Justice for Josiah continues; students call for improved safety on campus

Despite CSU Trustees adhering to time-keeping that resulted in public speakers’ microphones being turned off, the message still came through loud and clear—the fight for justice for David Josiah Lawson is not over, nor are efforts to improve safety for students of color on all campuses.

Students for Quality Education (SQE) activists and Charmaine Lawson demanded that Trustees use their influence to seek justice for Humboldt State student David Josiah Lawson, who was murdered at a party near campus in April 2017. Their advocacy followed a decision by the grand jury in Humboldt County to not issue indictments in the case.

“This chamber has influence, it is time that you use it. It is time that you stand with me,” said Charmaine Lawson, whose son David Josiah Lawson was just 19 when he was killed. “My family entrusted you with my son. My son was an outstanding young man with a bright future. Send a message to (DA) Maggie Fleming that we will not tolerate white supremacists and hate bias towards people of color, especially students…This fight is long from being over. I will continue to fight for justice for my child.”

Charmaine Lawson asked Trustees to come with her as she and a team of professionals meet with the Attorney General’s office about the case. Trustee Adam Day said he would go with her. Later, student Trustees Emily Hinton told Charmaine Lawson she also would accompany her to the meeting.

Humboldt State student and SQE member Deema Hindawi told Trustees that some measures to improve campus safety, including lighting on a bridge, still have not been completed. Students also are disappointed with the administration saying that they don’t need additional safety groups on campus.

“Where is the safety for students of color on campus?” Hindawi challenged. “We do not feel safe and you tell us that nothing else is being added… If there really was safety on campus, David Josiah Lawson would be alive today.”
SQE recently launched its “No Harm, Disarm” campaign, which calls for the CSU to disarm campus police and security, and invest in additional mental health counselors and intervention teams, Black resource centers, and mandatory de-escalation and unconscious bias training for campus police and security.

Many who spoke during public comment during the March 20 Board of Trustees meeting had microphones cut after just a minute of testimony, under the guise of the meeting needing to stay on schedule and adherence to Board policy. The meeting started a half-hour early, and ended ahead of schedule.

To watch a replay of the Board of Trustees meeting, click here. Footage of the March 20 Plenary session is the last video located at the bottom of the page.

**The real admissions scandal: Not enough access for qualified students**

Public outrage continues to swirl over the recent news that wealthy parents have been buying their unqualified children access to the nation’s elite universities, but there’s an arguably more disturbing scandal that continues to plague higher education: lack of access for qualified students.

It is a problem much larger than the unqualified wealthy purchasing access at elite, mostly private institutions. It’s happening right here in the CSU, with too few spots available for qualified students, many of whom are low-income, students of color, and the first in their families to attend college.

At campuses here in the CSU, more than 30,000 qualified students are being denied a chance at a college degree. What’s worse, at least one of our campuses is trying to make it more difficult to gain admittance. At Cal State LA, Campus President William Covino is planning to declare impaction, which will disproportionately hurt low-income students of color in the surrounding community.

As California State Assembly Speaker Rendon, a CSU Fullerton alum, writes in an editorial for the Sacramento Bee, “The college admissions cheating scandal is a juicy crisis of real importance, but if we want equal opportunity for college education, the scandal shouldn’t be our focus. The way I see it, the dramatic cheating revelation is kind of like a big crash on the highway. Everyone wants to slow down to look at what happened but, for most of us, the important thing is to think about where we’re going.”

Gov. Gavin Newsom, who along with Rendon is an ex officio member of the CSU Board of Trustees, sees this as a broader issue as well, as an article in the LA Times summarized: Newsom said the college admission system favors all “people of wealth and privilege,” not just those who were indicted in the current scandal.

We must ensure that students who want to receive a quality education are able to do so, and that the State of California upholds the promises made in the Master Plan—that is the real equity conversation that must happen in the wake of this admissions scandal.
CFA Chico partners with CTA on fundraiser for Camp Fire victims

The CFA Chico Chapter is partnering with the California Teachers Association to raise money for educators and students impacted by the Camp Fire through sales of #Buttestrong Unions T-shirts.

Money raised from shirt sales will benefit the Camp Fire Relief fund for CFA/CTA members affected by the fire, as well as retired members of CTA/NEA and student CTA members at Chico State.

“This is a terrific way to show your union pride and support our colleagues whose lives were turned upside down due to the Camp Fire,” said Susan Green, CFA’s Treasurer and a Chico State faculty member. “Our community is still feeling the dramatic effects of the fire and we need to continue to come together to show support for the victims.”

CTA also will be holding a county-wide event in the spring for all teachers’ unions in Butte County, and is hoping to get a photo with educators and students wearing the shirts.

Each shirt is $15. To order a shirt, which comes in two designs, click here. California Faculty Association-Chico is among the unions listed on the back of the shirt.

The preordering window is open now through March 31 and shirts will be ready by April 8.

Faculty Rights Tip: Safety

Article 37 of our Collective Bargaining Agreement covers workplace safety for all Unit 3 faculty members— instructional faculty, counselors, librarians, and coaches.

It is the administration’s responsibility to ensure that faculty members are not required to work in unsafe conditions or perform tasks that endanger health or safety.

When faculty members believe that they are being required to work under unhealthy or unsafe conditions, they should notify “appropriate administrators,” i.e. college deans and campus provosts.

The university must then investigate complained-of conditions as soon as possible and immediately communicate the results of their investigations. If necessary, the university also must explain the steps that will be taken to correct the conditions.

Faculty members also may request temporary reassignments when they believe in good faith that their present assignment presents a clear danger to their health and safety. The administration must respond to such requests and may not unreasonably deny them during the preliminary aspect of any investigation.
Some unhealthy or unsafe conditions may warrant contact with campus police departments, as the threats may be connected to criminal activity.

Please check out Article 37 for other important safety provisions.

- Browse the faculty contract.
- See an archive of Faculty Rights Tips.
- If you have questions about a faculty rights tip or would like to suggest a tip, please write us with the subject line “Faculty Rights Tip.”

Links of the Week

Impaction: What’s next?
University Times
Cal State LA administrators made the decision to move forward with impaction despite the opposition from many of the students, faculty, and community members. The Final Admissions Proposal was submitted to the Chancellor’s office on March 15, which institutes the raise for admissions criteria and officially declares Cal State LA as an impacted university beginning Fall 2020.

Oakland teacher strike inspires other Bay Area school districts to follow
Golden Gate Xpress
In the wake of the successful Oakland teacher strike two weeks ago, educators across the Bay Area are rallying together to improve their wages and work conditions.

Higher Education Funding Momentum Must Continue
Fox and Hounds Daily
The decisions by the University of California and California State University to hold the line on tuition increases in the Fall are welcome news, provided that Governor Gavin Newsom and the Legislature follow through with robust increases in State funding for UC, CSU and our community colleges. Otherwise, educational quality will suffer and thousands of deserving students will be turned away.

For an Asian-American Family, the Cost of Education
New York Times
The college admission scandal and a lawsuit charging admissions discrimination at Harvard have special resonance for families like mine, where parents sacrifice so much for their children’s opportunities.

Promoting Tuition-Free Programs to Undocumented Students
Inside Higher Ed
When Tennessee and Nevada started tuition-free community college programs several years ago, state lawmakers made no allowances for students who were undocumented immigrants. The two states were not alone. Among the approximately 15 states that now offer tuition-free programs, only a handful allow such students to participate.

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