

Nashville, Tennessee
May 5, 2003

Dear Florida College Donor:

First, please be assured that in writing this letter I do so with a wish for Florida College to prosper and continue to serve students with the opportunity to receive a quality education in a Christ-centered environment. However, the college has a serious problem which must be corrected in order for it to survive:

the problem is called **leadership**.

I hope you will read this letter carefully and then go to the website referenced below and read the letters which document the problem.

Business Leadership: The President

1. FC's enrollment took a **25% nosedive** over the last three semesters: **562** in Fall 2001 to **420** in the current semester just ending, while similar small colleges run by Christians enjoyed record enrollments.
2. The previous school year FC suffered a **\$1,500,000 deficit**, and the current school year's deficit is in high six figures. Florida College cannot long survive with such deficits.
3. The president has developed a talent for **slashing the budget**: services, needed upgrades to facilities, and **worst of all – faculty**.

To survive in today's educational market, a college must appoint a president who has critical skills in:

- (1) public relations,
- (2) business management, and
- (3) fund raising – in addition to his ability as a professional educator.

Sadly, President Caldwell's critical skills leave us in the lurch. He reached the presidency by the **Peter Principle**.^{*} While we must have a faithful Christian to lead Florida College, it does not make sense to insist that his primary qualification is "gospel preacher." ^{**} FC is not a "Bible college." You can count the number graduating each year with a B.A. in Biblical Studies on one hand. It is, however, a very good liberal arts college that must continue to provide its students with a thorough understanding of the Scripture to increase their faith at a time in their lives when it would be seriously challenged if they attended a state university.

Administrative Leadership: The President

According to a graph provided by the college in April 2002, approximately 72% of the cost of a FC education is obtained from student fees. Therefore, obtaining enough students to meet the college's fixed costs is critical to its survival – as well as securing the other 28% through contributions and various revenue sources. It becomes immediately obvious that the college **must have superior talent in the Admissions Office**.

Caldwell let 10 years of experience in that office walk out the door when Royce Chandler resigned in 2000. Caldwell then appointed his first cousin's husband who had absolutely no experience in student recruitment. The recruitment contacts under Chandler's watch continued to carry the enrollment through the fall of 2001, after which it declined severely as the backlog began to depend on the work of the

^{*} The theory that employees within an organization will advance to their highest level of competence and then be promoted to and remain at a level at which they are incompetent. – The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.

^{**} In all fairness, Caldwell holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from Peabody College. However, leadership skills are dependent on personality, character, and experience. I know great leaders who have no college education.

new Director of Admissions. Remember, if you will, that similar colleges (like Freed-Hardeman) had their largest enrollments ever this year.

Now, let's take a look at other talent lost because of Caldwell's mismanagement (mistreatment) of key personnel. I suspect that most of you are not aware of the circumstances surrounding the firings by Colly Caldwell of three capable FC employees. I am talking about Jaun Guyer, Shane Scott, and Fred Thompson.

Several people who have learned the circumstances have written severe letters of criticism of Dr. Caldwell. Three members of the National Council who know the facts have resigned in protest. Several members of the FC administration and faculty have censured the president for his unwarranted actions. All three men were fired without the due process that should be afforded to any respected employee in business, government, or academia.

I have received copies of six letters over the last ten months which were written in defense of those who were fired, or by those who were fired. Since several individuals have already made copies and distributed them, I am taking the liberty of making copies for Florida College's donors because you are called on every year to support the various programs the college develops. These letters and the accompanying protests from many corners point out "**the lack of leadership and character at the top,**" as one member of the FC National Council said.

Three board members misled by board secretary Bill Hammontree were responsible for the unjustified firing of Jaun Guyer. They demanded that Caldwell fire Guyer. Knowing that they were wrong in their accusations against Guyer, Caldwell protested. They threatened to fire Caldwell if he did not dismiss Guyer. Caldwell acquiesced. Guyer's dismissal was done so surreptitiously by Caldwell and four board members that the faculty and most of the administration did not know what really had happened.

