to feather his and his his friends' nests was a given. What was NOT planned was that the faculty would not screw up the re-accreditation, despite the Watson administration's best attempts.

Now, are we going to DO something about it? THAT's the question.

Reply

Replies



Robert Blonaz Apr 13, 2015, 6:59:00 AM

Based on our history, what do you think the answer to your question will be?



Eric L. Peters Apr 13, 2015, 9:59:00 PM

The delay in granting tenure speaks volumes. If the goal is to close the University, then one would expect no new such arrangements be made. This is an issue that I would expect would be front-and-center with the Union. So, that kind of places the ball in your court.



Concerned Faculty Apr 15, 2015, 9:07:00 AM

"We're in a battle trying to save a damn university."

The President actually believes that he is the university's savior.

Is the Kool-Aid available in diet?

[Reply](#)



R. Benny Apr 13, 2015, 11:10:00 PM

...or in the court of the current Union leadership...such as it is...

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Thanks to Haki Madhubuti

"1. He/she must be a scholar of national note, with significant peer review publications and books in his or her field. There must be no doubt as to his/her standing in the community of scholars. This would also include a history of the candidate's participation in the appropriate professional organizations.

2. He/she must have served with distinction as the administrative head of a major unit within an institution of higher learning or at the important position of Provost and/or Dean. Of course, prior service at the presidential level is preferred.

3. He/she must have a documented history of raising significant monies from the private and public sectors. At most major and research one universities it is not unusual to expect the president to come with a plan to raise in excess of half a billion dollars or more in the first few years.

4. The prospective president must have a consensus buy-in from the faculty, students, administration and staff, therefore, arriving with a unity mandate to lead by joining a University community that has bought

Friday, April 17, 2015

If Going Through the Proper Channels Doesn't Work, Open up the Floodgates: The Hopelessly Incompetent Watson Administration Puts Chicago State at Risk Again

I am posting the following for my colleague Dr. Janet Halpin. Some background information will help readers fully understand the issue here. First, because of previous violations of Title IV regulations, Chicago State is currently on provisional status for the disbursement of financial aid. Second, early in Wayne Watson's regime, the administration decided to eliminate the Board of Governors (BOG) program and developed a new degree program which it called General Studies. Rather than go through program elimination for BOG then create a new program to replace the BOG degree path, the university simply transferred most of the admission criteria from BOG to General Studies as a Reasonable Modification of an Existing Program. Although BOG and the early General Studies program resided outside the university in special programs, eventually the administration moved General Studies into the College of Arts and Sciences. In order to be admitted to General Studies, a student must have earned 24 hours of college credit and be at least 25 years old. 2012-14 and 2014-16 undergraduate admissions criteria are below:

The degree of Bachelor of General Studies is for someone who is interested in furthering their education and career opportunities outside of one area of focus... Program Requirements Admission to the General Studies Bachelor of Arts Degree Formal admission into the General Studies Degree Program requires a student: 517

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After the Streisand Effect-- All Quiet on the Midwestern Front?



Hot off the presses...

Is it a Machiavellian or Orwellian world at CSU?

The General Studies major at Chicago State University is an interdisciplinary undergraduate degree program that students can tailor to personal and professional interests and experiences. It offers the equivalent of a double minor, tied together with a General Studies Orientation course and culminating General Studies Capstone course. Students may receive up to 18 credit hours of academic credit for previously acquired experiential learning. Class times and days vary depending on a student's chosen fields of study.

The General Studies degree offers versatility in the range of courses across a variety of disciplines, with some structure added to ensure fundamental ideas are included in the program. This degree is often useful for someone who has completed some college coursework, but has not yet earned a degree, and may be working in a field where a degree would offer professional advancement.

Program Requirements

Admission to the General Studies Bachelor of Arts Degree

Formal admission into the General Studies Degree Program requires a student:

- to have a minimum of 24 credit hours from an accredited college or university and
- to be 25 years of age or older to be admitted.
- to attend an Orientation Meeting for General Studies Students. Dates are posted in advance
- to be able to show official notification of acceptance by the Office of Admissions as a candidate in the General Studies degree program.

