

Good evening and thank you to our Board of Trustees, Chancellor Yong and District Office for the opportunity to address you all virtually again this evening. If there is one thing that has been reaffirmed for me professionally over the last two years, it is this—our California Community Colleges, the largest post-secondary system in the world, is crucial to the health, wealth and vitality of the communities we serve.

We welcome all and our efforts to make each learner feel at home is crucial to a sense of belonging, and over the last two years this mission has taken on a special significance as we have, for the very first time, worked and studied remotely. MJC has not just felt like home, it's actually been in my home, and yours, since March of last year. With this co-mingling of work and domestic life there are, of course, some challenges. But all in all, it reaffirmed the idea that some things are so important, namely life-long learning, that we simply must find a way to go on. And it has gone on to a remarkable degree.

Tonight, I'd like to briefly highlight some accomplishments of the MJC Academic Senate, focusing on just three advances. Firstly, we have ratified our vision for the ACCT Institute, a unique teaching and learning center that calls for applied creativity across academic and professional disciplines and a renewed focus on the college's role in community transformation. As an example of these active, contextualized learning efforts, over the last year we've worked with three other community colleges on the "Strengthening Innovation and Technical Ecosystems (SITE) Program Grant" to develop a two-year college invention education program prototype for the entire California Community College system in collaboration with the state chancellor's office and Lemelson-MIT. Now, just last week, with the quick help of many at both the college and district, MJC has again partnered with Lemelson-MIT to propose a new \$6.4 million, three years National Science Foundation grant that would grow the invention education prototype to six California Community colleges and for a longer period of time. If funded, this new grant would increase the number of MJC faculty who can participate in the project, by bolstering our efforts with an additional \$475,000 a year for three years.

Secondly, despite the pandemic, the Academic Senate has supported education for the incarcerated and we have been able to complete a pilot program at the REACT Sherriff's Office facility. Now, with the leadership of dean Vicki-Trask Mulvaney, there are multiple grant opportunities that will help us to serve both the REACT facility and the juvenile detention center right off campus. Stay tuned in the fall for more on the growing teaching the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated program at MJC.

Thirdly, over the last two years, the Academic Senate has been a partner with all other constituency groups to revise and reaffirm our college participatory governance model. The new governance model seeks more efficiency in decision-making, cutting college-wide councils, committees and meetings by 40%, and also fosters transparency and engagement, highlighting the active participation of all in college-wide governance.

The last two years, as virtual as they have been, have also meant real, shared work with each of you and I could spend the next 15 minutes thanking each person I've had the opportunity and honor to work with as Senate president. So many have demonstrated a core belief in the intrinsic value of each person and each viewpoint; your dedication to civility, mutual respect, fairness, politeness and concern for the common good have all held up the principle that the "diversity of thought and ideas, on which an academic community thrives, is best maintained by a policy of respect and civility." But, I do not want to run afoul of your patience this evening so I will forego mentioning the many colleagues. Instead, I'll end with a brief passage from Marge Pierce's catalytic poem, "To Be of Use:"

*The people I love the best
jump into work head-first
without dallying in the shallows
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight....*

*I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,
who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,
who do what has to be done, again and again.*

*I want to be with people who submerge
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest
and work in a row and pass the bags along....*

*The work of the world is common as mud.
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.
But the thing worth doing well done
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.*

This, in essence, is why it's been a true joy working with each and every one of you. You've inspired with your commitment to the college, our community and each other. Thank you for the opportunity. Have a great summer and I greatly look forward to fall semester, one in which we celebrate the 100th birthday of our community's college.
