**BOT Speech**

December 4, 2020

Thank you. Let me begin by saying – WOW! – our faculty are awesome! While this has been a very difficult semester, I witnessed the resiliency and steadfast commitment of our faculty to teach, mentor, and support our students in the midst of this pandemic. I sat in on faculty teaching classes fully masked, to masked students, while simultaneously teaching to students on zoom. I talked to faculty at their wits end, in tears, completely wiped out. Though physically exhausted, mentally drained, and socially disconnected they made it through. What our faculty accomplished is nothing short of amazing!

The Faculty Senate has a lot to be proud of as well. Allow me to highlight “the big 3”:

First: The Tenure and Promotion process was moved online. Remember the “binder” Richard mentioned yesterday? It’s two inches thick. Every single faculty members’ binder materials had to be converted to an online format. All processes, procedures, meetings, and voting had to go online. This required a massive amount of work on the part of faculty, administrators, and staff alike. In particular, I would like to thank Associate Provost Brandon Schwab and his office for everything they did to make this happen.

Then came talk of budget cuts. At this juncture, the Faculty and Staff Senates teamed up, unanimously passing a resolution on budget principles.

Last, Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading. This was tricky because time was short and support was mixed. But, in the end, the Senate made the final call and chose grace, passing a resolution supporting this option. **Through all of this, we remained together.**

As we set our sights on spring ’21, we commit to working *with* the Administration on budget and salary issues. And, we’d like to talk to you about the idea of the Faculty Senate Chair serving as a non-voting *ex-officio* representative on the Board of Trustees.

In closing, what strikes me most about the quote, “tough times don’t last, tough people do”, is the word is “people”. A collective. This simple word has brought me to an understanding that we **survive**, that we are **strong** *because* **we are together**. There is no other way. Thank you.