

RAMFAM Association Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2009 – 10:00-noon – Student Recreation Center-Longs Peak Room

Members Present: Lynda & Amanda Zeringue, Laura Huff, Judy Sayre Grim, Greg, Glenna, Megan & Lauren Brissey, Ed & Linda Carpenter, Mary Sanz, Mark & Leslie Sabo, Rose & Bob Lopez, Jana & Ken Parker, Shannon Medlicott, Terrilee Lang, Jody Donovan, Kacee Collard

Members Present via Dial-In: Cecelia Luhrs, Joe Garrity, Ellen Muskin, Lorraine Chillemi

Guests: Tony Frank, Blanche Hughes, Joyce Berry, Ashley Robinson, Caitlin Kinnett

Interim [President](#), Tony Frank, joined us for almost 2 hours to answer questions and interact with parents and family members of current CSU students. Here are the questions and answers:

1. What are the plans for parking on the northwest corner if the University continues to grow?

Looking at mass transit to help with transportation. The [Mason Street](#) corridor project will be helpful on the east side of campus for transit. In terms of parking garages, one is currently being built on Centre and Lake; also looking to build a garage near Green Hall and on the west side of campus in the future.

2. Referred to paper headline stating [cuts “rattled” CSU officials...what’s the real story?](#)

The State of Colorado is experiencing revenue shortfalls. CSU budget has been trimmed by \$6.7 million. Out of \$137 million, the state is looking to cut \$6.5 million in FY09 and \$5-\$10 million in FY10. There may also be cuts in FY11. The state intends to fill this gap with federal stimulus dollars. The issue with this fix is that the state cuts recurring funding (meaning if they reduce next year’s budget from \$137 million to \$132 million, it will stay that way in future years) and the stimulus funding is one-time money. This means the stimulus funding gives CSU time to plan and be strategic about future cuts, but we will have to deal with it. This story refers to the Joint Budget Committee decision to take an additional \$300 million from higher education institutions in Colorado from the \$700 million higher education institutions receive from the state in total. If this scenario comes to fruition, it will be a huge blow to higher education. The legislative fix, at this point, is to backfill the cuts with funding from [Pinnacol Assurance](#), a state-sponsored workers’ compensation insurance pool that functions as a quasi-governmental agency. If the cuts happen, President Frank wants to have a conversation regarding a stable funding stream for higher education. President Frank is optimistic that 1) the state will go a different route in terms of cutting \$300 million in funding or 2) if they do, they will backfill the funding, giving CSU time to plan.

President Frank then talked about tuition implications. CSU’s tuition is below the national average and below peer institution rates and is still considered a good value for higher education. However, the economic downturn makes it hard to absorb any increases in tuition. President Frank indicated it is bad public policy to privatize higher education, which is what the \$300 million cut leads to. He doesn’t see large tuition increases as helpful to anyone. Administration is looking at a 9% resident student increase and a 3% non-resident increase in tuition for the 2009-2010 academic year. He would like to get back to low, single-digit increases in tuition in the future.

3. What is your opinion of in-state tuition for illegal immigrants?

If you believe that the principle of higher education gains more for society than it costs, it is worth it.

4. If we are subsidizing their education and they are free to leave the state after graduating, are we wasting money?

Traditionally, Colorado has been on the opposite end of that equation. People who were educated elsewhere migrate into Colorado.

5. What is the [College Opportunity Fund](#)? When did it start and what are the budget implications?

The State of Colorado conducted an accounting trick as a result of [TABOR](#), which only allows for inflation plus population growth. Higher education entities became and outside “enterprise” by growing less than 5% in funding per student, so the College Opportunity Fund is the same funding that would have gone to higher education, but instead it goes to the student to be used only for higher education. This gets around TABOR limits. Budget implications are that the legislature can either decrease how much each student gets for their College Opportunity Fund or they can decrease our fee-for-service revenue.

6. You indicated higher education is a public good, like K-12 schooling. Wouldn't a cultural change need to happen in the state before the funding could happen? Also, has it been discussed to close a college to save costs?

If the Joint Budget Committee moves forward, many smaller colleges may not survive. It could create capacity issues and credit transfer scenarios. It could also cause legal implications. For the first question, President Frank indicated he doesn't buy the premise that higher education isn't like K-12 education. It is the largest unsecured funding source from the state. It goes against representative government, but as a president, he has to advocate.

7. What happens to students who don't apply for the College Opportunity Fund? How does the institution recoup the revenue?

