

**Subject:** Some reflections for you to ponder and understand the legacy of Foothill  
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When I retired from Foothill in 2006, I wrote some reflections of my 36-year career, from faculty member to college president. I hope you will indulge me in sharing some of these reflections so you have a deeper understanding of some of Foothill's history, culture and practices, some of which had statewide impact. These reflections, along with the importance of preserving the college's award winning architectural integrity, are what I would like to leave with you as the keepers of Foothill's legacy. Here are some excerpts:

### **The 1970's**

#### **Birth of 1:1 meetings between presidents**

- "During my Academic Senate presidency (1975-76), there was dissension among the faculty about the administration. Wanting to open the lines of communication, I went to President Fitzgerald and asked to establish weekly college and senate president meetings, which continue to this day. I thought this president-to-president dialogue would be helpful for morale. In fact, it did improve open communication and continued to this day."

#### **Campuswide involvement in accreditation**

- "When we were going to begin our self-study for re-accreditation, President Jim Fitzgerald and I were talking about how faculty could be involved so that it did not become an administrative document. I suggested we have the entire faculty participate and have each volunteer for the various self-study committees. Jim did this and we had almost full faculty participation. We continue extensive faculty, staff, and student involvement in our self-studies to this day, the most recent being in 2005, for my last self-study as college president." (And actually the most recent being our current effort with ISER)

#### **Birth of the Faculty Association**

- "During my senate presidency, I also came in close touch with Bob Klang, the president of the De Anza Senate. He was interested in unionizing the faculty through a local organization. A few Of us, including myself, were already members of the AFT (American Federation of Teachers) chapter, and I served as treasurer. However, a local union seemed to be more beneficial since it would be more responsive to our needs as a faculty. I supported the effort because a union would remove any arbitrary decisions by the administration. *In Spring 1976, Bob and I co-authored the position paper that proposed the formation of a local union, which became known as the Faculty Association.*

#### **Scheduling and growing enrollment**

- I had never done a class schedule before and thought there was a formula that helped

indicate which courses should be offered and when. What I learned was that it was more like “flying by the seat of your pants.” Therefore, I began to do environmental scans and scheduled courses related to public needs. For example, we avoided offering courses that would have attracted primarily males on Monday nights during the fall, so as not to compete with Monday night football. We offered the tax accounting course during tax time, etc. We offered film appreciation on Friday nights, when the class went to the movies. The center grew from a few hundred students to over 1600 in the first year.”

### ***The 1980's***

#### **Birth of teaching demo's and including faculty and staff in administrators' evaluations**

- “Under the new administrative structure, I began my new career as dean of administration. My main interest was in personnel, hiring, evaluation, and professional development. Part of my responsibility was to revamp the faculty interview process. In 1981 I instituted teaching demonstrations as part of the interview process for faculty. This process continues to this day and has proven to be especially insightful. I also created the formative and summative evaluation approach and included faculty and staff involvement in the evaluation of administrators. Similarly, hiring committees for administrator positions were constituted to include classified staff as well as faculty, whenever appropriate. The inclusion of faculty and staff in hiring committees, and in an administrative evaluation, seems obvious now, but it was not at the time. Thus, we were carving out new standards, even then.”

#### **The discovery of “Float”**

- “In the early 1980's the State Chancellor's Office issued what we called a “hit list” which included the types of course and activities that we had to cease because of lack of state funding. I was still the dean of administration and had to identify cuts in the budget and reduce courses and layoff faculty and staff. It was during this time that I discovered the presence of “float.” Float refers to salary for positions that are in the budget but are vacant, and thus, the funds remain unused or “float.” I discovered that we had several faculty positions, which were fully funded, but the faculty members were on sabbatical and only receiving 75%-85% of their regular salary. Thus, 15% to 25% of the salary was unused and constituted a substantial savings to the district. I “cut” our budget largely through discovering these unused float funds.”

