

Email from Meredith Heiser re: 2016 Commencement Celebration

From: Meredith Heiser
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 9:18 AM
To: Nick Tuttle; Patrick Morrissey; Kathy Perino; Richard Morasci
Cc: Steve Batham; Kathryn Maurer; Lisa Drake
Subject: RE: Faculty speaker

Nick, I want to say respectfully to you and the commencement committee that I don't view this in any way as an equity issue. If anyone from the classified ranks were kept out of shared governance then that would be surely be an equity issue. Graduation is in a different category. It is a symbolic event which honors teaching and learning, an activity which primarily involves students and faculty and the college president.

Graduation has fundamentally always been about faculty conferring degrees (not other members of the university/community college)--I don't think that is just true of Foothill. That is not meant to disrespect other administrators or classified staff, but it is simply a reflection of academic tradition and the expectations of students and parents. I don't see any problem with including non-tenured faculty although they might feel worried about endangering their tenure--that is a choice they can make. I would have other concerns about part-time faculty but we could discuss those separately.

In the end, we will see who students nominate and the Senate will continue play its role with "advice and consent." I would really suggest if the commencement committee plans to go ahead with this very different approach that they should come and address the Academic Senate explaining the rationale in more depth and they should also speak with ASFC.

This would be a significant change and I think it needs to be debated in a shared governance body, not a committee which only reports to the president--maybe at a later point, there should be a joint meeting with the classified Senate. I also think you would be best advised to run this through PaRC, at a minimum, which includes classified staff, administrators, faculty, and students. If this is a good idea, you should have no problem getting by in from these groups.

Meredith

Dr. Meredith Heiser
Foothill College
12345 El Monte Rd.,
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022