

It is a testament to the ingenuity and passion of all those who work in California's Community Colleges, a system serving a quarter of all community college students in the nation, that in the face of global crisis, our faculty, classified professionals and administrative leaders have all come together to assure we continue serving students despite enormous odds. At Modesto Junior College alone, we've transitioned to remote teaching and learning in 48 hours and 1,600 courses and a variety of student services are still being offered. Classified professionals have pivoted to finding creative ways to do their jobs and often have stayed behind, while others have sheltered at home, to assure campuses are clean, safe, and operational. Administrative leaders have grappled with the new real by seeking to continue as many institutional functions as possible in thoughtful ways. Frankly, it has been miraculous to watch our college come through this pandemic while demonstrating that the bonds of creative collaboration, the Academic Senate theme for this semester, remain strong.

There have, of course, been some hiccups along the way. I know personally I have caused hours of headache to others as I've grappled with how best to represent faculty's academic and professional interests from a distance. It, for example, took me a whole day to make a YouTube video for faculty and students. I'm still learning. And while there has been a few, specific concerns related to "remote participatory governance" and our collective struggle with how we maintain transparency, collegiality and process, everyone has put in long hours to help find common ground and seek the best possible solutions. It's important we continue to work together to find ways to assure that although we are in a state of emergency, we still diligently follow-through on all the things that are much more difficult right now-collegiality and participatory processes.

One example of a recent concern is the academic senates coming to mutual agreement with the board of trustees on piloting a new budget process that is "widely accepted" and provides "collaboration between the colleges and with district office." Thank you to Chancellor Yong for his flexibility and leadership in seeking solutions to process-related issues in this complex time and thank you to the trustees for patiently listening to concerns.

There are so many others to thank for all of the selfless service I've witnessed over the last month that the parameters of this report couldn't possibly contain them, but I'd like to especially thank Jim Houpis and his entire administrative team and all of the classified professionals who still make sure of our functionality in difficult times. And thank you to Mikayla Ramirez and all of ASMJC. Student leaders have demonstrated courage in the face of crisis by holding student town halls and finding ways to ease the burden of this pandemic on the student body. They are role-models of resilience.

Over the next month, the MJC Academic Senate plans on co-hosting a *Grading During Covid-19 Townhall* with the college executive team to aid all faculty as they confront the challenges of minting grades this semester. Given the cancellation of our faculty retreat at Asilomar this May, the Academic Senate will also be rolling out a series of mini-virtual retreats over the course of the summer, and we continue to be responsive to our participatory governance responsibilities as well as our students.

So, I'd like to end by thanking my own constituency group—the faculty. To transition everything one has learned over a career to a new modality in just a few days is a Herculean task. Thank you for the Nursing and Fire Science faculty who are now, literally, contributing to the battle against Covid-19 on the front lines. And thank you to Mike Smedshammer, Ashli Bumgardner and Distance Education program faculty for aiding the college administration in our [Educational Continuity Plan](#).

My mother, a kindergarten teacher, sent me, of course, a Dr. Suessesque affirmation of teachers yesterday that I thought I'd end by sharing with you tonight—despite it being a bit corny. It reads: *"We will teach you in a room, we will now teach you on Zoom. We will teach you in a house and we will teach you with a mouse. We will teach you here or there, we teach because we care."* Thank you to everyone for caring when others need it most and thank you to everyone in this virtual Board meeting for your dedication to our colleges and its employees, our communities and our students.

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## **Handout**

- [Educational Continuity Plan](#)