#### **Increasing diversity in hiring**

- “The district-wide Minority Staff Association was created and was active during President Tom Clement's tenure. One outcome was the establishment of the Multicultural/ Affirmative Action office and a faculty director at each college. However, the position was untenable. We had an excellent candidate in the position, but her role quickly became unpopular. The college was grappling with what it meant to have an active affirmative action program and it went about it by using statistics, which quickly became construed as “quotas.” Melanie Pla-Richard was hired. She had an excellent background for working with people, having been in social work previously. However,

it became her role to inform hiring committees that they could not go forward in the search process if there was an insufficient pool of minority candidates. The committees, who previously had been relatively autonomous, were not happy with her authority and ability to stop a search. In some cases, committees would put forth a “token” minority as a finalist just to keep the process moving, though it was clear that the credentials of this minority candidate were not comparable to the other finalists recommended. Ultimately, Melanie resigned from the position and was reassigned to Psychological Services where she has built a very effective program.”

- “Another experience with affirmative action did not lead to the desired result. We had two finalists for a faculty position, one was white, and one was black. We really liked both candidates but only had one position. Tom was chairing the final selection process. The dean persuaded us that the white candidate was superior because she had a doctorate. We finally went with her though we all wished we could have gone with both. Later, I worked with the vice chancellor of human resources, Gerry Kaspar, and told her the “test” to assure that we were making an affirmative action hire should be, that if we wanted to hire two candidates for the same position, and one was a minority, that we should hire the minority. In 1987 the district adopted this as part of board policy and procedures to assure that we were meeting affirmative action’s spirit and intent. Clearly, the dean’s “rationale” of the doctorate was immaterial other than for prestige since we only required a master’s degree for the position.”
- “All of this was a great lesson for me. Even though affirmative action was well intended, it was not producing the desired results and, in fact, was producing a backlash at Foothill. It became clear to me that we needed to educate everyone on the value of having minority candidates, and particularly minority hires. Furthermore, a “mandate” should not be the primary reason for minority hire because choices would be out of compliance and not out of commitment and belief.”
- “When I became president (1994) I initiated our hiring process with considerable information about our students, who they were demographically, and how they have changed ethnically. It then followed that, to better serve our students, we needed to hire people who could best relate to our students. If our student demographics increased in minority representation, then we needed people who could relate to these new students. Often, this would mean that we wanted candidates who had worked with people of ethnic groups and who could understand the culture and the needs of these groups. This usually meant that candidates of color might have an advantage, though that was not always the case. The important point was that we were hiring candidates who could best relate to our students, regardless of color. Yet, candidates of color could have an advantage, not because of color, but because of their unique experiences.”
- “I firmly believe that, with these new guidelines, we did hire more faculty and staff of color because of their ability to better relate to our students, rather than being hired because of color per se. I also must emphasize that personal life experience could be a

key factor.”

- “Another positive result of our newly interpreted hiring process was that we could change the role of the multicultural director who could focus on broader education issues and not serve as the college’s compliance officer.”

#### **Birth of division curriculum committees and one oversight committee (between 1983-1994)**

- “Before I became dean of instruction, Foothill had one central curriculum committee, which was typical of all colleges. Because of a single committee and its endless deliberation, it took an inordinate amount of time to have any courses approved. I also questioned the validity of having members of the curriculum committee approve courses, in which they had no expertise, since the expertise really rested in the departments and divisions.”
- “However, I noticed in the education code that each college was to establish “a” curriculum committee. The language did not say that there was to be only *one* committee. Therefore, I took the opportunity to have each division create its own curriculum committee for course approvals, while the central curriculum committee would be more focused on policy, like graduation requirements. I did this after asking myself why we did have only one committee. The only reason anyone could think of was that a single committee could provide oversight over possible course duplication. For example, what if the biology department wanted to offer a course on human sexuality, and the psychology department wanted to do the same. The central committee would provide oversight to prevent this type of duplication. However, in the 11 years that I chaired the college curriculum committee, the issue only came up once, which did not seem sufficient reason to maintain only one committee at the expense of greater department creativity and efficiency in approving new courses.”

