



## CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY Faculty Senate

DATE: Jan. 19, 2022

The following is an open letter to President Harlan Sands, Provost Laura Bloomberg and Cleveland State University from the faculty of Faculty Senate

On January 12, 2022, the faculty of Faculty Senate met to discuss the state of the university, to discuss particular challenges facing Cleveland State as we begin the spring term of 2022, and where possible, to propose solutions. While no formal voting occurred at this 2-hour meeting, the consensus was that the Senate leadership provide a synopsis of the most pressing needs to the Cleveland State leadership. They are numerous. The faculty of Faculty Senate are concerned about the impact of management on the health, wellbeing and future of Cleveland State and of the employees at all levels within our institution.

Before addressing change at the university level, the faculty discussed our collective response to the Ohio State House's desire to control academic content through HB327 and tentatively approved (formal vote will occur at the Feb 2, 2022 Faculty Senate meeting) our "Joint Statement on Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism and American History." We are pleased to be working in concert with the administration on this important effort. This draft is uploaded to the faculty senate website on resolutions: <https://www.csuohio.edu/facultysenate/resolutions-and-statements>.

Nevertheless, managerial concerns dominated our meeting. On three, I will expand in some depth, and present a reminder list of others afterwards. The underlying cause of many problems may relate to lost institutional memory – turnover and outsourcing means people assigned to help almost have to be walked through their job by the individual needing assistance. I, and others, have sat in meetings and we see where the end point needs to go; we have observed what works and what doesn't at CSU. But, the high-salaried personnel making decisions don't know CSU. Universities are not all the same. The faculty, in part, gives us a personality, an approach, maybe a niche that really works. Breaking up this structure is risky, especially if you don't understand the foundation.

### **Current administrative actions have destabilized our foundation.**

The three biggest problems:

Shared Governance (or lack of it) and CSU 2.0;  
Fair Compensation moving forward (the lack of it); and  
Covid response at CSU (and obligations placed on faculty and students).

1. Faculty governance has been pushed aside. Other than putting faculty who were available in Summer 2021 on "workgroup" committees, all under the guise of CSU 2.0, proposals for change appear administratively driven. Faculty Senate, which holds jurisdiction on all matters curricular, and the personnel policies that govern the process for change have been ignored. Not one programmatic proposal has even started through the obligatory committee procedures described in the Personnel

Policies of CSU (3344-11-01 through 3344-16-13). Appointment of department chairs, the administrators who work most closely with faculty and who are part of faculty senate, has not followed the rules described at 3344-11-07 A (4). If the Senate bylaws are in fact Ohio law, then not following these processes violates the law. That a college does not yet exist does not remove a required approval by affected schools and departments who oversee and present programs, and the checks and balances contributed by Faculty Senate.

Faculty Senate cannot act on any programmatic change that lacks review by the faculty in affected units. That administrative choice and requirements of “confidentiality” have prevented units from even knowing about some discussed changes will never justify a rushed or altered approval process when the information is finally released. Concurrently, such actions instill confusion and fear among faculty across programs.

Fear is enhanced by removing leadership. No faculty, when voting on CSU 2.0 in April 2021, anticipated a clean sweep at the decanal level. Who defined as “leadership,” from the president to the deans, will have over 4 years experience at CSU (normally the minimum time when many faculty could consider application for tenure and be considered experienced enough to lead committees)? Therefore, the problem is not that colleges will merge, which was supported; the problem is how these mergers are being implemented. As in the 4/3 conversion of course credit hours in 2013/14, the time to complete change is insufficient. Perhaps a year was always insufficient, but the pandemic demands on faculty has made successful completion for Fall 2022 unlikely, and making this merger work at CSU requires faculty. An extension for completing the curricular components of CSU 2.0 must be considered until committees can shepherd all material through appropriate faculty governance.

2. Contract Negotiations only continue on and on. The faculty are CSU. We have and are educating students despite the pandemic, adapting and extending our teaching to reach students both at home as well as in the classroom. Everyone admits these demands have significantly increased instructional time requirements.

Faculty are uniformly disappointed, insulted, demoralized, and discouraged that given how hard each of us is working, administration wishes to impose significant de facto cuts to our salaries. Over the four years preceding the current negotiations, faculty received the following cost of living increases:

Recent raises:

2017-18 academic year	1.0%
2018-19 academic year	2.0%
2019-20 academic year	1.5%
2020-21 academic year	0% - (with a temporary pay cut Fall semester)

What is offered moving forward? Nothing encouraging has been heard, which contrasts with a government reported inflation rate just between December 2020 and December 2021 at 7%. And, that value does not count housing and cars, both of which have increased much more. Furthermore, the federal reserve goal is an annual 2% inflation rate. Suggested offers (per a December AAUP email) would equate to a CUT in real pay, which is unacceptable. The AAUP has also reported concern that administration could impose this “last best offer” on Faculty.

Everyone should consider what would happen if this contract, whether 3 years or a 6 year one, is imposed upon Cleveland State. What might CSU look like? Proposed salary adjustments suggest Cleveland State

faculty should believe they are grossly overpaid and undeserving. Merit pay (if offered) and promotion increments could provide certain eligible faculty an opportunity to sustain but not in any way increase their financial position. All that is happening with the new contract has been affecting morale of all faculty, including lecturers, clinicians, professors of practice, adjuncts, etc., who carry a significant share of classroom instruction.