We stalk students who don't apply. If you didn't apply, it goes on your bill and you have to pay it.

8. Have you considered implementing a policy that doesn't allow freshmen to park on campus? It is a way to discourage driving, also addressing parking on campus.

In 10 years on the President's Cabinet, nothing has caused more controversy than the issue of parking. To date, CSU has not implemented a policy because its customers, the students, haven't supported it.

9. I am disappointed in the transportation in Fort Collins. Taxis are expensive and the busses stop running at 6:00 pm.

[ASCSU](#) is in discussions with the city of Fort Collins around this topic. CSU and student fees pay down the cost of transit in the city. They met this week to discuss later bus routes, but the economics are not worked out. We are at an awkward point where there is a definite need, but not enough need to warrant later routes.

10. Could the bus provide later routes on the weekend into Old Town? Perhaps the businesses in Old Town could chip in to lower the cost. They could even charge a nominal fee, like \$3, and have a restaurant validate the cost if students eat in Old Town.

That is a good idea. The Mason Street corridor project addresses the issue of transportation into Old Town. The validation is a great suggestion and we will look into it.

11. CU has a good system that works and has encouraged not driving while drinking.

CU has severe parking issues. We will follow up with CU to see how their system works.

12. I was disappointed with the lack of transparency with the resignation of President Penley and Chief Yarborough. What can be done in the future?

I don't know the answer. In both cases, their personnel records are protected by state law. There is a balance between a public organization's responsibility to be open and transparent and the laws that protect our employees. We haven't struck a balance legislatively.

13. Is that common, or just an issue in Colorado?

Lynda Zeringue commented it is the same in Wyoming and we are kind of stuck with personnel laws.

14. Chief Yarborough was paid \$156,000 per year, and was on paid leave for many months. I read that he was the highest paid chief in the state of Colorado. It was frustrating the papers had just enough information to raise questions, but no answer.

President Frank indicated he couldn't comment on the situation. Blanche Hughes indicated she has the pleasure of chairing the search committee for the new chief. They are just now creating the job description, including a salary that will be lower than Chief Yarborough's salary. She indicated the press release will be out soon and parents and families can contact her with any questions they have. President Frank indicated, in the future, as much information as we can share about personnel issues, we will. Should CSU's chief make the highest salary in the state? Absolutely not.

15. When will the new Computer Science s building open?

It is open and occupied. Joyce Berry indicated it is a fabulous building, and the [grand opening](#) will happen soon, but the building is already in use. Amanda Zeringue, a current CSU student, indicated it has 24-hour access to computers, printers, and the internet.

16. What is the status of the search for the new president?

The Board of Governors is in the midst of the Chancellor search. The [Chancellor](#) will oversee CSU, CSU-Pueblo, and CSU-Global Campus. The Board is hopeful to name a Chancellor in May 2009. Once there is clarity on the Chancellor position, they will move on the President search. The exact timeline hasn't been worked out yet. The Board will be on campus the first or second week in May to talk to constituents about the position.

17. Are you going to apply?

I love this university and I've been here since 1993. I like representing the people here – it's energizing. I am interested.

18. This is my first student in college and my student has a faculty member who is chronically unprepared and 20 minutes late. What process should she or I go through to fix this?

We don't want it to continue unchecked. Encourage your student to utilize the faculty evaluations at the end of the semester and talk to the department chair.

19. Can we e-mail you with concerns?

Yes at presofc@colostate.edu

20. With RamCT, could you encourage faculty to keep it up-to-date and give feedback?

We are pushing the idea that the world has changed. It used to be that classes were lecture-style because I have information to give to you. Now, facts are available 24/7. So, we are changing learning by building into living communities and focusing on active learning and active research. Classes are now an opportunity to interact and it is a great challenge for residential campuses.

Leslie Sabo, a current parent and faculty member indicated the resources are available for faculty to keep up with RamCT. She encouraged students to utilize the course evaluation surveys to remind faculty that they are working with millennial students; to speak up if they are unsatisfied. She encourages service learning and lectures with application built in. She indicated good teachers want to grow to teach students well.

