

MEMO

To: Thuy Nguyen, President

Cc: Revenue & Resources Committee
Equity & Education Committee
Advisory Council

Fr: Community & Communication Committee

Date: May 28, 2020

Re: Additional Information for Recommendation for External Evaluator for Governance Assessment, Ad, updated memo

In response to the discussion about assessment of governance, Community & Communication Committee commissioned the Governance Assessment Study Group to work with the other governance committees around assessment. The study group worked with C&C to would like to provide additional information for the memo dated April 23, 2020:

In December 2019, the Community and Communications (C&C) committee approved the convening of a study group representative of all constituents from the four governance committees to engage the process of an evaluation of Foothill's new governance structure. Conversations held in C&C leading to this decision recognized: 1) that the previous governance evaluation would need to be completely overhauled due to the significant change in governance processes and structures, and 2) a desire for greater, meaningful engagement in the governance evaluation.

In conversation with both the study group and C&C about what topic areas to assess within governance (and the methodology to be used), the Community & Communication Committee approved a recommendation to be made to the President for an external evaluator to be involved with helping design and implement the governance evaluation.

The purpose of an external evaluator is not to cast judgment on the current governance structure, but rather to gather data and provide insights that will help the College continue to improve and strengthen the ongoing governance process. This effort will examine the implementation process, resulting in information that will facilitate any adjustments or professional development that may be needed for improvement and documentation purposes. Foothill's Office of Institutional Research will help serve as liaison between the external evaluator and the College. Scope of work and feedback on evaluation design will continue in its current iteration with input provided by the governance study group and finalized by C&C.

An external evaluator brings to the governance evaluation:

- An external lens, which Foothill's IRP team does not bring.

Unlike most other programs and activities that are evaluated at Foothill, the IRP team are active participants in the revised shared governance model that was implemented in Fall 2018. IRP team members have regularly attended meetings of all four governance committees, including serving as a facilitator for one of the four committees and serving on the various committees' study groups. This means that IRP, despite their ex-officio role, brings an internal lens to the evaluation of governance, based upon their existing experience with observing and participating in governance.

- The ability to include interviews and/or focus groups in the data collection for the evaluation, which would be much more difficult for Foothill's IRP team to effectively conduct.

Interviews and focus groups allow an evaluator to delve deeper into a topic and gain a fuller, richer picture of a situation from one person's point of view. They also allow people to engage in the evaluation in multiple ways, and are therefore more rooted in equity than a fully survey-based approach. Combining interviews (depth) with surveys (breadth) is a common methodology in evaluation design. But interviews and focus groups, by their very nature, do not allow respondents to remain anonymous to the interviewer. For example, when the interviewer is a work colleague of the person being interviewed, and when the topic of the interview touches upon a potentially sensitive or difficult topic for one or both of them (for example, how well another work colleague is representing their constituency in shared governance), then it becomes much more difficult for the person being interviewed to be fully honest and forthcoming in their interview. Interviews and focus groups will be much more effective if they are conducted by an outside person who is external to the college and can guarantee confidentiality, sharing only aggregate results.

C&C aims to begin the process in Summer 2020, remaining open to extending the evaluation into Fall 2020 or beyond.

With the assistance of the institutional research department of Foothill College, C&C recommends contracting with Dr. Kristen Fong for this work.