"There's Something About Foothill"

Greetings Foothill,

Our Anthropology Summer Abroad Program in Ireland is getting high praise from the U.S. Ambassador Kevin O'Malley. In *The Irish Times* Magazine's July 1 edition, O'Malley states that one of the highlights of his tenure as Ambassador was his visit to the Foothill program's archaeological dig last year. "The dig was being carried out by a group of American and Irish students," he states in the article. "As we pulled into the town, the streets were lined with schoolchildren waving American flags—that was a really touching moment for my wife and me," O'Malley said.

Faculty **Sam Connell** reports that the trip is going really well this year also, and they are finding lots of great artifacts in the digs and the town and community of Clonalis. Our students and faculty are our ambassadors!

Students at a dig site in Ireland last year.

In the last two weeks of learning and exploring, I noticed that there's something about Foothill – something special. For instance, the Foundation reports that about 120 Foothill employees donate regularly through payroll deduction.

A few weeks ago, **Lan Truong** and the student services team invited me to their potluck. When the group of approximately 50 went around to introduce themselves, there was a noticeable pattern:

Employee: "Hi, my name is …"
Group chorus: "annnnnnnd…"
Employee: "And … I was a student at Foothill."

At the welcome reception, **Karen Smith** and many others kept saying, "There are so many good people at Foothill."

Speaking of my reception, thank you to those who were able to attend, particularly faculty members who made a special effort despite summer break. It was quite crowded and I did not get to see everyone, but am truly grateful!

Campus police posted this picture taken by **Kathy Nguyen** on their Facebook.

In the last President's Communiqué, I should have said, "Kurt Hueg, as dean, will take on the extra duties of the VP for Workforce and be part of President's Cabinet with the other vice presidents." Sorry about that - I'm learning!

Speaking of hires, President's Cabinet and I have decided to go out for an (internal) interim hire for both the Vice President for Workforce and Director of Equity. As I explained to the

search committee, I reviewed the job description before my start date when I was told there was an unsuccessful search. I became convinced that it needs to be revised and hopefully reclassified to a higher level. Coincidentally, there was such effort previously by the Student Equity Workgroup. The President's Cabinet and I decided that the best approach would be to cancel the current search and advertise internally for a year-long interim. This will give me the opportunity to engage the SEW in further dialogue about the needs of the college and the position, and to receive input on a revised job description, while having a structure in place for our equity initiatives this fall. Our goal is to have an interim director start in August.

The Board last week approved a revised district mission statement, which in part states (*with emphasis added*), "The mission of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District is student success. We are ***driven by an equity agenda*** and guided by core values of excellence, inclusion, and sustainability."

What does it mean to be "driven by an equity agenda"? In part, it means discussing current events and how they shape our view of equity.

Last week, we held a "Courageous Conversations" gathering to discuss the recent police events across the country. Approximately 80 students, faculty, classified professionals, and administrators attended, including Student Trustee **Courtney Cooper**, Trustee **Laura Casas**, Chancellor **Judy Miner**, and Campus Police Chief **Ron Levine**.

The conversation started with a young, African American male student sharing his poem on hope. Next, facilitators **Pat Hyland** and **Sam White** (faculty) asked the group to write down a word or two to describe our emotional state. Some of the words were:

disillusioned / scared / helpless / sad
blessed (to be alive)
frustrated / angry / insecure
hopeful
responsibility
fed up
confused, need answers, explanations to why things are happening
numb
disappointed / frustrated / thankful (the conversation is being had)
forgiving and accepting
scared / hopeless & hopeful

Thank you to faculty **Kimberly Escamilla** who shared some student transfer data. (She later shared more with me. Did you know that in the past 3 years, only 22 of the 1,269 Foothill-UC transfers are African Americans?)

There were a couple of questions by faculty (and I paraphrase); "I want to improve my record on equity, but I don't know how. What can I do?" I informed the group that there are tools, but if we have trainings on them, will people attend?

How can we encourage employees who normally do not attend this type of activities to be open to change personally and attend trainings that help us all improve Foothill's own role in promoting equity and fairness in the world?

As I mentioned to the group, I am reminded of Ghandi's saying
                    "Be the change you want to see in the world."

One clear request was to keep the conversation going. Thank you to **Carolyn Holcroft** for approaching me about having this conversation, and **Erin Ortiz** for enthusiastically supporting it! You probably saw the invitation.

Courageous Conversations
Monday, **August 8**, 2016 from 1:00PM-2:15PM; and
Wednesday, **September 14**, 2016 from 1:00PM-2:15PM

Student Trustee Cooper spoke eloquently about her own experience as a woman of color and the inequities in healthcare services that resulted in her own medical condition, and how she worries daily about her young brother (a Foothill student) as he navigates the world.

Courtney has just been elected President of the State Student Senate, succeeding **Dahlia Salem**, another Foothill owl. Congrats Courtney!

Like I said, there's something about Foothill!

Of Service,

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