

Some “Fairness” Highlights

“SAFETY AND FAIRNESS AT ASU: A STUDY” by O. John Kuenhold August 2015

[Original report appears here.](#) [Executive team response appears here.](#)

Excerpted by Danny Ledonne, September 2015, with **emphasis added** throughout.

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ASU is dependent on its burgeoning Extended Studies and online graduate programs for growth and to support the underlying undergraduate programs which are at the core of its mission.

These changes have created a division between creative optimistic departments which are growing and others which are uncertain of the future and find themselves looking across the campus with a bit of envy and trepidation. Faculty members acknowledge that the expansion of graduate programs and Extended Studies has been a stabilizing factor. There is a strong desire to grow, build, or in some cases, rebuild core undergraduate curriculum. **There is some anxiety over the decision- making process, where the available limited resources will next be invested, and there are many competing worthy ideas all of which are consistent with ASU’s Mission.** This is the context in which my discussions on campus occurred.

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ASU is large enough that it is unrealistic to believe all faculty members will feel represented by the Faculty Senate or that the members of that body will effectively communicate back to all the faculty all the issues coming up and solicit input from fellow faculty. The same would be true of other organizations. This is not necessarily wrong. It is just the reality that these individuals will usually express their individual views as to what they believe is best on a given issue and some will carry out their responsibilities regarding communication to and from their constituents better than others. The administration should not rely on representatives in the communication of important information.

The consequence is that many employees, students and faculty feel as though “they” have no voice in the decisions made. Of course, the majority really are not interested in becoming involved in budget decisions unless it is about funding for something in which they have a special interest.

The ASU website sets out the desired relationship when it says there must be “active cooperation” between the various constituent groups. It goes on to say ASU is deeply committed to “promoting effective shared governance by fostering the open and transparent exchange of information and opinion.” This identifies the responsibility the administration has to create an atmosphere for good communication and for initiating communication around matters under discussion or planning.

There are frustrations from the administration point of view as well. When a lot of planning goes into a public forum on budget decision items in order that everyone can consider and make comments at the same presentation, but only a handful of people come, the presenters are left wondering if it was worth all the work that went into it. It often seems to the administration that people did not read what was communicated before complaining they had not received any information on a topic. These are common problems in large organizations of busy people.

A number of people indicated that they perceived decisions were made by a small cadre of people and that the supposed paths to get favorable action on a proposal were blocked before they reached the decision-makers. In particular, faculty expressed a view that their ideas never get past a negative reaction from a department chair or the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VP for Academic Affairs) unless they go around to President Svaldi directly. Almost everyone expressed the view that while it may not be the right way to accomplish things, the best way to get something done was to schedule a meeting with the President and go around the real and perceived obstacles to getting what they want.

When the best means to achieve something is seen as a visit to the President there is a problem with process for decision-making and over time it undermines the sense of equity or fairness even if in a particular instance the decision is viewed as a good one. In order to strengthen the formal decision-making process, there needs to be clear leadership from the top and down through the Vice-Presidents to the department heads. I address some of the department leadership issues in another section but real leadership in those positions is important. ASU has great leadership in some departments while other departments are struggling around leadership or have imposed leadership from a separate department because internal issues have left the department without an appropriate chair.

In reality, there is a great deal more transparency and opportunity to stay abreast of what is going on and what decisions must be made today than in the past. With emails, webpages and other media sources including social media, everyone on campus receives lots of information and invitations to participate in campus planning. ASU suffers the same information overload that other public and private institutions suffer. The challenge is to provide information in a variety of ways that both gives notice as an email does, and offers materials and presentations for quick reference, reuse and archival purposes, as on the website and on YouTube. Emails get deleted or buried in the flow of new ones. There is a good deal of effort required to do what is necessary to make information more accessible but there is also the potential to improve both reality and perception regarding a common understanding of shared governance.

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Recommendations:

1. Increase the administration blogs/webpages that document campus discussions and

decisions for easy review. Systematically incorporate presentations (PowerPoints, YouTube) and documents in a systematic way so a viewer can review presentations when they want to.

2. Invigorate the documented and intended processes for communication and decision-making to avoid business being done on the basis of personal relations with all the problems it brings.

3. Make transparent disclosure of the reasons for decisions and the priorities set.

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Students frequently expressed frustration at the absence of student health care insurance and the lack of a student health care clinic on campus. I discussed these issues with administrators, the nursing instructors and a hospital administrator. No one disagrees that it would be a good thing to provide both a student health care clinic and affordable health care insurance. In the past there was a low cost health insurance program and for a time there was a student clinic. Access to birth control information, treatment for STDs and treatment for colds and the flu were commonly discussed issues. The current treatment options for students include the nearby Urgent Care Clinic operated by Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc. and the emergency room at the SLV Regional Medical Center, directly across the street from the Nielsen Library on the ASU campus. Many students who come from the Front Range have health care insurance through their parents, but the Alamosa treatment options are out of network and thus not generally covered. The Nursing Program at ASU expressed great interest in partnering with SLV Regional Medical Center, Valley-Wide Health Systems or some other provider to create an on-campus health clinic. Such a partnership would benefit the nurses who instruct to keep their own certifications and skills current, and it would offer another placement for the nursing student rotations in their training. The hospital has expressed a willingness to explore these issues with ASU. The need to sit down and enter into an MOU relating to sexual assault issues affords a perfect opportunity to explore these options fully. **The absence of health care carries over to the discussions of “equity” and “fairness” since it represents yet another obstacle and cost for students already facing many financial hurdles. There is broad support for having both an insurance program and a health clinic, but for many on campus it may not be the highest priority. To this author it should be on the list of significant shortcomings in the services for students at present.**

