

Subject: Happy New Year and Happy Lunar New Year

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From: Bernadine Fong

To: foothill

CC: centralservices

Hope everyone has had a joyful, restful, healthy holiday season. And hope everyone stays safe during these welcome but concerning weather conditions.

As with any new year, ours brings new ideas and new resolutions, but this one, and this quarter, will also lead up to the installation of our new president, Kris Whalen. The Board will take action to make the appointment tonight, and her start date will be April 1, the beginning of our spring break. MIP-C, our governance group, now renamed to Mission *Informed Planning* Council, will be planning her introduction to the campus and our many campus constituencies and groups. Judy Miner and I have already begun the onboarding process so Kris can have a seamless transition.

Foothill could not be in a better place to prepare itself for this important transition. We are on track with our all-important self-study and accreditation work, we have several new initiatives which are lifting off, literally, and our enrollment is looking stronger every day. Our financial resources are healthy, and we are proceeding with caution to assure that we have sufficient reserves for the coming years. Most importantly, our students continue to meet their goals and continue to meet ours – reducing achievement differences. In the 14 months that I have been onboard, the college, thanks to all your hard and diligent work for our students, has made great strides in reaching a “new normal,” or in the words of one faculty member, “putting Humpty Dumpty back on the wall.” I sense positive energy is continuing to emerge and creativity and innovation continue to be as strong as ever.

As of this week, we are launching 17 (yes, seventeen) full-time faculty searches: accounting, biology, child development, computer science, counseling, emergency medical services, English, health services (resuming our model to have student health services to be led by a faculty health professional), library, math, music, pharmacy technology, photography, psychology, psych services (expanded to head up our to-be-launched multicultural center – see below), respiratory therapy, and veterinary technology. We also are concluding our fall round of tenure review of our probationary candidates. Even with all these new hires, we still have vacant faculty positions which we are holding in reserve. All our faculty searches are the result of our Faculty Prioritization Process and reviewed by MIP-C. Similarly, we continue to employ and replace classified professional positions though, like faculty positions, we are holding the line on “no new net positions” to assure that we are effectively but prudently staffed in both areas. In any case, winter quarter will be exceedingly busy and dominated by these faculty searches which we are hoping to conclude this quarter. In comparison, some of our searches last year were prolonged until late into the spring quarter because of Covid issues. Prolonged searches also risk losing top candidates.

Our initiative on mentor mindset and sense of belonging (remember David Yeager’s presentation on opening day) initiative with David and his colleagues is launching this quarter. (If you are interested but have not signed up, let me know). Our recruitment for our campus abroad in Florence and London is healthy and we are in search of scholarship funds to help assist students. Geoff Matthews (astronomy) is initiating implementation of virtual reality in his course, soon to be followed by Kristin Caldwell Tripp in media studies. Our Metaverse Institute continues to attract additional participants (anyone is invited to join, contact Konstantin Kalaitzidis) and will be making presentations at the ASU-GSV (Arizona State University-Global Silicon Valley) Educational Technology Summit in April.

Laurie Scolari, the FEI team, the UndocuCoalition, and others, are meeting to plan a multicultural center to expressly serve our most marginalized communities, including those currently served by FEI. College is a different world and while it is familiar to us, it is not familiar to many. While we provide students many support services and programs across the campus, our concept for a multicultural/BIPOC center is to provide our students with a centralized resource/referral center for their explicit needs, physical as well as emotional, including addressing a greater sense of belonging, having a growth mindset, dealing with racial trauma, and forms of discrimination.

This quarter, and in relation to our prospective multicultural center, we are restarting our Community Health Worker certificate program to offer our students, particularly first gen and English language learners, a short pathway (two quarters) to higher wage earning jobs (\$35 an hour plus overtime). Similarly, we are offering ESL classes to housekeeping employees in local hotel chains so they can ultimately expand their employment options. Child Development is working with the Institute for Nannies and Families to upgrade skills of nannies, another higher wage job.

This month we are also celebrating the Chinese or Lunar New Year (Jan. 22nd + 10 days), the year of the Rabbit. The date is determined by the second new moon after the Winter Solstice. This year's new moon occurs in China on January 22nd. (This is why you see moon cakes sold at Costco right now). If you were born in the year of the Rabbit, you are considered vigilant, witty, quick-minded, and ingenious. The Lunar years are in 12 year cycles so if you were born this year, 12, 24, 36, 48, 60, 72 (and so on) years ago, you are a "Rabbit."

Best wishes for another productive, resourceful and invigorating year and stay well and safe, particularly during this inclement weather. And to our Rabbits, Happy Birthday!

Best regards,
Bernadine

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