In March, Dr. Halpin discovered that with the knowledge and apparent approval of Angela Henderson, the university had admitted a number of students who simply did not qualify for the General Studies Program. At the end of Dr. Halpin's post are several e-mails that demonstrate clearly that several administrators knew about the modification of admissions criteria. Of the 47 students enrolled in the General Studies program as of February 17, 2015, only 12 meet the criteria for admission to the program. Thus, 74.4 percent of the students enrolled in General Studies should not be there. Finally, 28 students are enrolled full-time, which means they are eligible for financial aid. Of those 28, 23 (82.1 percent) should not be in the program. Despite her knowledge of the change in admission criteria, Angela Henderson refused to give her written assent to the practice. Nonetheless, as Dr. Halpin's material makes clear, Henderson is clearly responsible for the change in criteria and will be responsible for the potential consequences of the university's failure to adhere to IBHE and DOE policies. At the least, it seems likely we will be paying back more financial aid we have unlawfully disbursed.

Here is Dr. Halpin's post (the first of two, another will appear tomorrow):

If going through the proper channels doesn't work, open up the floodgates

Dr. H of General Studies and I recognized a serious problem in the General Studies program, and immediately began attempts to have it addressed. This is the original report. It has been edited to remove any identifying information of students. Tomorrow I will document our further attempts, ending with April 15/16, when a newly admitted General Studies Student contacted Dr. H to set up an advising appointment.

Date: March 14, 2015
From: Dr. Janet Halpin, Professor of Geography
Regarding: The General Studies Major at Chicago State University

On Monday, March 9, 2015 I dropped by your office. A student who left several years ago contacted me to enquire about requirements to graduate if readmitted. I am trying to find a variety of alternatives for this student. I did not see a CAPP option for General Studies, so I thought you might be able to provide some assistance using degree planning sheets. However, we did not get that far.

Our conversation immediately led to the present situation with General Studies, in which enrollment jumped from about two dozen students in 201409 to 47 in 201501, and for whom you have been provided insufficient information. You added that you have not been able to access all the functions of Banner. I have been using Banner since 1998, so I offered to print out some information for you and Prof. D., who is assisting with advising.

Starting on Monday, March 9, and continuing until March 13, I checked each name on the database. Additionally, there were three students listed as GSP who had Academic Early Warnings in October 2014, whose names are no longer on the list of GSP majors. Table One summarizes the results.

Admissions status code No. of students (N=50) Notes on transfer credits
Freshmen (23+) 27 These students were admitted with no university credits at all. Some were admitted for fall 2014 and some for spring 2015
Freshmen (under 23) 1 student was fttf in 2010/11, but is trying to graduate after being unable to complete their original program
Transfer Freshmen 12 credits ranging from 0* (two students) to 19
Transfer 10 credits ranging from 10 to 63.360
Table One

*I do not fully understand this. A transfer with 0 credit hours implies that these two students had attended an institution of higher education but had no transferable credits: only Fs or Ds, or perhaps developmental Math. The admissions requirements for CSU, according to the catalog and the Admissions website, will not accept a student who is not in good academic standing. I'm not sure what's going on there. Also, transfer students should have at least 24 (?)

Of the 50 GSP majors, it appears that only about 10 or 15 met usual requirements for admission to Chicago State University based on 24 credit hour minimum or current ACT score for those with fewer than 24 credit hours. Do you have documentation of the "college readiness interviews" that were conducted as part of the admissions process before students were admitted? You said that the information meetings have been very poorly attended. The most recent one, on Tuesday, March 10, 2015, (?) had no attendees. I myself went to one in Spring 2014 when we sat and chatted the entire time because there were no attendees. You said you received a printout of the students who are declared majors, but you have no information about how they were interviewed or by whom.

While the Office of Admissions and First Year Experience handle the admission, orientation, and advisement of new students, when there is a problem students are sent to their major department. You and Professor D. should have documentation for the students listed in Table Two. For them to register for the spring semester, they would have required an academic plan, and probably a petition for reinstatement of financial aid. Additionally, the student who was Dropped for Poor Scholarship would have needed a Petition for Reinstatement and very clear documentation of the compelling circumstances that led to their getting back into the College of Arts and Sciences after the disastrous 0.0 GPA fall semester. [Identifying information has been obscured]:

Table Two

Name	Status	GPA	Fall'14
Student A	Probation	1.50	6/13
Student B	Probation	1.00	3/13
Student C	Probation	1.81	9/13
Student D	DPS, Reinstated	0.00	0/7

You probably would not know anything about the following three students who started as freshmen in fall 2014 but did not return in spring 2015 (Table Three) I have received from an unnamed source a forwarded copy of a memorandum sent by Ms. Cheri Sidney of Enrollment Management on December 29, 2014 (see below), requesting approval of new Admissions Requirements for the General Studies program. There are numerous serious issues related to this.