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The CIELO Campus Climate Report also points out **there are groups on campus that feel “less optimistic about the current campus climate and prospects for improvement.”** The CCCR specifically identified Hispanic faculty, staff and students as less optimistic. **It concluded LGBT faculty, staff and students cited “high levels of gender and sexual orientation discrimination,” and female faculty, staff and students as “more critical of ASU’s campus climate by comparison to male respondents.”**

Finally the survey cited male faculty, staff and students were “more likely to report discrimination and were acutely aware of ideological, philosophical, and religious repression.” My interviews and meetings with groups support each of these points to varying degrees. Fairness includes a number of issues brought to my attention that were not within the scope of the CCCR, Noel-Levitz® report or other previous campus surveys. I discuss some issues with focus on students, staff and faculty for their specific views on fairness. Other issues such as being an HSI institution are discussed as a single campus-wide issue. In discussing the concerns raised and my observations, it is important to keep in mind that all but a few of those I interviewed shared a strong affection for ASU. One expression of that love is the desire to improve the institution.

That said, those spoken to hold some different ideas as to what would improve the University and what would harm it. That should not surprise us. A free exchange of ideas and healthy debate is desirable on campus. **Unfortunately, I did not really hear many good stories about healthy give and take discussions. The most surprising and troubling theme was the degree of unhappiness among many (not all) Hispanic employees at every level in the University. While one can say the gender related issues on campus are the subject of a lot of discussion, the undercurrent of unhappiness of a significant core of the campus community is not discussed often and it needs to be explored and addressed as discussed below.**

P.64-65

CASA has also given a number of students who live off campus a good campus “home” which better connects them to the student life and activities. Many students from the San Luis Valley cannot afford to live on campus because of finances and/or because they have family responsibilities that require they return home. This group of students is at great risk of being overwhelmed and feeling disconnected. CASA meets a real need for these students. As good as CASA is and as great as it might become, its’ meager financial support is symbolic of the question we started with: **What does it mean to be an HSI institution? While there are many on campus who suggested this broader cultural connotation for HSI, there are some real contradictions on the campus. Where there were three Spanish professors a decade ago, ASU now has only a single Spanish professor. One position was eliminated and one is unfilled following the economic crisis.** There are many departments who want to grow now and there will be hard choices regarding priorities. If bolstering offerings supportive of ASU as a HSI leader in terms of culture, history and language, do you start with language or somewhere else? **It was surprising to me that there was not a student outcry and demand for more in terms of Spanish language and student cultural exchanges.** I suggest a deeper conversation with students on campus about the relationship between language and culture and whether a language requirement would be a good addition to the graduation requirements at ASU, as there is at most liberal arts institutions. As someone who hired many people over the

last forty years, fluency in Spanish is a big plus in the workplace anywhere in the country. It also is the gateway to an expanded connection to Hispanic culture for all students.

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The recent addition of a Latino Studies Minor is another positive step with its dual focus on the southwest and Latin America. At one time, ASU had a vibrant exchange program with the Universidad Popular Autonoma del Estado de Puebla. ASU offers students the opportunity to spend a semester at other universities in the United States but there are few opportunities to study abroad at ASU. The cost of such semesters abroad is obviously an obstacle, but setting up the framework and exploring money sources to support the program seems like a good step to round out choices for ASU students to enrich their college experience and is certainly aligned with an expanded view of HSI. Recommendation: There should be a campus dialogue to explore what people want HSI to mean and to define the steps needed to reach that vision. An expanded view of HSI would be another avenue to attract students who want to learn about and embrace culture, language and history.

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The **failure to radically impact retention and graduation rates is a large disappointment** given how much effort has gone and continues to go into this problem.

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The single loudest complaint about the current facilities revolved around the Rex Student Activity Center located in the original ASU gym. It was renovated over a decade ago into a student activity center with a weight room, exercise equipment and places for aerobic exercise classes. The equipment is well-worn and the numbers of students wanting to work out there continues to grow. Students today want to be fit and they are used to having good facilities to do so. AS&F, other students and ASU staff all think improvement to the Rex should be a high priority. I received conflicting stories as to whether the original plans for use of the new student fees included a climbing wall some believe was to go in the old field house since the track team was getting its new High Altitude Center dome. Whatever the original plans, the decision was made to put the climbing wall in the Rex. Money was a key factor. As the many new DII sports were added, the Athletic Department has put the field house to good use. Planned improvements to the Rex were pushed back. The suggestion this was in part due in part to cost overruns on the stadium is disputed. The climbing wall is a big hit but it further reduced the space in the Rex. The expansion of DII sports as a strategy to increase undergraduate enrollment worked. ASU is also a great place for a multitude of outdoor activities that are not DII sports. Improving and emphasizing the opportunities for outdoor activities and adventure sports in the San Luis Valley could be another successful strategy to attract undergraduate students. Having an outstanding student activity center to work out

in is essential to such a strategy. It is also one of the first facilities potential students look at on the campus. **Addition to and improvement of the Rex is a good step both for equity to existing students and as a means to recruit.** Additional funding for adventure sports and other outdoor oriented activities is also needed.

