



President's Communiqué

FROM THE DESK OF THUY THI NGUYEN

Gratitude & Forgiveness

Hope everyone enjoyed a rejuvenating Thanksgiving break with family and friends!

I managed to avoid talks about party politics, though I did have an engaging Thanksgiving-Day conversation about our resilient students and their plight with homelessness. I was asked: if housing prices are so high in the area, then why don't students just move to a less expensive area and go to another community college? How should I have responded? The person with the best response that I could use wins 2 free tickets to the Cornell West ("Race Matters") talk at Foothill College on January 17th. (In my next communiqué, I'll tell you know how I actually responded.)

Am grateful to Board of Trustees and Chancellor **Miner** for proceeding with the general obligation bond and parcel tax at its meeting last week. Thank you to all the faculty and staff who came to the board meeting last Monday!

Our football team last week made a valiant effort during the Bowl game at Reedley, and my husband commented that it seemed as though there were more Foothill fans in the stands than the other team's. So grateful to the families and fans of our student athletes; I've thoroughly enjoyed meeting them at the games and via Twitter. Although the team did not get the ending they wanted, the players are starting to get university offers and the program has created something quite special for years to come. Congrats to Coach **Kelly Edwards** for being named "Pac 7 Coach of the Year!"

Also grateful to ASFC and the Student Affairs team for quickly putting together a fun pep rally for the team.



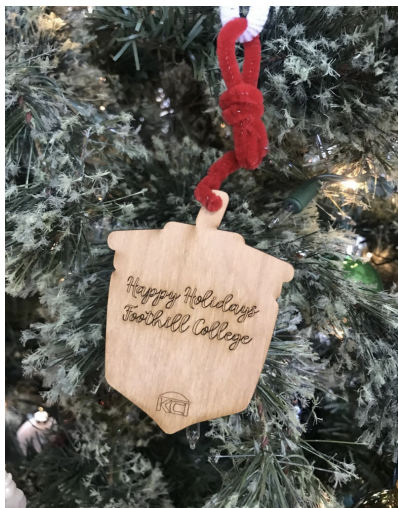
"It's a great time to be an Owl," said Athletic Director **Mike Teijeiro** who reported that for the first time in over 20 years, all five of our Fall Sports qualified for the playoffs.

1. Women's Water Polo-8-2, Coast Conference North Champions. Participated in the CCCAA Nor Cal Championships.
2. Women's Soccer 5-1-4, 3rd place Coast Conference South. Participated in the CCCAA regional playoffs.
3. Women's Volleyball 9-3, 2nd place Coast Conference North. Participated in the CCCAA regional playoffs.
4. Football-10-0, American Pacific 7 Conference Champions. Participated in the American Championship Bowl.
5. Men's Soccer-13-1-5, Coast Conference North Champions. Participating in the CCCAA regional playoffs.

Most of the playoff games have already occurred, with one Foothill team remaining competitive – that is, the other "football" team: Men's SOCCER!

With last Saturday's away-game win against a formidable opponent, Men's Soccer is going to the state "Final Four." The [semi-final game](#) will be **this Friday at 10 am near home (De Anza College)** with the winner going to the state final on Sunday at 1 pm at De Anza College. If you can, join me this Friday.

Afterwards, come to our college holiday party! Back by popular demand, the holiday party will be at the Krause Center for Innovation with opportunities again for you to make holiday trinkets at the Makerspace downstairs. Don't forget the ugly sweater.



My son helped me make this ornament at the KCI Makerspace last year, and it is now on our tree.

Thank you to all those who came to the open President's Office Hour high-tea. There

were so many people that we had to move it out of my office to the conference room. I honestly wished it had not gotten so big in order to have deeper conversations, though was so appreciative to connect with the ones who came. I'll keep organizing tea gatherings, as I learned a lot from talking to colleagues in small tea gatherings this past year.

It was actually during the high-tea party, for the first time that I could remember, a Foothill colleague directly asked me first what I as president see our college needing to do to address equity at Foothill. It is hard to believe that it has been more than 3 years that someone inquired directly first. Am so grateful for the question, as I am often asked by many outside entities. I hope each of you will inquire directly with leaders within your respective areas as to how they plan to address equity at Foothill, and offer to help refine their thinking and implement the collective strategies. Equity Strategic Plan (a.k.a., Equity Plan 2.0) is also anticipated to provide such strategic framework college-wide so that we can move together with intention.