When the decision was made in 2011 to phase out the former BOG and replace it with the General Studies program, we were requested to do it as an RME: a Reasonable Modification of an Existing program. There were three iron-clad rules that could not be changed, in order that it remain a non-traditional program for students of 24 or older. This would also forestall the need to apply to the IBHE for a new program.

1. Students could still challenge up to 18 credit hours for coursework based on portfolios demonstrating skill and knowledge competence from life and career experience
2. There would be no foreign language requirement
3. NO STUDENTS WITH FEWER THAN 24 CREDIT HOURS COULD BE ADMITTED TO THE PROGRAM, because in the non-traditional BOG program, students did not have to meet the same admissions requirements as traditional new admits. BOG was separate from the University, and students who wished to change to a regular major were required to apply to the University - it was not a straightforward Change of Major.

Obviously, the credit hour requirement has proven to be the most troubling. As Prof. Nelly Maynard summarized in an email to Dr. Dave Kanis and me on 2/25/2014

"That is why the nontraditional degree program was always under a continuing education, continuing studies, Center for New Learning, "First College" and other similar programs.

That is why it is a challenge to put a nontraditional degree program with dissimilar admission requirements under a traditional degree program.

The Board of Governors Program has a long history as a separate unit. It was developed in 1972 as a cooperative effort among five state universities formerly under the Illinois Board of Governors. Since then, more colleges and universities: public and private, have opened their doors to this growing population and the competition for adult students, 25 years and older has increased.

The task of restructuring the BOG program requires a second look. If too many obstacles are scattered around and in front of that population, those students will go elsewhere.. They would even pay a higher tuition and attend DePaul or Roosevelt's nontraditional degree program."

The December 29, 2014 memorandum addresses the plan to change the admission requirements to allow the admission of freshman General Studies students. Why is that a problem?

2. It is a clear violation of an admission requirement that HAD to be in place to move the program from a nontraditional degree program for older adults into an academic college: The College of Arts and Sciences. We could not admit students who had not met the admissions requirements.

3. The memo states that the requirement for pre-admission interviews would follow the University College model. It does NOT follow the University College model: Students in the University College are conditionally admitted into the university, and they are clearly in a separate "Special Program". On the other hand, once the new General Studies students are "admitted" they are indeed IN the College of Arts and Sciences, because the program is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences.

4. The memorandum was dated December 29, 2014, but dozens of students had already been admitted under the "new" admissions requirements and had already completed a semester of work. Another cohort was already being admitted and placed in courses for the spring 2015 semester.

5. This was compounded by the fact that pressure was being put on the university to change the catalog to reflect these changes in admissions policy. An email was sent on Feb. 25 and forwarded on March 2, 2015 (see below) asking for the catalog to be changed without a required signature, to avoid "compliance issues". This was already too late to avoid compliance issues. But even more seriously, it was a clear attempt to circumvent the policies, procedures, and shared governance with academic bodies and committees of the university.

Registration will begin in a matter of weeks for the summer and fall semesters. This must be addressed immediately before any more students are "admitted" under these conditions. I will be away for several days on an earlier planned trip but will be available by email and cell phone.

The Banner printouts for the 50 students [were attached to the original letter].

Dr. Janet Halpin
Professor of Geography

CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
 Ms. Cheri Sid
 Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management
 Cook Admin. Office :
 Telephone (773) 995-31
 E-Mail: csidney@csu.edu

Date: December 29, 2014

To: Dr. Angela Henderson, Senior Vice President and Provost of Academic Affairs
 Dr. Leroy Jones, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

CC: Mr. Matthew Harrison, Director of Admissions

Re: General Studies Admissions Criteria
 Provost and Dr. Jones,

There have been many discussions regarding the general studies admissions criteria; however, we require approval to formally implement the following admissions criteria for the General Studies non-traditional program:

GENERAL STUDIES ADMISSION CRITERIA PROPOSAL:

- Students must be age 24 or older
- Students must meet academic requirements per the criteria below:
 - Students with 24 (or more) semester hours of collegiate level work* must:
 - Provide official, sealed transcripts from each university attended
 - Demonstrate a cumulative grade point average (GPA) above 2.0
 - Students with fewer than 24 semester hours of collegiate level work* must:
 - Provide official, sealed transcripts from each university attended (if prior coursework exists)
 - Provide official, sealed proof of high school graduation or equivalency (G.E.D. acceptable)
 - Complete CSU's English and Reading proficiency examinations
 - Complete CSU's General Studies prospective student interview
- New students, 24 years of age or older, who do not have an ACT/SAT score, will be interviewed by the department prior to being recommended for admission. (UC media)

* Collegiate level work is defined as 100 level courses (or higher) from a regionally accredited college or university.

If you have questions, please call me to discuss in detail, otherwise if you approve the above admissions criteria for General Studies, I am requesting that you sign and date below and return to me.

I approve the above admissions criteria for General Studies

 Dr. Angela Henderson, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs Date

I approve the above admissions criteria for General Studies

 Dr. Leroy Jones, Dean of College of Arts and Sciences Date

Subject: Fwd: GENERAL STUDIES
To: "WH, ID, TR

Drs. D, H, and R

Have we updated the catalog to include the corrections related to General Studies? I spoke to Provost and she stated that our course should be that of correcting our catalog and not her signature.

Please advise as to where we are in the process.

Thank you.

Cheri

Cheri Sidney, CCEP
Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management
Chicago State University
Cook Administration Rm. 129
Chicago, IL 60628
Ph: 773.995.3534
Email: csidney@csu.edu

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----- Forwarded message -----
From: JM
Date: Wed, Feb 25, 2015 at 5:24 PM
Subject: GENERAL STUDIES
To: Cheri Sidney

Cheri,
The Office never received the signed copy. I know you have plenty on your

plate but if I don't nudge this we may get caught in a compliance issue. I'm just trying to keep ahead of these issues.

Posted by Robert Bionaz at 2:38 PM

 +1 Recommend this on Google

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Thanks to Haki Madhubuti

"1. He/she must be a scholar of national note, with significant peer review publications and books in his or her field. There must be no doubt as to his/her standing in the community of scholars. This would also include a history of the candidate's participation in the appropriate professional organizations.

2. He/she must have served with distinction as the administrative head of a major unit within an institution of higher learning or at the important position of Provost and/or Dean. Of course, prior service at the presidential level is preferred.

3. He/she must have a documented history of raising significant monies from the private and public sectors. At most major and research one universities it is not unusual to expect the president to come with a plan to raise in excess of half a billion dollars or more in the first few years.

4. The prospective president must have a consensus buy-in from the faculty, students, administration and staff, therefore, arriving with a unity mandate to lead by joining a University community that has bought

Saturday, April 18, 2015

If Going Through Proper Channels Doesn't Work, Open Up the Floodgates, Part Two: The Administration Wonders How They Can Cover This Up.

This is the second post from Dr. Janet Halpin. This series of communications reveals her frustration with a university administration that seems more intent on avoiding blame for its obvious failure to follow appropriate steps for deletion/addition of programs than on addressing the serious issues Dr. Halpin raises. A number of conclusions may be drawn from on her two posts: 1) "General Studies" is a different program than the Board of Governors degree program; 2) the Board of Governors program should never have been eliminated; 3) the General Studies program should never have been implemented as a "Reasonable Modification of an Existing Program"; 4) rather than deceive the IBHE, the Board of Governors program should have gone through the Program Elimination process and the university should have submitted a new program (General Studies) request for IBHE approval; 5) the provost of the university is responsible for and fully aware (or should be) of the problem and its potential programmatic and financial aid ramifications; 6) despite Dr. Halpin's well-founded concerns, the university appears ready to cover this up. Here is Dr. Halpin's second post on the topic:

If going through proper channels doesn't work, open up the floodgates, Part Two

In my previous post I shared my initial report of the General Studies program admissions. Dr. H and I discussed the matter immediately after spring break and agreed that our Dean had to be informed. The information was sent that day, March 23, because it was important that he not be blind-sided by this. Then there were several phone calls and emails requesting an opportunity to discuss the findings. The Dean requested time to discuss it with the Provost, so I started including Provost Henderson on all reports and emails, in order that she would know what the concerns were.