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The perception that athletics is favored in the budget is present in many quarters for different reasons. As already noted, **students feel the Rex Activity Center facility is not adequate.** A few indicated that the **denial of general access to the new weight room and even the dome is not “fair.”** **Some faculty members point to the capital expenditures on athletic facilities during almost a decade while pay issues and staff cutbacks for faculty and for staff remain unaddressed.** A number of people just think athletics are too influential and take too much of the budget at ASU and in American universities in general. **ASU doubled down on student-athletes as a means to increase and sustain undergraduate enrollment.** It is a conscious strategy aimed to stabilize the University and enable the University to address the faculty and staff issues and beyond that, to look at expansion of undergraduate offerings. **One can understand the reasoning and still feel this was ill-advised and not fair.**

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The strategy to build undergraduate enrollment by offering additional sports to attract students who want athletic competition as part of their college experience has been successful in terms of numbers. **Coaches and student-athletes, however, raised many concerns that ASU has too much of a good thing. It is time for the University to do a careful evaluation of the size of each program. Recruiting students in numbers so large that only a small portion will ever get to play is not fair to students.** It is one thing at a DI school where the student-athlete gets a large scholarship and free education regardless of whether or not she/he plays. It is not the same when students are getting no financial incentive or the small stipends most of the enrollment-based sports offer. **It is time to re-evaluate the cost-benefit to the University and to the student-athletes involved to find the right numbers for each sport.** Student-athletes and other students involved in University organizations have an expectation of reasonable financial support. I have suggested that adventure sports and student organizations like CASA need additional funding. So too, enrollment-based sports deserve a reasonable baseline support. Whether it is housing and food service issues for sports teams required to stay on campus over a holiday, or traveling costs for a club to attend a national conference, **ASU students too often find themselves having to fund these things for themselves or club sponsors or coaches are paying.**

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At the end of the day, once a student-athlete is on the campus, the whole campus needs to support that individual and help them graduate and grow. Some of the athletic teams have much higher graduation rates than the student body as a whole. Others are only slightly above the average. None are below it but with the exception of a few teams, there is a lot of room for improvement in graduation rates for most teams as there is for the campus as a whole. **Beyond the baseline support for any athletic program offered, there is no appealing argument to allocate additional resources to athletics until the many unmet needs in the academic side of the University are fully addressed.**

P.71-72

The men's basketball program was a subject numerous people wanted to tell me about. This is a program that has expectations of success and entertainment. In order to do so, coaches have become reliant upon junior college transfers who come to the campus to play ball and complete their degrees. **I heard very unflattering things said about some of the past players and the actions of the coach on behalf of some of the players. The former coach was criticized for trying to get his players better housing and not following the rules in doing so as well as trying to interfere with disciplinary actions in the dorms.** He has left to work at a DI school, and an Alamosa native has been named the new head coach. He will face the same problems some of which are described here. **While the coach has left, it is useful to look at some of the issues the last few years as they could occur with any team and any coach.** RAs described problems with student-athletes in the dorms in past years (not in 2014-15). The problems described by the RAs ranged from small to serious. The attempts by the coach to intervene to help the student-athletes only made the relationship with the Housing staff worse. The result was the coach sought other housing for his student-athletes this past year which made sense, but highlights the outsider status of some of these particular student athletes.

At the root of the problem is the large number of transfer students. The other sports teams strive to bring the student-athletes in as first-year students. They are part of a class and even when they spend much time with teammates and focused on the team, they inherently become connected to the University and other students. The former coach was a passionate advocate for his student-athletes. He expressed frustration at the difficulties his student-athletes face.

He asked: "Once the studentathlete enrolls, does the University community not owe that student-athlete the same support and mentoring and wish for success as any other student?" Even if you do not believe the way the teams are recruited is a good one, that issue should be separated from the obligation to support the student-athlete once he/she is here.

Conversations in the community and on campus (not the RA conversations) sometimes labeled all the young men on this team with a broad brush that had racial

overtones. Many of the young men who transfer are first-generation college students from low income families and are African Americans. Helping them find a place for their own personal growth and education culminating in graduating is the same goal as for every incoming first-year. The graduation rates shown to me for this team were far better than suggested to me by some people. Athletic Director Larry Mortenson has given a lot of time and thought to the issues of this team and worked hard to help the former coach help his student-athletes to succeed both on the court and in the classroom. The new coach enters the job with a familiarity with ASU, the team and the issues the team and its players have faced. Just as other teams (and departments) have recovered from bad places over the years, this program can do the same with effort and with support.

P.72-73

Given how many worthy ideas there are at ASU, it is no wonder that **some look at the support the Grizzly Club has with a degree of envy. The theatre, arts and music departments all have their own benefactors but it is fair to say the athletic programs have a huge fundraising advantage and continuity over time through the Grizzly Club.** It took years of personal effort and commitment to build some of these relationships for the University and for the athletic department. It is certainly a model to build around for other campus funding purposes but it would be hard to replicate outside athletics and perhaps the arts. **The Foundation and the Grizzly Club both see protecting their key donors from daily solicitations as important for good reasons. At the same time there needs to be a better way to take a new idea and find the right funding for it.** In thinking about the problem, a crowdsourcing type approach that floats ideas and offers participation broadly to alumni and other ASU supporters makes sense to me. This reaches the known donors without threatening Foundation and Grizzly Club ties to them but it also reaches out to people who have never given to either the Foundation or the Grizzly Club.