The pandemic further hit many junior faculty, especially those who are parents, especially if they had to pause their tenure clock to have an opportunity to still make tenure or gain contract extensions. These pauses will permanently affect them financially from delaying promotion. Moreover, some are reluctant to request a Covid extension on a tenure clock for these reasons as well as a fear of how it would appear should they not be able to keep up with all of their demands when they do apply for tenure.

Amidst these disheartening actions by administration, pronouncements of great appreciation of faculty are made and a need to make the environment conducive for faculty retention and a balanced family/work life are promulgated. However, no concrete actions underpin this appreciative discourse. Praise is not enough, and in the absence of fair treatment, words of “praise” add insult to financial and emotional injury.

Fair compensation for work done demonstrates the value of an employee. Without fair compensation negotiated with the AAUP and other unions, good personnel leave, existing personnel become overworked, exhausted and demoralized, and morale collapses. This outcome is no longer a concern, but is a fact.

### 3. The ongoing pandemic and the University COVID Response for Spring Semester and beyond.

CSU demands courses be face to face. Instructions to faculty provide limited options that include a short period of change to remote learning, but options are primarily directed at situations where faculty become infected. These faculty are still expected, if at all able, to continue their duties while sick.

Concurrently, faculty are asked to enforce mask policies in class, teach in classes with varied opportunities for spacing students, and support students who become sick and cannot attend. Given the expectation for hybrid/consecutive teaching, often with inadequate classrooms, faculty continue to be expected to use their creativity to solve educational needs, working extended hours to deliver course material in multiple ways simultaneously.

The state of Covid at CSU is not known. The Covid dashboard does not reflect much, CSU has never reported on campus transmissions, and information was received that an unvaccinated staff member died of Covid, having infected numerous colleagues prior to their symptoms worsening. Covid has clearly hit home.

Faculty Senate voted overwhelmingly for a vaccine mandate in Fall, 2021. The administrative response was to propose education and run a study on vaccination and Covid levels to aid decision making for Spring semester. However, no results of that study have been provided to Faculty Senate; given incredible current infection rates in Cuyahoga and nearby counties, might CSU now need a mandate? Without a mandate, policies for this spring term mirror those of fall. If we assume that the new infection variant passes through vaccinated individuals as well, could faculty and staff at least be provided with higher-quality N95 or KN95 masks?

Note that students are as concerned and have taken their own approach to raise awareness as they felt placed in a position to advocate for safety in education:

Petition: <https://www.change.org/p/safe-learning-for-cleveland-state-university>

The over 400 messages in live chat during the Facebook presentation on 1/13/22 were more vehement. Students want options, but faculty are presently banned from offering them, and realistically, often functionally blocked by workload commitments and insufficient technology. You may not have liked the student comments, but they accurately describe the situation faculty encounter each class each day, solving problems one at a time.

**Past problems and constant change contribute to stress and confusion in the following areas:**

Computer technology

Computer replacement

FAST (staff shortages)

Property Control (almost no staff)

Architects Office (gutted – almost nonfunctional)

HR - Health Care (rising costs, variable availability, a promised meeting never materialized)

HR – Hiring, insufficient staff

Magnusmart (still a nightmare)

Parking – (no answer on questions of legality of requiring a front plate)

***With outsourcing, these areas are particularly affected:***

IS&T Help Desk, Blackboard, payroll/Kronos, job searches, healthcare (& impact solutions?), student recruitment and admissions (CSU Global-Shorelight), on-line program development (ASU), and now even strategic planning (Sasaki). Eventually CSU may now become less guided by its own administration and more by the contracts CSU becomes obligated to meet.

**Conclusion**

On topics where administration want support of faculty, faculty cooperate. Little evidence suggests the reverse occurs, as the dividing factor is money. Administration treats faculty time as of minimal value when they add tasks, yet expect faculty to carry their maximum assignable teaching loads, sustain research and other creative activities, and support their units, often covering for retired and displaced staff. The stress imposed from the above crushes morale, threatens faculty retention, and often impedes performance. CSU has reduced employees and expected more of those remaining, but has CSU really reduced costs, and has too much control been given up?

Demands, not simply for faculty, but for CSU

1. Complete a fair contract with AAUP.
2. Stabilize curricular structure. Work with faculty to successfully complete CSU 2.0 before starting the next change.
3. Balance administrative units. Outside hires bring new ideas, but administration would benefit with some blend of home-grown talent and experience.
4. Reinstigate faculty governance by including faculty in decisions. Listening sessions are not faculty governance, and even less so when meeting with outsourced staff. Apply existing rules for program changes.

5. Rebuild the local support for instruction, especially but not limited to IT and IMS people who can show up in person, talk with faculty and staff, and respond when emergencies arise.
6. Make classrooms functional for concurrent (hybrid) instruction and then allow faculty to coordinate with their department or school on how best to deliver a course. Too many tiers of permissions prevent safe and responsive actions especially while the pandemic continues.

Respectfully,

Robert A. Krebs  
Chair, Faculty Senate  
And the Senate Leadership