

Foothill Academic Senate Retreat Agenda

Strengthening Our Senate: Lessons from Challenging Discussions

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This Academic Senate retreat is an educational and team-building activity, not an official meeting. No Senate business will be discussed or acted upon during this gathering.

The purpose of this retreat is to reflect on past experiences and to generate ideas for improving Senate processes and culture in handling issues that may be contentious. If there are any ideas or proposals that emerge, we can consider them for future consideration.

This retreat is being held in full compliance with the Brown Act. The discussion will focus solely on general principles and best practices, not on any specific business matters currently before the Senate or likely to come before the Senate in the future.

Objectives:

- Reflect on the Senate's experience with challenging discussions this past year
- Identify strategies for improving how the Senate handles challenging situations in the future
- Build trust and strengthen relationships among senators

Format:

- Zoom-based discussion:
- Join Zoom Meeting
<https://fhda-edu.zoom.us/j/88601836250?pwd=jkz8aRVD5mU21eX9hZOucbwUzMUeZ.1>

Meeting ID: 886 0183 6250

Passcode: 276197

- Combination of small group breakouts and large group debrief
- 60-90 minutes total

Agenda:

1. Set the Stage (5-10 minutes)
 - Welcome and agenda review
 - Framing the discussion
 - Review of discussion guidelines
2. Small Group Discussions (30-40 minutes)
 - Breakout into groups of 4-6 senators
 - Discuss the following questions:
 - What did we learn about ourselves as a Senate from the experience with the contentious resolution?

- What are 2-3 things we could do differently to handle similar situations better in the future?
 - How can we strengthen trust and relationships within the Senate to weather difficult discussions?
- Record key insights and recommendations
- 3. Large Group Debrief (20-30 minutes)
 - Share highlights from small group discussions
 - Identify common themes and unique suggestions
 - Prioritize top ideas for improving Senate processes and culture
- 4. Next Steps (5-10 minutes)
 - Identify specific items based on the recommendations
 - Assign responsibilities and timelines for follow-up

Preparation:

- Review the agenda and come prepared to share your reflections and ideas
- Find a quiet location with a stable internet connection for the Zoom call
- Test your audio and video beforehand to ensure smooth participation

Follow-up:

- A summary of key discussion points and action items will be distributed after the retreat
- We will dedicate time in future Senate meetings to implement the ideas generated