Faculty Report to Bellevue College Board of Trustees, 28 September 2026

I'm going to respect the timing guidance that was sent to me, but that's going to require me to be a little more direct today.

You as trustees and we as faculty both share a belief in the value of a great education for the people in our community. We all work to make Bellevue College the best it can be. We are in the classrooms with students every day, striving to help them succeed. But we are seeing that the Provost and President don't share our values. We find that alarming and we hope you do, too.

We've had forty years of labor peace, and your designees seem intent on ushering us out of that era. Early in the bargain, your representatives told us at the table that the preferred and necessary nature of labor/management relations was adversarial. For decades, we have had a shared sense that adversity is an exception or an indicator that we have failed to meet a shared goal. Now the Provost and President, your designees, are driving a paradigm shift, taking us into hostile territory.

We have heard from the college's team multiple times at the table what sounds like a preference for not coming to a ratifiable agreement and instead finding a path to unilaterally imposing their will. They certainly have shown no urgency around finding a deal.

Instead of good faith bargaining, they cite endless after-the-fact impact bargaining as the preferred path for exercising their capacious view of management rights. I am concerned that your designees are underselling the disruptive nature of that strategy.

I also want to highlight that the rhetoric you're hearing from administrators about shared governance is not at all in line with what we saw from accreditors. The President, Provost, and others are treating that accreditation report as though the solution is to create a new body or change the responsibilities or reporting structures of existing ones. This does not scratch the itch that accreditors obviously have, which is systematizing the ways in which the recommendations, approvals, or concerns of those bodies are acted upon by administrators. Administrators' responsiveness to governance voice is clearly the key both to meeting accreditors' demands and having a healthy institution. The only useful accountability for that is in our CBA.

In many circumstances at BC recently, engagement with faculty voice is at or below the contractual minimum, and our accreditors are clear that it's not enough. Your bargaining team is telling us with their actions that they want the bar to be lower. In bargaining and in presentations to faculty they are saying this is necessary so they can build a different channel for faculty voice which has no accountability for them and no design to share as yet. It doesn't add up or mesh with what we are seeing even in the last couple weeks.

During opening week there were no scheduled opportunities for the President, Provost, or Interim Vice Provost to take questions. To my knowledge it happened twice anyway, both times to Interim Vice Provost Pryor. When he agreed to answer questions on Thursday to cover some dead air, he made it through two before Provost Clark gave him the hook, indicating that it transgressed our values to acknowledge disagreement in front of one of our elected student leaders. When he announced the abrupt and unilateral shift of the Basic and Transitional Studies and ELI programs away from Arts and Humanities during our division retreat that Friday, he declared the situation unproductive after another two or three questions from the dozens of faculty who were hearing about this for the first time, and he abruptly left the meeting.

I don't believe that the appearance of assent among the faculty is necessary or beneficial to the experience of student leaders, or in fact students in general. I sincerely hope you don't either. I also am having a hard time squaring the college's actions around BaTS with any reasonable understanding of shared governance or our existing CBA language. It does, however, seem like the model that your designees are pursuing, at great cost to the college and our ability to focus on our students.

In the past we maintained labor peace and an acceptable level of shared governance by using labor management, LOAs, pilots, and joint committees to create space to get something right before removing faculty protections in the CBA or requiring management to contemplate limits on its authority in specific areas. Faculty have an understandable desire and in fact a responsibility to see a thing work before investing their faith in it. The administration's recent actions and your bargaining team's approach is to insist that all the guard rails and protections need to be removed so that they can take a series of deeply uncollaborative actions.

Look, we're professors. We do this work because we love our subjects, we love learning, and we are dedicated to supporting student success. But we have learned to become advocates and activists because it has been necessary in order to get what our students need to succeed. And this bargain is creating a lot of union activists. They say a bad boss is the best organizer, and that's what you're seeing right now. Your designees are building our union stronger than ever, ready to take action, and aware of what our power can achieve. And Bellevue College faculty are seeing that we need to stand up and fight if we're going to protect our profession, our college, and our students.

The escalations your designees are instigating force us all to question whether you have the right people at the table and whether they have the right instruction from you.

Lindsay Haney
President, Bellevue College Association of Higher Education