

Janine Fitzgerald  
Michael Fry  
Fort Lewis College  
1000 Rim Drive  
Durango, Colorado 81301  
February 19, 2014

Mr. John Wells, Chair  
FLC Board of Trustees  
Wells Group Real Estate Brokerage  
901 Main Av  
Durango, Colorado 81301

Dear Mr. Wells,

We, as members of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), were disturbed by the nature of the deliberations that took place on 2/7/2014 regarding the proposal from our administration to implement a predominantly 3-credit model at Fort Lewis College. The AAUP is a century-old national organization that works to advance academic freedom and shared governance, define professional values and standards for higher education, and to promote economic security for those engaged in higher education. The Fort Lewis Chapter of the AAUP was chartered in December of 2013 and currently has over 30 paid members and 20 other affiliates. The process by which the Board of Trustees came to this decision is at best mysterious to us. Specifically, we are concerned about the following:

- The Faculty Senate, at the suggestion of our Provost, assigned a task force to develop a policy regarding the 3/4 credit issue in April of 2013. The task force, which consisted of representatives from all areas of the college, surveyed each department and developed a report calling for the continuation of the 3/4 mixed credit model. The report was unanimously supported by all members and was subsequently accepted by the Senate **by a 12 to 3 vote**.
- At the December Board meeting, no member of the 3/4 credit task force was asked to present on the report. At the latest Board meeting, there was no discussion of the task force report nor of the Faculty Senate endorsement of it. The curriculum committee also submitted a memo against the 3-credit model switch, which was also not discussed at the Board meeting.
- The reasons given by the administration for the radical intervention in the curriculum (including issues around transfers and accreditation) were clearly refuted by written and oral evidence presented to the Board by the faculty.

- We were further dismayed that no in-depth discussion occurred at the BOT meeting as to the viability of the Provost's proposal. Some of the issues that concern faculty include that it is discriminatory against certain groups of faculty and no criteria were developed as to how research release would be granted.
- The Board was also led to believe that divisiveness among the faculty necessitated the change to the 3-credit model. While there is some disagreement among faculty, we are not as divided as has been represented. The survey was misrepresented at the Board meeting and a closer look will show that a substantial majority were opposed to the change. However, even if we were divided, it seems alarming that the Board of Trustees would choose to involve itself in faculty affairs.
- To our knowledge, our Board of Trustees has never before intervened in curricular matters of the College. Additionally, AAUP national policy calls for Boards to intervene only in exceptional cases. No one at the Board meeting contended that there were exceptional or emergency circumstances.

We want to be assured that the Board's decision was made in a reflective manner. To help restore confidence in our system of governance, we request a response to our concerns and an explanation of the reasoning of the Board in making this decision. In deference to the Board of Trustees' Manual of Policies and Procedures calling for the "highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, and honesty...that shall through personal conduct inspire personal confidence and trust in the College," the AAUP respectfully requests either a written explanation from you or a meeting with you as the Chair of the Board to discuss your decision.

You can contact Janine Fitzgerald at [janinefitzgerald0@gmail.com](mailto:janinefitzgerald0@gmail.com) or Michael Fry at [EstherNaomiMiller@gmail.com](mailto:EstherNaomiMiller@gmail.com). Thank you for your service to the College and for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Janine Fitzgerald, Professor of Sociology and Human Services  
Michael Fry, Professor of History