Next, my email to my dean, of April 13, 2015:

"On March 23, 2015, Dr. H and I apprised you of two extremely serious issues related to the General Studies Program:

1. Large numbers of students had apparently been admitted and were taking classes at the University without meeting the admissions requirements for the program.
2. The Provost and Enrollment Management were attempting to change the catalog without going through the channels the curriculum review process, in violation of principles of shared governance and the established practice of the university. It was also in violation of the circumstances in which the program was permitted to move to the College of Arts and Sciences.

...

On April 2 2015 I provided more information about the transition of the BOG-GSP program, and referenced the files, documents and minutes that you had received from me when your new team started in the CAS Dean's Office. You called me that afternoon to earnestly request that I wait until you had a chance to discuss this with Provost Henderson. I sent a copy of the information to Provost Henderson, in case she was unsure of the nature and details of the issue you wished to discuss.

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into his or her vision for the future."

From an open letter to the CSU Community, 2009.

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Administration's Lies: Here is What Transparency, Accountability, Responsibility and the Commitment to Academic Rigor Really Look Like at Wayne Watson's Chicago State University



After the Streisand Effect-- All Quiet on the Midwestern Front?



Hot off the presses...

Is it a Machiavellian or Orwellian world at CSU?

I heard from the grapevine that a meeting was indeed scheduled for Friday, April 10, and from a different grapevine that the meeting may actually have occurred. No one has contacted me to provide any clarification, to indicate that there is no problem after all, that my information is faulty, that existing admissions requirements are not being waived/ignored.

Can you please update me on this. Registration for summer and fall is now only days away."

The dean phoned on April 15 to share the results of the meeting. I prefer to put things in writing because my memory is imperfect, so I sent a confirmation of the conversation:

"Dear Dean:

We spoke about an hour ago and you briefed me on the results of a meeting you had to discuss the admission of dozens of General Studies against existing admissions regulations, and the attempt by Enrollment Management and the Provost to change the admissions regulations without going through the proper procedures.

You said that the following had been agreed:

1. Going forward, no new students will be admitted into the program unless they are in compliance with existing admissions regulations.
2. There will be a meeting of Dr. H (General Studies), the Registrar, Office of Admissions, and [CAS]Dean to ensure that there is a mechanism in place to track compliance.
3. Students currently in the program will be moved to other majors. I asked which majors they are qualified to enter: mainly University College?

Also, you indicated the Provost/Chief Academic Officer of this university was apparently unaware of the process [of shared governance? of changing programs and admissions standards?] and did not intentionally side-step the regulations for changing admissions requirements of the university.

Can you let me know, please, if I misheard any of this?"

There was a quick response that [finally] raised concern about where I was going with this and would we be drawn into a quagmire. I'm sorry to say that my alarm, concern, and frustration had finally been replaced by exasperation, and my next email was less measured than perhaps it should have been:

April 15, 2015: "This is already a quagmire, and has been for quite a while.

Last summer when the University admitted students who had not met the requirements for admissions it was a quagmire. When a second cohort was admitted for the spring 2015 semester the quagmire got deeper. Do any of these students get financial aid? One of the questions I asked earlier but no one has answered yet is: should students who were admitted erroneously without meeting the admissions standards be entitled to financial aid? That's the quagmire getting nasty, I think. We probably should pay that money back.

When there is a document dated December 2014 about changing the admissions requirements, and dozens have already been admitted under non-existent, non-approved admissions standards, it is already a quagmire.

When there is a document from several months later saying that the important thing is to change the catalog and not to have a signature from the Chief Academic Officer from the university, it is already a quagmire.

Maybe it goes back further than that. The former BOG program was problematic, but it had a valuable mission and vision to provide a service to people of this community. Rather than clear out problematic issues and leadership and appoint a team to help resolve some of the challenges, someone stamped their feet and said "Off with its head". So a program that very many universities have and which can play a valuable role in education and employment preparation, disappeared. Oh wait, it wasn't eliminated. It went around through the back door behind the backs of IBHE and re-emerged as the General Studies program. That was one reason for the delay in launching it: no students could be admitted while the BOG major existed, because there was no [separate] CIP code. There's another clue that we already had a quagmire.