P.75-77

Numerous classified employees expressed the perception that as a classified job becomes vacant it is changed to an exempt position resulting in a decline in the number of classified employees. The IT group was a frequently cited example of this. Several employees suggested that it seemed as though the University is trying to eliminate classified employees. There is considerable confusion around this and the complaints below that additional communication and transparency can help address. **Another contributing factor is that a number of the new jobs on the campus have grant funding or cash funding which makes the positions exempt but the job duties may be very comparable to classified positions.** Additional effort to clarify the differences between classified and exempt jobs and to apply the differences consistently across the campus would be helpful.

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A number of employees stated they feel stuck in jobs they may or may not like but which offer no opportunity for advancement. They enjoy working at ASU and consequently, many said they were looking for lateral moves or a move to a different part of campus either for a change or to a place where opportunity to advance was perceived to be better. Classified positions are subject to requirements for specific job posting and a defined process to fill an empty position. Employees said exempt positions are not always advertised and that it seemed that when a new exempt position is created the person getting the job is already selected. **For a classified or exempt employee hoping to move laterally or move upward this can be frustrating.** The posting of all jobs to get competitive applications would answer at least some of these concerns.

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The successive pay increases are welcome but do not address inversion and compression. Classified employees' base salaries are adjusted on a statewide basis but frustration was expressed around the issue of compression resulting from the years with no COLA and the change from the old state "step" system to the current broadband P4P system. A number of the classified employees seemed unaware that the change to P4P was not just at ASU but applied to state employees in general. An example of the kind of problems that exist described to me was that a new hire custodian started at a pay comparable to a multi-year veteran.⁶⁹ These kind of wage differences are bound to cause problems in morale and a sense that one is not appreciated. As described earlier, the FY 2015-2016 budget contains \$200,000 set aside for salary adjustments for faculty and staff. The effort to hire new classified employees (and new faculty) at equitable base salaries is a good thing. If new employees start at the bottom of a range they too will soon become unhappy and trapped. So it is reasonable to start new classified employees at a higher rate in the appropriate range but this leaves the task of addressing the older employees now compressed. The \$200,000 will begin the process of addressing this. If and when the pay adjustments are completed, all classified employees will be better off. The fact that the discussion of this issue which I first heard in September has changed to concrete action in order to change the situation is a step forward that certainly will help morale but the amount of money available will not go very far especially if some is used to refill a vacancy. The multi-year commitment on these issues is necessary to resolve this.

Facilities and grounds personnel expressed multiple frustrations including not being respected by the faculty and not being included or offered a chance to contribute ideas in discussions concerning their work. The facilities employees pointed out that the campus has activities every night and that their schedules become very full. Event management is complicated and puts a lot of strain on the facilities staff. The supervisors complained that they are expected to be at many events and they do not get overtime for these evening and weekend activities. **One custodian said that people used to try and help clean up and not leave a mess but now that does not happen. A large number of the facility and ground personnel are Hispanic. Several quietly expressed that they feel disrespected as individuals, as Hispanics, and on the basis of their educational levels.**

Exempt employees have their own concerns. There are no mandatory evaluations and whether reviews are done depends upon under whom the exempt employee works. Several exempt employees felt stuck in their positions and they were concerned that saying anything could jeopardize their position since they are without the procedural protections of classified employees. They also expressed the same frustration classified employees had that **openings were not always advertised.** My former employment with the courts did provide me with a good awareness of these issues. In an expanding economy new hires must be paid more than earlier hires were during depressed times. This creates a problem that occurs over and over. **If there is not a periodic and systematic approach to realign salaries equitably this can become a toxic issue in the workplace.** Similarly, there needs to be periodic reclassification for the employees whose responsibilities have grown far beyond those in their assigned classification. I spoke about these issues with Tracy Rogers, Director of Human Resources as well as with other administration figures. Ms. Rogers understands the issues and is on the committee working to address them. As already noted, \$200,000 is set aside in the 2015-2016 budget to begin addressing compression and other salary issues for all staff as well as faculty.

A concerted effort to look at salary equity across job classifications has been ongoing since President Svaldi was appointed. Throughout the period of severe financial difficulty, ASU has continued to review CUPA comparisons with various comparison samples for every class of employee targeting those paid less than 75% of the group average. There has been an effort to determine whose salaries need to be adjusted first and to figure out a plan to get there. For example a review of the 2013-14 AHES salary comparison using 477 institutions shows almost all ASU administrators, faculty and coaches have salaries ranging from the low 70% to the low 80% as a percentage of the median for the job classification. There were a couple of outliers-one employee at 35% and one professor at 56.5% of the group median. It is reasonable for employees to expect that these issues will be fully addressed in the next couple years and periodically thereafter through proactive actions by Human Resources. The 2015-2016 budget begins an adjustment process that may take years to complete but a process has begun.

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The Human Resources Office and the Office of Equal Opportunity are two important resources for employees. **I will address faculty perspectives below but the staff perspective was fairly negative towards both offices.** The role of HR Director is not easy. In fact she bears multiple roles that sometimes seem in conflict. Employees definitely saw HR as an arm of administration. In talking with employees, I sought to differentiate between the role HR plays in making sure employees know their benefits and the procedures to take for common employee issues like pregnancy, changes of family status, and the role HR plays when there is a dispute between an employee and supervisor

or a disciplinary action against an employee. **A number of employees did not express confidence that the information they were receiving about their benefits was always accurate, and many expressed the feeling that they were treated as though their questions were a bother.** Other employees expressed satisfaction with their interactions with one or more of the HR employees. **There is room for a lot of improvement in the relationship between HR and classified and exempt employees.** I recommend elsewhere that HR initiate implicit bias training across campus and that effort could be coupled with a more general outreach to make employees more comfortable and confident in the advice they receive from HR. The Human Resources office is small considering how many employees ASU has. HR Director Tracy Rogers is knowledgeable and quickly identified the issues percolating on campus in our conversations. She expressed the desire that their office be viewed as friendly place to learn one's benefits and rights and get accurate information and advice. They need to reach out to employees to make that a reality.