Caldwell peevishly fired Scott after Scott did not follow Caldwell's suggestion (not an order) that he take down his personal website defending himself against the false accusations of his critics. Caldwell shrank from dealing with the critics and sacrificed a good teacher *whom earlier he had defended vigorously*. Caldwell told his faculty that Scott had not taught any false doctrine to his classes! But he refused to tell the faculty WHY he had fired Scott — even though Scott asked him to do so. Scott finally wrote a letter to his colleagues giving a detailed account of what happened. Caldwell never attempted to refute a word of it. Caldwell's style is to hide until the smoke clears and hope that by the time he emerges everyone will have forgotten about it.

Caldwell fired Thompson after he allowed the yearbook staff to dedicate the book to Scott, after the staff voted 100% for Scott over two other candidates. As many of you know, Thompson was the editor of the FC Magazine, probably the best piece of public relations material that ever came out of FC. Caldwell then appointed the bookstore manager to run the publications office and the magazine (you may recall that you have received only one issue of the alumni magazine in the last year, instead of the usual quarterly). Because of Thompson's visibility as the editor of the FC Magazine, he received numerous e-mails and letters critical of Dr. Caldwell. Thompson vigorously defended himself in his letters to FC board chairman Bob Harmon and later to Caldwell. You will find these letters on the website.

After Thompson was fired, three administrators (Hunter, Qualls, and Walker) went the next day to Caldwell's home and tried to persuade him to reverse his unjust action. He refused. Public Relations Director Ralph Walker cautioned Caldwell, after he fired Scott, that he had acted without providing the obligatory due process. Walker urged him to establish a due process policy, which Caldwell steadfastly has refused to do.

Remember these facts: FC's enrollment has fallen by a shocking **25 percent** in three semesters. The school experienced a \$1.5 million deficit in the last fiscal year and is experiencing another severe deficit in the current fiscal year. The president has not come forth with a recovery plan. Three talented administrators and a teacher have been dismissed without due process. **As three National Council**

members have pointed out with their protests and resignations, Florida College desperately needs new leadership.

Inside of three-and-a-half years, Caldwell fired three capable men *without due process*. Would you work for a company which had no written HR due process policy, where you could be fired at a moment's notice without an opportunity to defend yourself before your superior and peers?

Administrative Leadership: The Board

With recent resignations, the Florida College Board of Directors now has only 14 members, three of whom are well into their eighties. Only two of the board members are professional educators. The remainder are businessmen with diverse talents and abilities. The board has absolutely no racial, gender, or cultural diversity. The board seems to have no interest whatsoever in setting policy to govern fair employment practices.

The **board is operating with only two-thirds membership** allowed by the college's by-laws. Surely it would be wise to fill out the board with more professional educators with administrative talent who could help guide FC into the twenty-first century, and to incorporate in those appointments a fairness toward gender, racial, and cultural diversity.

In a very real way, **donors to a non-profit institution are like stockholders** (without certificates) in a corporation. But unlike the corporation, the closest thing you will see to a financial report from Florida College is the sketchy quarter-page report found on page 25 of the April 2002 issue of the FC Magazine. **You will never receive** a report from a board meeting. As a private, non-profit corporation eschewing all federal funds, the board may legally operate under a cloak of secrecy with no accountability or reports to its constituency (the donors and those who buy FC's educational services).

Please take the time now and read the six letters that document this correspondence to you. The website location is [http://www.fc.edu/letters](#). If the letters are convincing (and you can call the authors if you wish), then take the action recommended, or action of your own choosing. But whatever you do, **take a stand** for a better Florida College. Don't put this matter aside and hope that others will deal with it.

I am a long-time supporter of Florida College. But right now <iamdisgusted@hotmail.com>. Contact me if you need more information.