#### **Birth of 75:25 full-time/part-time faculty ratio and tenure process**

- “In 1987, as dean of instruction, I had the opportunity to work on the State’s AB (Assembly Bill) 3409 Task Force. This group was made up of one CEO, Lois Callahan, president of the College of San Mateo; two CIO’s, Raul Cardoza and myself; the presidents of the state Academic Senate, Mark Edelstein; AFT (American Federation of Teachers), Bob Gabriner; CTA (California Teachers Association), David Rubiales, and FACC (Faculty Association of California Community Colleges), Cy Gulassa, who was also head of the union at Foothill-De Anza; and an attorney, who happened to be Peter Landsberger, our district’s former general counsel. So out of a committee of seven, three were from our district.”
- “The task force was charged with developing reform legislation that would be AB 1725. We developed the language for personnel, faculty and administrator qualifications, tenure, and full-time and part-time faculty ratios. We met regularly for close to a year. We made great strides in the language and the agreements and compromises. One of the compromises was tenure and the full-time to part-time faculty 75:25 ratio. The

faculty on the task force wanted to have limits on colleges' use of part-time faculty and wanted a FT: PT ratio of 75:25 that would be tied to additional funding for full-time faculty positions. The administrators wanted a formal multiple-year tenure review process. At the time, tenure was obtained almost automatically after three years. *The compromise was that the tenure process would include a formal review protocol at the end of each year, and would be for four years, in exchange for the 75:25 ratio as a goal.*"

### **Birth of our tenure committees**

- "..., when AB 1725 became regulation, it was necessary to develop a tenure review process. In 1986, as vice president for instruction, I suggested that we should have a tenure committee, like universities. Bob Pierce was the senate president at the time, and he wanted to have most of the committee to be faculty and chaired by a faculty member. In my first leap of faith and trust, and there would be many more throughout my career, I agreed. For several years the tenure process was jointly developed and administered by the administration and the academic senate. The union did not want to be involved for fear that it could pit one union member against another. However, over time, the tenure process did become part of the collective bargaining process. However, the initial thrust of the committee structure, chaired by a faculty member and predominantly faculty, remains.'

### **Birth of Leadership (Asilomar) Retreats**

- "In 1987, when Mike McHargue was president of the Academic Senate, he remarked to me that it was a shame that our newly hired faculty did not have the benefit of the college's history, as told by Bob Smithwick, our founding board member. That brief conversation resulted in the now traditional Asilomar Leadership Retreats (though not all were necessarily held at Asilomar). The first retreat, at Asilomar, was in fall 1987, and included all administrators and new full-time faculty members, and of course, Bob, who would reminisce about how Foothill and the district was started and the legacy that was left for us to continue."

### **Birth of Campus Abroad**

- "Our Campus Abroad program began in spring, 1987 with a huge kick-off that surprised all of us. When we were approached by AIFS, the American Institute for Foreign Study, we were told that these overseas programs start small, and we should expect about 30-40 students signing up for our first quarter in London. However, much to everyone's surprise, we had people, lined up around the building on the first day for registration. We ended up with 200 students in all!"
- "Our very successful Campus Abroad program then expanded into Paris, Salzburg, Granada, Salamanca, Dublin, Vietnam, and Beijing, with a program in Ghana in 2008. The program in Africa is especially important to me. In 2004, my family and I traveled to southern Africa and had the opportunity not only to go on safari, but also to spend time with the local tribes of three countries. The people are so proud of their heritage and culture, that it seemed that the experience would be an inspirational one for our

students, particularly our African American students.”