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Employees expressed mixed views about the Office of Equal Opportunity. **Many liked Mr. Korngut personally and found him helpful and knowledgeable. Others expressed a lack of confidence in filing a complaint regarding discrimination or harassment for a variety of reasons including the time the investigations seemed to take and perceived negative outcomes of which they have heard.** The addition of Erica Romero as a deputy investigator was a step taken to ensure that if someone felt uncomfortable talking to a man or to Joel Korngut in particular, that person would have a younger female option. The raw number of complaints filed since Erica Romero was added as a deputy did not increase in any way that would validate the suggestion that people were not willing to talk to Joel Korngut, but over time the numbers may change. The fact that Erica Romero is only part-time in the position and has many other responsibilities may play a part. To the extent the concerns are to have a female coordinator available, Erica Romero meets that request. To the extent she works with Joel Korngut, there undoubtedly are some who are not satisfied that her appointment addresses the problem they perceive. That fact is underscored by a complaint filed that the University chose to have handled by an outside investigator because that complainant was not comfortable with Joel Korngut or Erica Romero. I am familiar enough with the circumstances to say the decision to have an outside investigator was a sound move by the University in that instance. In fact, with the many responsibilities of the Title VII and Title IX Coordinator and the low number of complaints actually filed, utilizing an outside contract investigator may be a viable long-term solution regardless of the internal staff. This should be analyzed after the selection of the new title IX and Title VII coordinator.

I repeatedly heard the complaint that at ASU everything is based on who you know. I discussed this in the earlier section on governance. When there are significant numbers of individuals who feel that way, any inside person will be subject to having their determination in an investigation discounted by some on the basis of relationships on the

campus. These cases are hard enough and with the intentional lack of transparency (intended to protect privacy), the broader community never knows if a particular determination seems correct or not. Depending on who a person knows and talks to, they may receive totally different points of view and there is no way to fact check.

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Faculty salary levels have been a concern for a long time, probably from the day the school opened. The 1997 Evaluation Report from an evaluation team for the Commission of Institutions of Higher Education identified key issues for the faculty: low salaries, lack of professional development planning for faculty and staff, a need for a coherent plan to enhance diversity among faculty, and Title IX compliance. **Each of these problems persists today in spite of multiple efforts to address them.** The faculty suffered a similar freeze to other employees following the 2008 recession. In addition some positions were eliminated and frozen as vacancies. It is important to note that adjustments recommended in the 2006 CUPA study were implemented in spite of the 2008 recession. The 2014 across-the-board raise and just announced 2.5% salary increase for faculty and exempt staff (starting January 1, 2016) are welcome and deserved. In addition, the recently adopted FY 15-16 budget sets aside \$200,000 to specifically address the worst disparities in salaries in comparison to peers. The campus-wide compensation committee redefined the the CUPA peer group. It commenced the most recent CUPA Salary Survey in 2012 and this process was well along the way when I began my report. A new survey was circulated in February of this year to verify actual current salaries. The faculty committee members who spoke to me indicated a good level of comfort and confidence in the comparison group selected and the goal of getting everyone to 90% of the average for the comparison group over time. The immediate recommendation was to bring the faculty and staff base salaries to a minimum of 72.5% of their peer group average and address inversion and compression in the faculty, exempt and classified staff as appropriate. This effort addresses the same issue for all employee groups. Almost everyone agrees that a reasonable multi-year goal is to raise the base salary for every employee to 90% of the peer average or better. This goal has been stated for twenty years. The hard work of the campus-wide compensation committee has now received positive action from the Board of Trustees and commitment of money to address at least the worst discrepancies in salaries.

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Another theme emerged around the changing nature of a University today. **In particular, the push for expanding online classes troubled a number of people. They expressed their discomfort with being asked to teach online classes and that they did not find them rewarding in the same sense that a classroom is.** They wistfully wanted the quiet academia of past eras. Teaching extra online classes offers a way to boost salary but it is different and demanding. Below I speak to challenges and opportunities of Extended Studies and other online classes. For those who are uncomfortable or just not really

interested in doing it, there was a degree of anxiety over these sea changes in higher education.

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The increasing use of adjunct professors for Extended Studies and on campus is seen by some as one element in a growing threat to the traditional tenure track model. Nationally the debate includes arguments not voiced to me at ASU but which propose that **expanding use of “adjuncts and their lowly status and compensation institutionalize disincentives to quality education, threaten academic freedom and shared governance...,”** in significant ways. This is an issue on campuses across the country. It offers financial flexibility and no long term commitment from the University. **For those wanting to pursue a tenure track this trend is unsettling. Several of the adjuncts sought me out to discuss their concerns related to pay, relationship to the University, the faculty, their role (really the absence of a role) in governance and course structure and control. There is a need to think about the long term use of adjuncts and the issues raised about their role. The recent formation of a adjunct faculty organization is a positive step.**

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. Appointment of the new President and the rise of other women into leadership have not come without struggle against both open and implicit bias. Given the important leadership roles of women described above, **I was surprised by the level of frustration and even anger expressed to me by some female faculty and staff.** There are many strong female advocates on campus for women’s issues as already noted and there are also many male supporters within the faculty. In spite of this, **it seems that gender tensions and bias remains a significant issue and one concerning which there is not as much constructive dialogue as I expected to find. In fact, it seemed at times as though people were talking to themselves and really wanted to keep it that way.**

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When I heard no-one express confidence that tenure decisions are made on the basis of clear and fair criteria, there is a problem that needs to be addressed both as an equitable and legal duty to the women applicants and in the best interest of the University.

