

Statement made to the Board of Governors on Monday, January 9, 2012 regarding the Student Success Task Force Recommendations.

My name is Anna Asebedo. I am an instructor and art department chair at City College of San Francisco. I work along with fellow staff to help students succeed.

Certainly City College has its inefficiencies as most institutions do, but I question the motive of some behind this task force's complex and rushed process. These questions are not within the scope of this discussion, but certainly must be addressed before any implementation can take place. Therefore, allow me to questions a few specific recommendations made by the task force.

I question the recommendation of adopting a large centralized computer system to help student meet their individual goals. If in fact, we are all working to most effectively spend public funds in support of instructional activities – this might be a good idea. If we had clear evidence that other colleges' implementation of such a system has improved student success for those demographic groups listed in the document – then this might be a good idea. If we had evidence that an already overtaxed information technology staff would be able to properly implement a large new statewide computer system – it might be a good idea, but in our current social and economic situation, it strikes me as at best risky.

I also question the recommendation that we limit a student's ability to experiment with what they study. Why? Lateral exploration is essential in people developing relevant and new ways of thinking and working. A popular figure, Steve Jobs, is an example of straying from the path by dropping out and taking a graphic arts course that influenced his design of the Macintosh computer.

Lastly, I question the very notion the degree or certificate is all important. These are indeed of value as countless economic studies have shown. And we should do everything we can to encourage students to complete their course work and get a degree. But, a degree is really a point on a continuum of formal education. If someone is lacking a couple of classes to graduate, are they really unsuccessful as compared to the degree holder? No. Many field leaders such as in the information technology field, for example Bill Gates, Steve Ballmer, and Steve Jobs are college dropouts. You don't need a degree to be a success and we don't need to equate a degree or a certificate with student success. Rather, we must focus on whether a student gets the information and skill development that he or she needs to confidently progress to the next phase that that student determines to be right for their life and well-being.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of my concerns.

Note: Due to the 2 minute time limit, I was interrupted by Vice President Alice Perez in mid-sentence (“. If someone is lacking a couple of classes to graduate, are they really unsuccessful as compared to the degree holder?”) and had to move forward to my second to last sentence.