

May 1, 2020

Dear President Nguyen:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foothill College Academic Senate engaged in a series of conversations regarding a lack of trust and diminishing confidence in our College's decision-making practices and current leadership approach. The Senate Executive Committee, in responding to constituent demands for a formal Senate response to these concerns, prepared draft communication and were seeking input from our constituents immediately prior to the Coronavirus outbreak. Given the immediacy and urgency of the pandemic, which resulted in the most significant operational shifts in our College's history at breakneck speed, the Senate Executive Committee voted to indefinitely delay the formal Senate response at the beginning of the Spring quarter.

There were Senators who expressed an optimism that we may not ever need to respond formally to the above-mentioned concerns, as perhaps the necessity to collaborate and engage with each other during this crisis could strengthen decision-

significantly increased over the last few years. We also hear that an increasing number of our colleagues are disengaging from campus activities and efforts due to low campus morale.

The Academic Senate understands there are challenges our campus executive leadership face during these current times, even prior to the current pandemic. We also understand that there are instances when some decisions, particularly decisions that involve personnel-related items, are not appropriate for broad stakeholder involvement due to legal or ethical reasons. Similarly, we acknowledge that there are differences in responsibilities between administrators and faculty. We urge the executive leadership to consider enlisting faculty at the outset to ensure a more informed and transparent decision-making process. We feel strongly that shifting to a more inclusive leadership style will greatly improve the functionality and well-being of our college.

While we appreciate some of the steps the college administration has taken recently to increase transparency and faculty involvement, we have not observed a consistent shift in approach. Our constituents have not heard from you an acknowledgement of these serious concerns and a demonstrated commitment to address them, despite repeated attempts to raise your awareness to them. The events of last Friday's College Advisory Council meeting, centering around your announcement to hold positions deemed critical to uphold existing organizational structure, further reinforces our concerns. These decisions were made and presented without transparency, and without any apparent faculty inclusion or even awareness prior to your announcement. The events have yet again stirred a strong sentiment of distrust.

We fear that without immediate, significant and visible adjustments to how our college is governed, we face potentially grave consequences that will adversely impact our students and community. We therefore urge you to receive this letter with utmost seriousness, as it includes the Academic Senate's proposal of concrete steps that can be taken to help heal the faculty-administration relationship.

With the above context, we share below recommendations we feel will help move our campus to reestablishing trust between faculty and executive leadership, re-engage faculty with campus wide efforts, and support an overall positive campus morale. We would like to acknowledge that this is not a comprehensive list of strategies, and we are open to engaging in conversations to refine these and/or identify additional ones that will best serve our college. We request a formal written response from you regarding each of the recommendations listed below by May 22nd, in preparation for faculty discussion at the June 1st Academic Senate meeting.

1. Reaffirm a college-wide commitment to the spirit of shared governance. This includes a commitment to ensuring planning and decision-making conversations are happening in councils and committees where faculty already serve. Those councils and committees should be fully informed with modeling, data, and all necessary details so weTj0.001 Tpto39 0 Tdthe abo

2. Include faculty leadership in manager's meetings and president's cabinet, and/or where decisions of consequence are being discussed and informed to ensure affected stakeholders are being engaged in an appropriate and timely manner, and that decisions are being communicated in the same way.
3. Task the Revenue & Resources Council with the central role in budget discussions, including initial conversations, modeling, planning, and developing strategies for any potential need for organizational restructuring or hiring freezes and/or holds, in anticipation of the impending budget crisis.
4. Work with the college to create a new shared governance body dedicated to enrollment management, charged with strategic planning for enrollment and scheduling, balancing face-to-face, hybrid and online offerings, and informing class cancelation discussions.
5. Continue to engage with campus stakeholders via regular updates such as the Parliament and direct communication to the Senate that acts to keep the campus informed and to solicit broad input and participation.

In closing, we would like to reaffirm our commitment to a strong partnership with college executive leadership, and especially emphasize our ongoing enthusiasm for and support of your ambitious campus equity goals. We believe in the equity vision you bring, and are excited and ready to work together to close equity gaps, and improve outcomes for our underrepresented students.

Sincerely,

Academic Senate Executive Committee (Division Representatives and Academic Senate Officers)