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The atmosphere differed substantially in different buildings and on different floors. I had conversations where gender was not viewed as a major issue in a department and other conversations where it was a primary issue. Clearly the relationships and confidence between colleagues in these departments is very different than the relationships in other departments. In some departments the disputes are deeply personal. **In others, gender, ethnicity and political/social world-views all are creating friction. At the end of the day, the promotion and tenure issue embraced multiple departments and should be viewed as an ongoing campus-wide issue. I recommend comprehensive implicit bias**

training on campus related to gender, race, and ethnicity. I think good training on implicit bias could be a good opening for a better faculty conversation than exists today. I also recommend that the CUPA-based adjustments to salaries address any gender discrepancies that the data collection revealed.

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In some departments the issues have become so personal that it is impossible to get past the personal animosities. The implicit bias training is not going to get past those personal issues, which is why I also recommend a professional retreat.

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Recruitment and retention of Hispanic and African American professors was a topic of concern to many faculty, administrators, staff and students. It is not a new concern. This was identified as an issue in the 1997 Evaluation Report for the Commission of Institutions of Higher Education and the 2006 Self-Evaluation mentioned earlier. It is still an issue today. ASU has worked hard to recruit minority faculty including efforts to modify the search practices and to include a diversity advocate on each search committee, diversity statements in position descriptions, more targeted advertising and evaluation rubrics that include an assessment of diversity-related activities. These are strong, sincere steps and it is easy to see the progress in the area of women on the faculty. **It is hard to see progress in terms of Hispanic or African American faculty.**

P.86

There have been fewer difficulties recruiting Hispanic professionals in part because there are so many Hispanic graduates who are from the San Luis Valley and want to stay and work at Adams State. This is a special and valuable link between the Valley communities and the University. Still, the number of Hispanic professors is not close to proportional to the enrollment. **An undercurrent of feeling of disrespect was explicitly expressed to me by faculty as it was by some staff. Grounds staff and janitors described some faculty and others who just ignore them. The Hispanic faculty described feeling that other faculty did not think of them as equals and looked down on their backgrounds and degrees.** The CIELO Report findings suggest there is a definite class and cultural aspect to this. **One professor stated that a colleague from out of the Valley makes unthinking statements about the Valley and its culture that were hurtful and showed a callous disrespect for Hispanic culture. Another was told his degree from ASU was less than the degree from the university which the colleague studied!**

...

There can be little argument with the suggestion that for ASU to become a pre-eminent HSI institution, it needs to have a strong Hispanic faculty. **Ignoring the turnover and unhappiness of some who are teaching will not make things better.**

P.87-88

If women have had to struggle for acceptance on the ASU faculty, **women of color have had to struggle significantly harder and with less success. The number of female Hispanic professors who have left under unpleasant circumstances is significant. One professor named six, several of whom had been employed for significant periods of time.**

...

Several women of color on campus separately made a sharp point expressing they did not always feel the support of white female feminists on campus. Two said their worst experiences on campus involved working with white women who claimed to support them. I am sure the women spoken of would be deeply chagrined to know of these feelings. On the other hand, well-intended efforts by white supporters have been subject of bemusement throughout the civil rights movement. It is another illustration of why implicit bias training is a wonderful tool for self-reflection and closer understanding. ASU spends a lot of time thinking about how to support its undergraduate students who are struggling. The faculty needs to think about how to support one another including those one disagrees with. With the elimination of deans, the role of department chair carries with it many functions a dean used to provide including the role of mentor and support for new faculty. How to best support minority and women and minority women is a conversation the VP for Academic Affairs needs to give great attention to. Having a good support system in place and working will be a strong selling point when recruiting. **That said, the first order of business is to look to the well-being of the women of color who are on the faculty so they too do not leave under a cloud.** The mentorship program is one possibility but really it requires a broader discussion and determination of steps to improve the climate for women of color. The effort and here needs to be led from the top of the administration

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Just as talking about faculty salaries for years did not resolve the issue, talking about minority recruitment endlessly is not good enough.

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Early, clear, candid counsel to tenure-track faculty on what they are doing right and what they should work on together with frank evaluations. It does not benefit a professor or the University to stay years only to be denied tenure.

P.90-91

I did not begin my conversations with the faculty believing everyone would be best friends or that everyone works well with others. I worked in a large governmental institution for over thirty years so I expected there would be both open and not-so-open conflicts, and personal issues interfering with the educational goals. This is simply to be expected. **What surprised me was how poorly ASU and some faculty members are doing at addressing these conflicts. The conflicts were not being ignored and specific efforts to constructively resolve each of the conflicts were described to me. Some took place while I was conducting interviews. These efforts were ineffective. The behaviors described to me would be unacceptable in other public or private environments. The**

