
From: Bernadine Chuck Fong <fongbernadine@fhda.edu>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 11:19 AM
To: foothill
Subject: An Open Apology for an Open Letter

My Open Letter to Tenure Review Committees about expectations had some totally unintended consequences, so in the spirit of our core values of openness, honesty, and forgiveness, I ask for forgiveness of those who found my letter to be stressful and even disrespectful of the hard work that the tenure process entails, either as the tenure candidate or the committee members. And I sincerely thank those who brought this *faux pas* to my attention. Foothill has had a long history, beginning when the current tenure process first started, that it is intended to be an inclusive process because all the work in screening out and selecting in candidates to identify the best candidate possible, would have been done and the tenure process was to affirm this selection. Frankly, when I went through the tenure process at Foothill (almost 100 years ago), it was very proforma and I received exactly one administrative class visit, and not even from the division dean, and the process was almost “automatic” and frankly, less meaningful. The intent of my email was to highlight to the entire community the rigorous process of tenure which is affirmation of our entire search and selection process. It was also to highlight and acknowledge the extraordinary amount of time and effort of the tenure committee members to assure the integrity of the process. It was not my intent to exacerbate the stress associated with the tenure process or to question it in any way. However, my memo also elicited some important and welcome observations about the process and how it could be more supportive of the tenure candidates, as they learn to acclimate to the college, the community and the culture. Even for experienced faculty, teaching or counseling at a new institution brings new processes and procedures and obviously, new colleagues. Making those connections, and becoming acclimated, along with teaching new curriculum to new students, is daunting. How do we make the tenure process a formative one, as well as a summative one? I hope we can make this part of our dialogue, starting with feedback from our current candidates and those who have more recently gone through the process.

We are in the process of recruiting for 13 new faculty positions (12 recommended for the fall and one from an unsuccessful search this winter). We plan to have a more formal orientation to the entire college, in addition to the ongoing professional development program that already exists. Our core values, the history and legacy of Foothill and what has made it unique, are important to all newly hired employees, whether faculty, classified professionals, or administrators. Knowing and understanding how the college operates, how decisions are made, and how college priorities are determined should be part of the orientation process. What is even more important is for us to continue to strengthen, or rebuild, a community that is supportive of one another, so that we can assure each other’s success, as well as the success of our students; so that we listen and value one another. I hope this apology begins to do that.

We are already planning a deeper orientation and introduction to our community and the culture we strive for, not only for the newly hired faculty, but for classified professionals and administrators who have been hired during this year. And with this new beginning, we will make community and inclusiveness a key priority.

Best regards,
Bernadine

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