

May 4, 2009

Neal Peacock  
Chair  
Board of Trustees  
College of Eastern Utah  
Price, Utah

Dear Mr. Peacock and Trustees:

As we are all aware, the College of Eastern Utah is facing an uncertain future. At the recent all-campus meeting, President King reassured the College community that the situation, although distressing, also presents us with an opportunity to rethink and renew the institution. We agree. In order to take advantage of that opportunity, we must begin with a frank assessment of what brought CEU to this crisis. An effective response to the very serious problems we face needs to be based on an accurate picture of what has and has not gone wrong at CEU. Our concern is that the merger proposals currently under consideration do not adequately address the root cause of our troubles and therefore will not ensure a sustainable future for CEU.

There are a number of misperceptions about CEU that need to be set straight. The College is in sound financial health. We are pared to the bone, to be sure, but our level of debt is within acceptable range for an institution of our size and our business operations are now effective, efficient, and up-to-date. Our infrastructure is in reasonably good shape as well. No one can accuse us of living in luxury, of course, but there are no problems beyond the normal infrastructure issues that colleges confront on an on-going basis. The quality of the education we provide is excellent. By almost any measure—retention rates, transfer rates, faculty-to-student ratios—CEU is successful. The education we provide can be favorably compared to that at any school in the state.

The problem is not that CEU doesn't do its job well. The problem is that we don't do it for enough students. CEU has had a dramatic decline in enrollment—29% since 2000. No institution experiencing such a drop in enrollment can expect to maintain political support for continuing claim to taxpayer dollars. CEU's appropriated cost-

Page two

per-student is now the highest in the state--\$13,191 compared to Snow's \$9,775. Any proposal for CEU's continued viability must bring this figure down to a level consistent with our sister institutions. This is the harsh reality of our situation--regardless of its causes, this is the state of affairs that must be addressed. Without a strategic plan for returning CEU to sustainability, a merger or enhanced partnership will be of limited value regardless of how it is configured.

As Commissioner Sederberg indicated when he spoke to the campus last fall, an institution's success can only be driven from within. That is why Faculty Senate urges the Board of Trustees to initiate a three-year program of administrative and instructional restructuring coupled with an intensive recruitment and retention effort pegged to defined enrollment goals. If CEU were to significantly reduce costs through restructuring and increase enrollment by 250 students, our appropriated cost-per-student could be brought into alignment with other USHE institutions. This is a difficult but realistic goal that we believe can be accomplished in three years.

The essential, first step toward accomplishing this goal, is the appointment of a CEU president who can make a three to five-year commitment to guide the College through the process of reorganization and recovery. The second step should be immediate implementation of a new administrative structure for the College that will reduce costs and provide for greater efficiency. Institutional restructuring should continue, as already anticipated, through the 2009-2010 academic year with instructional consolidation and revision of the general education program. Administrative and instructional restructuring must be accompanied by a major, college-wide effort to increase enrollment. CEU needs to adopt recruiting strategies suited to 21<sup>st</sup> century economic, demographic, and technological realities. The faculty is committed to cooperating with a new administrative team to ensure an innovative and effective approach to growing our student population, but it is of vital importance that the College move forward at once with tangible action to recruit and retain more students.

The approach outlined above—institutional reorganization accompanied by a new recruitment and retention initiative--will put the College on the path toward recovery and make it possible for CEU to continue doing what it has done so well for the past 70 years—provide quality education at an affordable price to the people of Southeastern Utah. Faculty Senate supports enhanced partnerships with other schools where they can demonstrably serve the educational needs of our students and create cost efficiencies through cooperative activities, but these cannot substitute for the basic, internal reform we so badly need. CEU is capable of

Page three

charting its own course back to health—we have the talent, experience, and determination to do so. But it is imperative that we act quickly, decisively, and boldly.

Sincerely,

Troy Hunt  
President  
CEU Faculty Senate

Approved unanimously, April 27, 2009

Administrative Reorganization  
College of Eastern Utah  
Faculty Senate Proposal  
April 2009





