

Vote of No Confidence Frequently Asked Questions

Prepared by Kathryn Maurer & Paul Starer in preparation for the Foothill Academic Senate
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1) What is a vote of no confidence in the president? What does it mean?

A vote of no confidence by an academic senate in the president means exactly what it says. The faculty body collectively lacks confidence in the college president to lead the college and do the work of the college.

2) How does an academic senate take a vote of no confidence?

There is not a one-size-fits-all for votes of no confidence. They are frequently taken in the form of an approval of an academic senate resolution asserting no confidence, and the reasons the faculty body has arrived at that conclusion.

3) What are reasons to vote no confidence in a college president?

The reasons can be varied. Often votes of no confidence focus on two key areas of leadership: fiscal accountability and governance.

4) How many votes are needed to pass a resolution affirming a vote of no confidence?

The Foothill Academic Senate Constitution requires a simple majority of voting members of the Executive Committee of the senate to pass a vote of no confidence.

5) What happens if we pass a vote of no confidence?

The Academic Senate President will transmit the resolution and the vote to the Foothill Administration, the FHDA Board of Trustees and the Chancellor of the District, and publish it on the [Academic Senate website](#).

6) Then what happens?

The Academic Senate President would address the Board at their next meeting and share the results of the vote on the resolution.

7) What about the Board? Do They Have to Respond? Will This Accomplish Anything?

The Board does have an obligation to acknowledge the resolution, to hear from faculty and others who support the resolution as well as from those who do not. However, the resolution is not binding on the Board and they are not compelled by the resolution to take any action.

8) Then why are we even doing this, if it is more of a symbolic vote and doesn't in actuality change anything?

It's a reasonable question. In response it seems necessary to rely on the content of the resolution. Are the concerns articulated worthy of your support? Do you

believe allowing the behaviors and practices outlined in the resolution to continue requires a response?

Further, there are the “optics” of the Board doing nothing in response to a faculty vote of no confidence in a college president. The Board are, after all, elected by members of the public. Indeed, our Board appears to have already scheduled a special meeting on this matter already: [put link here](#).

Lastly, symbols have value. That our college has reached a point where the faculty are considering a vote of no confidence in our college president, speaks to the serious and consequential break down in every effort to resolve the existing issues and tensions by all other means. How else to draw attention to the seriousness of the problems we are contending with? There is power in taking a public stance on the issues at stake even if such a stance does not result in the outcome you desire.