

Question Time

At the end of June this year, four employees of College Access Television (CTV) at PFW were abruptly terminated, and the station was closed. The news came as a shock not only to the dedicated staff of CTV, who were summarily locked out of their offices, but also to those faculty who had learned of the closure, which was not, and has yet to be, formally announced on campus. In addition, long-standing community stakeholders (including Allen County Public Library, City of Fort Wayne, University of St. Francis, among others) were also shocked and dismayed at this turn of events.

We ask Vice Chancellor Lewis and Chancellor Elsenbaumer to address the following questions:

1. Given that the elimination of the station directly impacts academic programming and promotion, most especially in those colleges and departments that have, for decades, relied upon CTV heavily as part of their community outreach and promotion, why were these units not consulted prior to this decision? What data was this decision based upon?
2. Vice Chancellor Lewis has made it known that Communications and Marketing has no intention of restoring CTV. He has stated that CTV cannot fulfill the marketing strategy he envisions. Why is CTV understood as primarily a marketing vehicle and not the rich community outreach that PFW's mission embraces?
3. Why was a plan not arranged for how to fill what amounts to an enormous gap in how academic units can continue programming, promotion, and outreach? How, then, can academic units be expected to fill this significant gap?
4. Concerned faculty have been invited to develop a business plan, one that would seek funding from outside the university and be self-supporting, for a new approach to CTV. Why, then, is Academic Affairs expected to cover the resources needed (especially in terms of personnel) to promote the university and perform community outreach? Isn't that the job of Communications and Marketing? Why would C and M expect to benefit from the efforts of Academic Affairs without providing the necessary resources?
5. Finally, how does Vice Chancellor Lewis intend to mend the relationships with PFW's collaborators? CTV and academic units have, for decades, enjoyed a mutually beneficial, albeit imperfect, engagement with these other institutions. Perhaps Vice Chancellor Lewis should consider forming an advisory board with faculty whose work has been directly impacted by this abrupt shift in direction so that future decisions might be better informed?

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