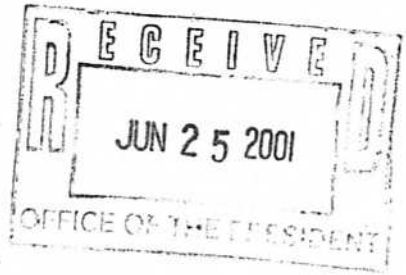




GAVILAN FACULTY SENATE



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An Open Letter to the Gavilan College Board of Trustees

From Ken Stewart Wagman, President, Gavilan Academic Senate

June 24, 2001

On Tuesday, June 12, 2001, the Board approved a full-time administrator position for the Athletic Director. The Board passed the resolution in just 5 minutes without giving previous public notice that this would be a topic of the June 12 meeting, without prior public notice of the wording of the resolution, without a report from the sub-committee explaining the rationale for the hiring, and without handing me, the faculty representative, a copy of the resolution until I asked for it and the Board was ready to vote. This new position will have a major long-term impact on the college and its budget, and its rapid approval without involving the staff, administration, and faculty was stunning and unprecedented in recent college history. (This resolution and vote were all the more surprising, coming, as they did, shortly after the Board approved a temporary budget for the 2001-2002 school year that is \$667,000 in the red, with the following year not currently looking any more favorable.)

The Board's actions on June 12 displayed a surprising lack of understanding that the Board of Trustees functions in a community that includes faculty, staff, and administrators. While the Board does have the right to wield power in this way, such heavy handedness can only lead to mistrust and difficulty in the future. The best outcomes will result from soliciting advice and cooperation from the administration, staff, and the faculty leadership when making major decisions.

In the past, administrative positions have been initiated by the administration in consultation with the faculty and then approved by the Board, not the other way around. In the case of this rapid approval of a \$100,000 administrative position by ignoring faculty and bypassing the administration's recommendation, the Board sent a strong message that it wishes to diverge from its past practice of setting policy guidelines and letting the administration manage the college.

It is quite possible that the Board may be correct in making the hiring of a full-time Athletic Director who is an administrator a high priority for the college. Since the Academic Senate hasn't discussed it and has not seen the report of any committee who has studied it, we cannot render an opinion at this time. Creating the best climate for hiring and integrating a new administrator will require widespread support. Such support can come through discussion among staff, administration, and faculty, followed by a recommendation to the Board.

Through the years, heavy handedness on the part of the Board has presaged tough times at the college. Before the Board and the faculty become alienated from each other, I propose that the Board meet with faculty representatives to discuss and clarify the role of faculty participation in major issues, so that history doesn't repeat itself. In recent years, we have worked hard to rebuild a climate of trust so that we can work together to better the college. It would be counterproductive to destroy that trust.

This letter was shared with the Academic Senate and other faculty, and they authorized me to send it. Also, the Senate would like to invite Mr. Washington and any two other Board members to the next Senate meeting at noon on July 10 in the Mayock House to discuss these issues.

I will not be in town for the June 27 Board meeting and Enrique Luna will take my place. I can be reached via e-mail at <kwagman@gavilan.cc.ca.us>. I await your response and look forward to discussing these important issues with the Board in the near future.

Sincerely,

Ken Stewart Wagman, President

cc: Gavilan College Faculty
President's Council
Administration