### **Diversity at Foothill**

- “Cultural diversity has taken many turns at Foothill. When I first arrived in the 70’s, it was called multiculturalism. At that point we had several “across the curriculum” initiatives. Diversity Across the Curriculum (DAC) was an initiative to assure that our curriculum was representative of differing cultural points of view. Every course had a diversity requirement. Nile Norton (Music), Scott Lankford (English) and Victoria Taketa (Counseling) were our first DAC faculty coordinators. Their role was to introduce diversity points of view and curriculum throughout our courses. They did this through workshops, meeting with faculty, and developing bibliographies. When we experienced an unrelated budget setback, they all offered to give up their reassigned time but continue the work. Over time, Nile remained the sole coordinator. During this time Nile and I worked with the curriculum committee, which I chaired as the chief instructional officer, to approve a cultural diversity requirement in the curriculum. This happened in 1989-90 and we were somewhat ahead of the times.”

### **Foothill – De Anza’s first shared governance model in the State:**

- “During this time, the BPDG (Budget, Policy, and Development Group) was in full blossom. The BPDG was a “shared governance” group established by Tom Fryer when he became chancellor in 1978. Tom was challenged by a Foothill faculty member, Bill Hines, to “show us the black box” where the faculty member said the district hid money. Tom responded to this challenge by inviting the faculty, and later the staff, to join his administrative cabinet group. This group was later enlarged to include broader representation of all the constituencies in the district. Tom was very proud of this group, which met every Friday afternoon from *noon to 6 PM*. The group labored over every decision of the district and was vastly empowered by the chancellor. However, the members would openly disagree when warranted. Tom used to have a favorite saying that we are committed to a fully functioning community college “whose work is joy.” When some of the labor groups did not get the COLA they wanted, they marched into a BPDG meeting with t-shirts labeled ‘Joy is 6%.’”
- “The BPDG gained much recognition throughout the state as a model for shared governance. Hence, when the language for reform legislation (AB 1725) was developed, the concept of shared governance, though the term never appeared in the legislation, permeated the language. It was not a coincidence that the three people from our district helped write the legislative language: Peter Landsberger, Cy Gulassa, and me, from our days on the AB 3409 Task Force.”

### **Birth of Service Learning**

- “Service learning became an important notion in the late ‘80s and early ‘90’s. We wanted to get our students more involved in community service and civic engagement. In 1991, I was serving on the Stanford Board of Trustees, and Donald Kennedy was the university president and I had access to him. Don was also a national leader in the

service-learning movement, so I invited him to a service-learning conference hosted at Foothill, to introduce service learning to our community colleges. Our service-learning program continues and, after 15 years, it has a good chance of finally becoming a graduation requirement.”

#### **Becoming Foothill's 5<sup>th</sup> president, 1994-2006**

- “My final presidential interview began with a public forum in Appreciation Hall. Based on my earlier interview experiences at the other campuses, it was clear that I had to do something different for the “tougher” in-house audience. While I might have rambled on about my traditional credentials and my accomplishments, this seemed to be trite for the at-home crowd, so I decided to use a different approach. As I prepared for my interview, I read a lot of business and organizational leadership books. One of them emphasized that good leaders personalize their leadership. They link the institution’s values with their own personal values. A leader must be the epitome of the institution’s values and thus, the values of both need to coalesce. This point has been deeply internalized. A leader cannot live and epitomize values that are not his/her own.”
- “I went into the public forum with a full audience and shared my personal values and commitment to them and what they meant for the college. I articulated five values: *honesty, openness, trust, integrity, and forgiveness*. Honesty has always been high on my list and along with openness, that we, as a college, should not have any secrets. I included forgiveness because the lesson learned from the ’91 crisis was that the district could recover from the crisis financially but not emotionally. I also emphasized the element of trust because that was what was lost in the ’91 crisis and that was what needed to be restored.”
- “Several contrasting impressions struck me when I became president. When I first started working at Foothill in 1970, I vividly recall thinking that the president came to work in a limo, because I could not conceive of someone in such an august role, driving himself to work. I often thought of that image as I drove my children to high school in the carpool lane, before going to the office.”
- “One of my boldest moves was in the third year of my presidency when I wanted to renew the campus’s commitment to diversity. This was important for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was that all the demographic trends predicted we, and California, would become more diverse, and that I wanted to sensitize everyone to the need for greater diversity in our employment opportunities. Our course outline for that year was *A Matter of Honor* and we focused on our responsibility to a diverse student body that represented different cultures and backgrounds, as well as different levels of academic preparation. However, the boldness of the theme was showing the video *Color of Fear* and inviting Lee Mun Wah and his group, the producers of the film, to conduct a workshop on opening day for all of our faculty and staff. The film was powerful but controversial. I remember introducing it that day and saying to everyone that presenting the film and the workshop was a risky decision on my part and that some