When the General Studies program was shoe-horned into the College of Arts and Sciences, the 24-credit hour rule was the FIREWALL that protected the college, because this was still meant to be a non-traditional program. The 24-credit-hours was the standard at which students in the former BOG could

apply to the university-proper, after they had demonstrated the capacity and skills necessary to succeed.

In our first real conversation about this, about two weeks ago now, you asked how to fix this. I said we were way past just fixing it. We cannot just talk about 'moving forward'. An injustice was done to the University and to the College of Arts and Sciences. Regulations were trampled. It's time to 'fess up.'"

Over the past SIX weeks Dr. H and I have been concerned about moving toward resolution and accountability for what is happening in General Studies. After ensuring that my Dean and the Provost knew precisely what the issue was, I finally sent my concerns to Faculty Senate. I was advised that while that was a correct next step, it would go nowhere. Due to the broken relationship between Faculty Senate, Academic Affairs, and the Board of Trustees, it would be better to report the findings to the Department of Education. I did send an exploratory email to two officials to enquire what route I should take, but have not heard back from them either.

On the morning of Thursday, April 16, I learned from Dr. H that a newly admitted General Studies student with zero higher education credits had called to set up an appointment. There is another detail attached to this particular case that compounds the seriousness of what the University is continuing to do, but let's just stop here.

There was an assurance that 'going forward' this would not occur. I will be willing to work with anyone and everyone to restore a sense of integrity to this educational endeavor. Please help us.

Posted by Robert Blonaz at 5:54 AM

+1 Recommend this on Google

3 comments:

Volced Apr 19, 2015, 4:04:00 PM
Only way to ensure response from Dept of Ed (DOE) is to file complaint, even anonymously. If DOE opens investigation, they can inquire and investigate, and will act as intermediary for these serious matters. DOE has power to discipline and demand immediate resolution; but only if complaint filed. Considering affidavit evidence "them white atheist profs", basis of complaint could be racial discrimination, but it is my understanding the only way to get DOE collaborative efforts to restore integrity to school is through requesting investigation by filing DOE complaint.

Reply

Volced Apr 19, 2015, 4:24:00 PM
Does anyone really buy that various unethical curriculum changes "behind IBHE's back" are "accidental" errors because provost doesn't know anything about higher education? Who abolished the Economics major at this supposedly higher education institution? Who abolished student newspaper? Everything shifty shady backdoor lies and coverups merit a complaint and investigation: "the squeaky wheel gets the grease".

Reply

In Party Apr 20, 2015, 10:46:00 AM
You asked? ---
An Admissions Scandal Shows How Administrators' Ethics Fade
"what comes into play is a phenomenon known as "ethical fading," in which the culture or structure of an organization causes those within it to lose sight of ethical considerations."
http://chronicle.com/article/An-Admissions-Scandal-Shows/229477?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

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Thanks to Haki Madhubuti

"1. He/she must be a scholar of national note, with significant peer review publications and books in his or her field. There must be no doubt as to his/her standing in the community of scholars. This would also include a history of the candidate's participation in the appropriate professional organizations.

2. He/she must have served with distinction as the administrative head of a major unit within an institution of higher learning or at the important position of Provost and/or Dean. Of course, prior service at the presidential level is preferred.

3. He/she must have a documented history of raising significant monies from the private and public sectors. At most major and research one universities it is not unusual to expect the president to come with a plan to raise in excess of half a billion dollars or more in the first few years.

4. The prospective president must have a consensus buy-in from the faculty, students, administration and staff, therefore, arriving with a unity mandate to lead by joining a University

Friday, April 3, 2015

Wayne Watson Unscripted: Press Release from Willie Preston's Attorney

Below is a press release from Rima Kapitan, attorney for Willie Preston and Brittany Bailey. This press release refers to an audio recording in Kapitan's possession which includes nearly an hour-long conversation between Wayne Watson and then Chicago State undergraduate student Jokari Miller.

In addition to the passages about Willie Preston noted in the press release, the conversation features a foul-mouthed Watson threatening Miller physically, calling him a "punk" and continuously reminding Miller that he (Watson) is talking to Miller as a "black man," not as the university president.