conflicts were clearly interfering with the operations of the departments involved and often created problems beyond one department. As an outsider, the dysfunction was shocking and disheartening. A positive was the willingness of most of those involved to talk about it and their recognition that it should stop. A negative was the fact the protagonists could not find a way to do so on their own or with substantial interventions. **The drama between faculty members was such that students and professional staff brought it up as something on the campus that troubles them.** A couple of examples illustrate the problems. **One department does not hold staff meetings because members of the department are uncomfortable being in the same room. A professor is not assigned to teach any classes. Some people on campus characterized the treatment of the professor as a public shaming.** Faculty were sharply divided on whether or not it was warranted by the events that led to it. In another part of campus, students told me they love their major but were baffled and put off by the way the professors are rude and insult one another. **For purposes of this report, I have considered what steps could be taken that have not been done already to prevent and better intervene in future similar conflicts. It was suggested to me that a contributor to the problem was the elimination of deans on campus and the assignment of many of the functions of the dean to department heads.** This seems to be at least partially true. **The VP for Academic Affairs is too removed to see and intervene early.** Not every department chair has good people skills nor have they been trained in how to address some of these matters. The Human Resources Department is small, very busy and removed from the academic conflicts. There are three things that emerged in my discussions. **Firstly, since the role of department chair now requires a higher level of personnel management, there should be some management training for department chairs that might help the situation both in terms of skills and in terms of chairs having other chairs with whom to talk. Secondly, the ability to manage people and lead should be more explicitly considered in selection of a chair. Thirdly, it may be useful to bring someone like Michael Josephson to speak on ethics and professionalism followed by a retreat for the faculty to reflect on this.**

P.91-92

Since 2010 the department has been under the extended temporary direction of Dr. Edward Crowther who is the chair of the Department of History, Anthropology, Political Science and Philosophy. This arrangement was crisis driven and by all accounts prevented a catastrophic accreditation problem. **Now the Education Department has emerged from the 2010 crisis but numerous people suggested that it was time to stabilize the department with an education professor as chair.** It was evident that this step will almost certainly require bringing someone in to take this role and there are always risks in doing so as well as the funding for the position. **The Trustees and administration have chosen to continue with this arrangement indefinitely in order to focus on other priorities. I understand this choice but many on campus and in the broader valley teacher community are anxious about the long-term plan. The resolution of disruptive faculty**

conflict is an obstacle to doing all this, but as already noted, the internal conflicts at ASU would not be tolerated elsewhere and should not be at ASU.

P.92

The Business School was also mentioned to me by a number of people in both flattering and unflattering ways. **Several members of the faculty suggested the Department caters to student-athletes. A student suggested that student-athletes were favored in class and given breaks, particularly by one professor.** On the other hand, a number of other students expressed very positive feelings about the atmosphere at the Business School. Clearly there is a line between supporting a student and giving them breaks others do not receive. The Department needs to discuss this internally and ensure all students are, and feel they are treated equally in the classroom. The successful online masters program was praised to me by several individuals on campus and in the community. The various economic development ties between the Business School and local economic development staff also brought thanks and praise to the Department and the valley communities have many graduates of the Business School who strongly support it. **Finally, the Department was cited by a number of campus individuals as a bastion of a “good old boy” mentality with several third-party and one first-party examples given to me.** I did speak with several people at the Business School and the Department Chair. The employees I spoke with directly denied this is an accurate depiction of the Department. I note that one of the professors, Liz Thomas-Hensley received a Presidential Teacher Award in 2014. There clearly are a lot of positives including enrollment, graduate programs and peer acknowledgements. Business is a popular major and a positive attraction in recruiting students. It is also important to economic well-being of valley businesses. **I recommend both internal discussions within the Business school around the allegations of perceived preferences and gender issues as well as continuing review of these by the administration.** I did not interview or survey all the employees or students and so I look at what I was told and observed and conclude that more thorough review is prudent. **Any department receiving the kind of criticisms voiced to me should take a hard look at how people perceive it and why, and act to change things that are causing these perceptions.** I do recognize that the Business School proudly presents a world-view that differs substantially from the one presented in other academic areas. That does not alter the need to review these issues closely.

P.96

Students and advocates for students inside and outside the administration and Board of Trustees spoke passionately about the tuition hikes Adams State has enacted over the past few years. The majority of undergraduate students are receiving substantial aid and many are trying to work while in school. At first glance, the tuition hikes seem relatively small and in comparison with other state or private schools, ASU is still a tremendous bargain. However, the ASU mission inevitably means it has students who are

financially struggling. **Money problems have been identified as a key reason students drop out.**

...

In spite of the acknowledged hardship for students today, the Trustees confirmed another tuition raise of 5.6% for resident undergraduate students for FY 15-16. (room, board and tuition together only rise 4%).

P.97

The cost of attendance at ASU continues to increase as just noted. Given the limited amount of funding from the State of Colorado, the University is increasingly dependent upon tuition, federal grants and gifts. Most ASU students rely heavily on a Pell Grant. **While Pell Grants have risen in the past few years, they still cover only part of a student's expenses.** That was not always the case. Forty years ago a Pell Grant covered more than 75% of all the costs of attending a public four-year college or University. The current grants total around 30% of the cost. In addition, students used to be able to use Pell money for summer sessions. This was particularly good for someone trying to get through as quickly as possible to minimize borrowing. **The ending of summer Pell money has hurt many ASU students and it handicapped summer enrollment at ASU. There is nothing fair or equitable about the way students today are forced to take on debt that will haunt them for years.** It would be nice to think someone in Washington or Denver would lead the charge to bring Pell and other programs back to where they were twenty years ago but that is unlikely. **Other strategies to help students are needed.**

P.98

Retention issues are discussed below, but many people cited the requirement for the 095 and 099 remedial, math and English non-credit classes as a huge impediment to success. I spoke with students who are doing well in credit classes but have yet to pass the general education math requirement in particular. The decade old study on this issue is discouraging to say the least. Some on the faculty felt this was a huge psychological barrier for students who arrive with a low ACT math score and are required to take the ACCUPLACER math test only to learn they must take developmental math classes that gain them no credit towards a degree. **One student described how this is a bad start for a lot of unprepared first-year students. Several people pointed out the high percentage of minority students in these remedial classes. The fact that there are so many students who come to ASU unprepared in math and English is a reality. I would say "shocking," but this sad state of K-12 preparation of students has gone on too long to be called shocking.** It is simply the reality that students who want to attend college are not adequately prepared and that math skills are a huge issue for many students who will do well in many other classes.