people would feel very uncomfortable, but that was the point.”

- “Some of the more powerful moments took place when the workshop leaders asked anyone to stand up who had experienced any element of discrimination. When colleagues, mostly blacks, stood up there was a hush over the theater, and a sense of recognition, empathy, and solidarity all wrapped in one. We had to realize that racism took place all around us and with some of our closest friends and colleagues. I remember someone whispering behind me, “Even Bernadine!” as I had stood up.”
- “Another powerful memory was when a newly hired faculty member (this was her first day on the job) stood up and declared that until that moment, she had been afraid to disclose her fear of being black and white and not feeling a part of either race. Others immediately embraced her, and this was a wonderful demonstration of the camaraderie and support that Foothill faculty and staff tended to extend to one another.”
- “I learned a long time ago, in a psychology class, that one of the ways to change behavior or attitudes was to create a certain amount of tension. This tension would require behavior or attitude to change to relieve the stress. The *Color of Fear* presentation did just that. I recall some of our most popular and well-respected faculty members complaining that the day was one of our worst opening days, that we should have had an uplifting experience, and not one that was such a downer. I realized that, with those comments, that I had made the right decision. We had follow-up workshops throughout the rest of the year. The first one drew over 50 people, which was extremely large in comparison to other types of follow-up workshops. One of my only regrets is that I did not repeat this workshop, or have similar ones, for faculty and staff who were hired in subsequent years, to demonstrate the college’s ongoing commitment to diversity and its importance.”
- “Profound sensitivity to students who are from minority backgrounds is paramount if we are going to gain their trust and confidence and motivate them to succeed in school. Embracing this sensitivity enabled search committees to focus on selecting faculty candidates who not only have academic expertise and competence, but who have the mentality and skill set to successfully work with our neediest students. Our search committees had the integrity to also stop a search when it was clear that the diversity in the pool was below expectations.”

### Themes for Opening Day

- “The faculty and classified senate presidents, and a few administrators, and I usually brainstormed in a meeting or two on what a fun theme would be that ties in with our academic theme. We have had very good luck in identifying themes for which there is unique dress and music, so we can come in costume etc. Sometimes we look for something from the public arena for a fun theme that would reinforce our academic theme. For example, we used movie themes, such as *Seabiscuit* in 2003 and added an academic theme of *Cowboy Diversity*, to emphasize our diversity and our cowboy “out of the box” spirit, **and Back to the Future in 1996**. We had a 1940s theme to celebrate our

40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and coupled that with a new focus on *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. When the Internet began to explode, we did *Surfing the Web into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* to emphasize technology in our teaching and we went Hawaiian style. When we began campus construction, we did a *Lego Land* theme. All our academic themes revolved around student learning, success, outcomes, learning styles, and curriculum. However, this very dynamic and spontaneous planning process was a challenge for our last accreditation visiting team who wanted to see a “diagram” or flow-chart of our planning process. We all tried to explain that our planning was a confluence of ideas and not a sequential event. We were innovative, but sometimes difficult for traditional minds to understand.”

- Our 2022 Opening Day repeat of *Back to the Future* is a demo of how my fading memory did not recall it was a repeat, but then, who is still around from 1996 except me? And thus, I have come full circle....

Best regards,

**Bernadine**

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