

AAUP OAKLAND UPDATE

March 19, 2010

President Russi's Second Faculty Open Forum

On March 11, President Russi led his second "Faculty Open Forum." Faculty entered the room to see chairs set in an arc, all focused on the central podium. The room was already two thirds full of well-dressed administrators, coffee was hot, the cookies were warm. The only microphone in the room was securely clipped to President Russi's power tie. His opening monologue produced little new information.

The 45-minute question period was remarkable in that President Russi found a way to answer not a single question, either directly or indirectly. The Provost and the Vice President for Finance provided the only direct answers.

The only new information was:

- President Russi recently announced that he was the champion of the academic core of the university. When asked to explain his commitment to the "academic core," President Russi evaded the question and insisted that he understands the faculty because he has stood in our shoes.
- In contrast to his ambiguity in defining the academic core, President Russi is convinced that the need for excellence is paramount in athletics. President Russi has interpreted the non-binding Summit League recommendations as mandating salary raises to promote excellence in coaching. Compare this to his lack of commitment to faculty raises and other support to sustain and promote academic excellence.
- During his opening remarks, President Russi announced that the LCME documents available in the Library have been replaced by documents that redacted *only* sensitive Beaumont material. However, information concerning Oakland University is still redacted, leaving questions about budget and resources unaddressed, including clear figures about the number of faculty currently employed at the Medical School.
- During his opening remarks, President Russi repeated his announcement that his one time \$100,000 donation to the university still has not been made. With respect to where the donation is targeted, in February his statement was that the issue was "too complicated," at the Thursday meeting he stated that the allocation of the gift was a personal, family decision that would not be made public.

Checking items off a list is not leadership, nor is misinformation, lack of honest engagement, or spin. As of yet, President Russi has only gestured toward change. His most important promises are still unfulfilled. His open forums have degenerated into public theatre.

Real change involves the spending of financial resources and political capital. We will be a better institution when all members of the community equally share sacrifice in hard times. We need—we all deserve—a leader who is clearly committed to living his promises.

Please remember to participate in the on-line poll Monday, March 22.

Let your voice be heard.