Gratitude is the attitude.

Forgiveness is our business.

Incredibly grateful to you for what you do every day for students, and this Thanksgiving break has enabled me to take a little time to reflect. [Three years ago \(9/12/16\)](#), I had inquired via the president's communiqué how "forgiveness" became a stated college value, and a few folks responded:

One faculty wrote: Specifically, my recollection is that the entire list of institutional values was Bernadine Fong's creation when she first stepped into the Presidency in 1994. For a long time it was printed on the back of our individual business cards (back when we still all got business cards for free)...She also came to the Presidency in the aftermath of several major financial downturns (including our entirely self-inflicted accounting error collapse in the early 1990s...)...and then another statewide budget downturn in the mid-1990s, when departments and programs across the district were quite suddenly asked to slash budgets 10% across the board instantly..As you probably know, Bernadine had previously been both VPI and VPSS simultaneously prior to becoming President...Anyway I seem to remember vividly a conversation with Bernadine, just around the time she stepped up to the Presidency...about the fact that various people at Foothill still seemed to be nursing grudges..."No one around here seems to forgive anyone else for anything. Ever." ..And the comment seemed to resonate with her deeply.

One faculty expressed doubts: Sadly, my perception is that it is not well-practiced in our community. As many, I see this job as one I'll have until I retire. Given that as a parameter of our work environment, I'm baffled by the lack of fence-mending I see here.

Another faculty wrote: If you want to promote learning you have to not only allow for mistakes, but encourage everyone to go ahead and dare to try. Forgiveness does just that. It says don't worry if you don't get it right, just jump in and try...I want my students to think of mistakes as an opportunity to allow something wonderful to happen - they'll learn something. If they don't know from the first day that forgiveness for our blunders is part of the package, how can they embrace the risk of making a mistake?

Dr. **Bernadine Fong** was quite wise to introduce this college value. I continue to learn from her and our chancellor, and last month, even served on a [Stanford panel](#) with Dr. **Fong** and Chancellor **Miner** to talk about the different paths to leadership.

Indeed “forgiveness” has become a hallmark value at our college, with many candidates commenting on it during their job interviews. It is not a surprise that “forgiveness” originated from angst caused by budget reductions. It is also not a surprise that forgiveness is very hard to practice. Many times, forgiveness is only possible if coupled with personal values such as gratitude and grace.

I too ask for your forgiveness and understanding, and ask that we also forgive each other. The last two years have been challenging for the college – permanently cutting an unprecedented \$6.16 million from the ongoing budget (yet with no program elimination, no FT faculty layoffs, and 0.5 FT classified lay-off). Our classified professionals continue to serve diligently, and have even increased their engagement in college governance. And while we are contracting as a college, the already small administrative team (with 3 management positions permanently eliminated as part of its contribution to the general-fund budget reductions) finds itself doing more to increase enrollment and stem the tide that caused the budget reduction in the first place. These efforts are showing promise, and the chancellor and board have expressed appreciation for the college’s innovative and aggressive efforts.

However, this has caused tremendous strain on the team. I anticipate exploring in the next few weeks with the administrative team how our college could reprioritize major projects (and possibly slow down a little bit) to improve quality (versus quantity) in our decision-making and operational implementation for the remaining school year -- a New Year’s Resolution, so to speak. For example, one possibility is not starting Ed Master Plan 2030 until next school year, and I look forward to going to the Advisory Council for consultation on this. If you have thoughts about where we could reprioritize, please let me know.

Speaking of New Year’s Resolution, want to clear out those children’s books to make room for the new year? Thank you to those who dropped off over 100 books for the new elementary school. Did you know that the school’s mascot is also an OWL?! Special thanks to Librarian **Mary Thomas**, KCI **Gay Krause**, and Bookstore Manager **Romeo Paule** for offering to place bins in their respective areas. The collection will be extended to January, though this is the current flyer provided by Vargas ES.



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Questions? Contact Trustee Devon Conley at dconley@mwwsd.org

Be safe out there with the rain. See you all on Friday at the Holiday Party! #GoOwls

Of Service

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