21. Does CSU have a direct tie to green companies? What happened to the land purchased for a green energy business?

Yes – CSU is committed to using renewable resources. [Maxwell Ranch](#) is an energetic wind farm location in Colorado. We have permits to use the wind farm as a 200 megawatt farm. We are in talks with businesses to run the farm in ways that are cost effective, in line with our environmental concerns, and that will take the neighbors into consideration. We want to be good stewards of our planet while providing an opportunity for students. We also have a solar energy farm near the foothills campus and are partnering with Xcel Energy on that project. On campus, we are working to build structures to LEED certifications, are retrofitting all of our fixtures and utilizing water/waste recycling in the residence halls.

22. Are you aware of any grassroots organizations for parents and families to help the state/federal funding process?

CSU is pausing on this idea. We have prepared requests to send to parents and families, but have not yet sent them. We are waiting to see what happens with the budget.

23. Are faculty members required to post grades online (RamCT)?

Those decisions are left to individual faculty members. Leslie Sabo also commented it is a busy time in the semester for faculty members. She said parents and family members should encourage persistent, but respectful grade inquiries of professors.

24. CSU staff members were asked to brainstorm a variety of ways to increase revenue and decrease budget expenses. Were those recommendations used in the \$6.7 million budget reduction?

Yes. Blanche Hughes indicated all Division of Student Affairs staff recommendations were used.

25. CSU generally has good community building events, but the Homecoming/Family Weekend parade change to Friday night disgruntled community members. Will the institution change the parade back to Saturday morning?

We were seeing the university participate less and less in the Saturday morning parade. It's not healthy to not have the university there. When the change was made, we could have communicated better with the community, given more lead time, etc. Moving forward, the parade is scheduled to be on Friday evening. President Frank meets with the Poudre School District Superintendent once per month to talk about these issues. The change is not permanent in his view, because he has no interest in compromising relations with the City of Fort Collins. CSU and the City of Fort Collins are tightly intertwined and mutually beneficial.

26. Will budget cuts affect ongoing research?

Not significantly. Most research is funded through the federal government.

27. What do you think of the marching band?

My brother was the director of the Big Red Marching Machine in Iowa for 8 years, so I am a big supporter of the band.

28. How will furloughs affect those salaries paid from research grants?

It is a complex question. It is illegal to treat salaries differently based off of the source of funding. We have to furlough all employees if we go that route. So, let's say I've taken a furlough day, but 80% of my salary is paid by an NIH grant, where the money can only be used for the grant. That hurts the grant and doesn't save the state money. We haven't broken the code on how to fix it.

29. What is your opinion on Greek life? Do you see a partnership or do you wish they weren't here?

I am not an expert on Greek life. If I stay as President, I will need to learn more. I think they provide important leadership and we should highlight the positive and work to change the negative aspects. I don't think we should throw the whole thing out.

After President Frank spoke, Dr. Joyce Berry, [Vice President for Advancement and Strategic Initiatives](#), said parents and families are critical to CSU and gave an update on current projects.

- HP and the [Griffin Foundation](#) helped open the new Computer Science Building.
- We are creating a new culture of philanthropy by creating lifelong relationships with alumni to help them see what is happening at CSU now.

- Denver has always been seen as CU territory and now CSU is visible; it is seen as the university on the move.
- A few special initiatives you might be interested in:
 - Student Support Grant – this will help support students who are unable to finish their degree because of money.
 - Senior Class Gift – we have been planting a tree. Likely parents and families contribute to the trees or another part of CSU. She'd like to see the Senior Class take that on and have it become a part of their identity as a class. This will create a relationship when they come back to campus in the future.
 - Marching Band Scholarships – the marching band is priceless and they are working on creating a scholarship fund for members of the marching band.
- There is more to come – it is a great opportunity to share our story.

Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Blanche Hughes, also spoke to the association, thanking them for their participation and input into university affairs.

- On this note, Lynda Zeringue encouraged others to participate in the RAMFAM Association and to give feedback to the institution.

Finally, Jody thanked Judy Muenchow, the Executive Director of Campus Recreation, and her fabulous staff for hosting the RAMFAM Association. From the shoveled walks to the IT support, they were supportive and helpful in our meeting.

Next month, Mike Ellis, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs/Executive Director of the Lory Student Center and Quinn Girrens, ASCSU Vice President, will join us to talk about student fees and Michael Daine, Associate Executive Director of Hartshorn Health Services/University Counseling Center will join us to talk about students and mental health.

Glenna Brissey asked about CSUnity and Kacee indicated she was the only parent or family member who showed interest in participating this spring. Jody suggested partnering with her student and maybe we will have more interest next year.

The final meeting of the 2008-2009 academic year will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2009 on campus! More details to follow...