It seems difficult to imagine a discussion like this taking place between any other university president in the United States and an undergraduate student.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chicago, Illinois - A chilling audio recording has surfaced in which President Watson of Chicago State University brags about his suppression of student dissent. This comes on the heels of the filing by Willie Preston and Brittany Bailey of an injunction motion. The motion seeks to compel the university to reinstate Preston as a student after he was expelled based on fabricated allegations, to allow him to attend public meetings on campus, and to reinstate both Preston and Bailey to the elected positions they won but were prevented by Watson's administration from serving. Preston and Bailey's lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, alleges that they were retaliated against because they were outspoken in their promotion of student interests and their opposition to the administration's mismanagement and lack of transparency. The audio recording corroborates Preston's allegations that he was expelled from the University for expressing his opinions.

In the recording, President Watson spends a significant amount of time attempting to convince former CSU student Jokari Miller to cease his activism and defense of Willie Preston. He belittles Miller's activism and academic record, chides him for criticizing the Watson administration at a faculty senate meeting, and threatens him about the potentially devastating consequences of political opposition to his rule. When challenged about having sabotaged Willie Preston's academic career over false disciplinary charges, President Watson says, "Stop trying to save every damn little puppy that falls off the curb. Puppies are important. We need to save them. But get yourself in the position where you can own the curb . . . I'm building curbs."

He also admitted openly - even bragged about - the fact that Willie's expulsion from the university had "nothing to do" with the allegations and findings of his expulsion hearing. He maintained that the real reason for the expulsion was Preston's political opposition, and suggested Miller speak with other college presidents to see how they liked being opposed politically. According to President Watson, Preston's expulsion from the university resulted from the fact that he went too far in his criticism of the administration. He was warned, yet he proceeded with his criticism anyway. As Watson put it, "You can't do A, B and C. [Preston] did A, B and C and guess what? Now he's expelled."

Watson also maintains that Miller was only emboldened to speak out against corruption and false charges because of Watson's race, and that a white college president would never tolerate such criticism. He says, "Take your little tail to a white school with a white president and lemme see you trying to play this shit!" He also expressed confidence that no white judge would take seriously a black student's allegations about Watson's use of the university's disciplinary system to ensure political loyalty: "If you want to, lemme see you walk up in court and go talk to the white judge. Tell him what you're saying."

Drawing a Machiavellian analogy that reveals how he sees his administration of the university, Watson describes himself as a general at war. According to Watson, students like Willie Preston are "called fodder. You lose people when you're in a battle. We're in a battle trying to save a damn university. This brother got confused. . . . Stop looking at the damn grain of sand on the beach and saying the world is dirty. . . ."

Posted by Robert Bionaz at 6:58 PM

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community that has bought into his or her vision for the future."

From an open letter to the CSU Community, 2009.

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After the Strelsand Effect-- All Quiet on the Midwestern Front?



Hot off the presses...

Is it a Machiavellian or Orwellian world at CSU?

6 comments:



Phillip Beverly Apr 3, 2015, 9:42:00 PM

Holy audio smoking gun Batman! Do you mean that there is actually an audio recording of a university president making the remarks that are quoted in the press release? Well surely the board will terminate his contract now. Or has the embarrassment not reached the threshold of intolerable. I am sure an economist could design an econometric model that would show how many students the university loses every time its administration does something stupid like this. Maybe that's why this regime eliminated the Economics degree, minor, department and faculty. Enough already!

Reply

Replies



In Party Apr 6, 2015, 8:39:00 AM

"Stop trying to save every damn little puppy that falls off the curb." - I can see the memes coming!!! But seriously, how long can this university continue to suffer without relief from this administration? It only took the previous governor 2-3 weeks to react to UIC's mess from a couple of years ago.

Reply



Concerned Faculty Apr 3, 2015, 10:59:00 PM

No one should speak to a student that way.

He ought to resign immediately.

Reply



Concerned Faculty Apr 3, 2015, 11:00:00 PM

This comment has been removed by the author.

Reply



Teacher Apr 4, 2015, 3:27:00 PM

This is truly outlandish. Mr. Watson should resign from his current 'Curb owning' venture. What a creepy thing to do to a student. It is now a wonder that the Board is not calling publicly for Watson's departure, say on Monday morn g.

Reply



Volced Apr 5, 2015, 12:56:00 AM

This comment has been removed by the author.

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