

During my first year as Senate president at MJC, our faculty has aimed to keep focus on two guiding principles—action and creative collaboration with trustees, district, college and student leaders, classified professionals and one another. In short, we've tried to foster the idea of an engaged, egalitarian community of learners.

This summer has offered a bit of time to accommodate ourselves to a new reality and focus on preparing for what will be a unique school year. Faculty have attended a variety of virtual conferences and, with much thanks to Mike Smedhammer, Ashli Bumgardner and Distance Education program faculty, we have also been able to offer a robust [Educational Continuity Plan](#) that includes high quality training for effective online teaching.

Our Academic Senate has also sponsored book discussion groups, and faculty have spent many summer hours reading together and learning more about equity, what neuroscience teaches us about effective college teaching, and how faculty can use the power of creative thinking, innovation and imagination in the classroom. Overall, these rejuvenating summer experiences have reinforced in my own mind H.G. Well's contention that civilization is ultimately "a race between education and catastrophe."

But, before sharing the annual strategic plan for our Academic Senate, I wanted to offer some gratitude. This "remote" summer I've had the opportunity to interact virtually with high school, college and university teachers all over the world. And I can tell you that many, many teachers today feel deep anxiety about a physical return to the classroom as long as there is continued spread of the coronavirus. As a father of an elementary school student, high schooler and college freshman all learning from home this semester, believe you me, I can certainly understand why so many want our educational system to "go back to normal." But, I've also listened to instructors break into tears, talk about their wills and take a bucket list approach to summer, fearing the health consequences of a premature return to campus. And so, I wanted to express faculty's deep gratitude to Chancellor Yong and our two college presidents, Dr. Houpis and Dr. Bandyopadhyay, for their extraordinary vision and leadership in committing quickly and firmly to a remote operation plan. They have put our well being first, and for this faculty offer a heartfelt thanks. It means the world to work at a place where you feel valued.

And what does the MJC Academic Senate hope to accomplish this year? We have seven prioritized action items to focus on:

- 1) We aim to continue developing, funding and implementing a permanent teaching and learning center, the [Institute for Applied Creativity and Community Transformation, or ACCT](#) at MJC, building on our Fall 2019 [Academic Senate sponsored workshops](#) dedicated to fostering active, contextualized learning models;
- 2) We look forward to collaborating with other constituency groups to re-envision our college shared governance model;
- 3) We will continue with the roll out Guided Pathways (GP) Schools, focusing on reimagining the student experience within GP Schools and using data to inform our decisions;
- 4) We will offer the Board of Trustees recommendations on establishing a Credit for Prior Learning policy as well as recommendations on the [Academic Calendar](#) and calendar and course compression;
- 5) We will continue our work with Kathren Pritchard, District HR, and Pam Guerra-Schmidt and the Columbia College Academic Senate to review and revise hiring processes at our colleges;
- 6) We will work with the MJC Foundation, college administrators, staff and students to find unique and meaningful ways to celebrate the 100th birthday of our college; and
- 7) Finally, we aim to create a Student-Centered Instruction Workgroup that will propose ways to keep and even expand on some practices we've learned during Covid-19. For instance, perhaps faculty should regularly video capture their lectures and maybe student services should continue with remote tools for assisting students developed over the last months.

In conclusion, one of the books I read for leisure this summer is called [How To Be A Monastic and Not Leave your Day](#). I figured since quarantine has meant most of the world has been living like monks, we might learn something from their practices of oblation and communal living. So, I leave you with a Benedictine plea: "Give us hearts wide enough to embrace each other as well as those whose lives we touch. Enable us to listen and to learn from each other and those around us each day. May we be models in our homes, neighborhoods and communities of wise stewardship, (and) dignified human labor...(and) may our presence among others be a constant witness of justice, compassion and hope..." To these ideas, I hope we all can say "Amen." This concludes my report for this evening, thank you for your time.