P.99

I discussed the role of being a student advisor with members of the faculty. **ASU relies upon faculty advisors once a student chooses a major. A number of schools now use professional advising staff for students. The role of advisor is an important one and in which not all professors excel and one for which they receive little training. It is not evaluated and plays no part in a professor's path to tenure.**

P.100

Student retention at ASU has been a discouraging problem for many years. It was cited in the 1997 Evaluation Report and 2006 Self-Study mentioned earlier. Advocates pointed out students have to borrow substantial sums of money even if they receive Pell Grants and scholarships in order to survive while in school. **Dropping out twenty years ago did not leave a student hugely in debt and without a degree. Everyone I spoke to on campus is aware of this issue. Many people have worked to try and increase retention over many years.** ASU currently gives this issue high priority and has spent a good deal of time trying to analyze how to attain better retention of students. The PowerPoint presented to the Trustees in December 2014 summarized the data and laid out strategies to try and improve. Tracking individual student progress and giving the student the ability to do the same is good. The Ellucian software acquisition is one of the strategies laid out in the presentation. **ASU tried to increase the minimum hours to fifteen per semester for FY 2015-2016, but reversed course before the end of the 2015 spring semester. I heard the complaints about this from a variety of students.** Students who work, or have families or are in a DII sport each have good reasons for wanting to take fewer hours. The core reasoning behind promoting the increase is beneficial to both students and the University. The comparison of student debt incurred over a four year versus a five year path to graduation reduces the debt load for the student substantially as illustrated in the ASU Financial Action Plan. With the new degree planning software and good counseling, hopefully students will see the benefit of taking more hours when they can.

P.101

I have already observed that almost every activity on campus has a good case that it is underfunded. **That said, there are student activities and groups that are essentially self-funding because of the lack of institutional support and do not have the kind of access to funding the athletic programs receive via the Grizzly Club. Several groups described trying to get funding to attend national conferences and ultimately Dr. Svaldi found them the funding, but one student said it seems like they have to beg every year.** She asked why funding for known expenses couldn't be covered every year. There are trips for students to conferences of organizations like HACU and US Hispanic Leadership Institute that have obvious ties (and potential funding) to the HSI status. **For example, funding CASA adequately to grow its membership and activities would**

support a richer and inclusive understanding of HSI. The diversity and inclusiveness at CASA is real in a world that talks a lot about these ideas with little to show for the talk. It seems like a good strategy to build an organization that is a real-life model of inclusive excellence.

...

The new climbing wall is a plus at the Rex but as discussed under facilities, recruitment of students interested in staying fit and being outdoors requires better facilities. This is a matter of meeting the fair expectations of the students here and as an amenity, to attract fit and outdoor active recruits. **Further renovation and expansion of the Rex and new equipment for it was the single loudest complaint about the campus facilities. It should be a priority.**

P.104-105

For all the good examples of diversity and inclusiveness above, **there is more to do to improve diversity and inclusiveness.** The CIELO Campus Climate Report found there are **“low levels of satisfaction with existing campus climate at ASU for persons of specific racial, ethnic, social class, gender and sexual backgrounds.”** I have already discussed this in the context of the employment issues. I do think “low levels of satisfaction” overstates the feelings of those I spoke with but my interviews supported the finding in the CCCR that **staff at the University is less satisfied with efforts to promote inclusive excellence in the workplace.** It is clear that more attention should be paid to staff attitudes as described in the earlier section. The Climate Survey suggests class as well as race/ethnicity or other status is important to this dissatisfaction. **The janitorial staff complaints were harsh regarding the way some of the faculty treat them. Education and class identification are certainly part of this picture but there is no excuse for what used to be called good manners. The fact that some (not all or even most) Hispanic staff and faculty do not feel fully respected, equally valued or listened to goes to heart of the University. These feelings were recognizably strong for natives of the San Luis Valley.** I concluded that some of these feelings came with them to the campus and some of them grew out of their experiences on campus. **Several members of the faculty gave very specific examples of their ideas not being respected or considered, of being excluded from discussions, or put down in ways that seemed tied to their ethnicity. As suggested earlier, there needs to be real discussion and reflection within the faculty around these issues. Neither these questions nor the gender issues described will go away.**

When you consider the numbers of Hispanic students over many years and the significant number of Hispanic faculty and staff, the undercurrent of unhappiness is particularly disheartening. The Title V-funded Hilos Culturales faculty retreats held each summer are a great example of a concrete and consistent effort over time to address cultural sensitivity and build cultural connection between the faculty and the San Luis Valley. Everyone who has participated expressed they were very happy with having done so. It is a great program,

but it leaves work to be done. **My recommendation for mandatory training in recognizing unconscious bias is one step to try and improve on these issues.** An interesting starting point for a discussion of the feelings of the Hispanic staff and faculty might be Professor Saenz's faculty lecture, "The Black Legend and Hispanic History."