Dear FHDA Faculty Department Chairs:

Our Academic and Professional Matters (APM) committee, consisting of Chancellor Miner, Academic Senate officers, the college Presidents, VPs of Instruction, and FA President, have already begun collaborating to design our 2019 District Opening Day schedule.  District Opening Day will be held at Foothill College on Thursday, September 19 from 7:30-4:30 PM.  Time has been allotted in the afternoon (1:00 – 4:30 pm) for department faculty to meet with their counterparts, (or close counterparts), from the other college. This idea arose from a suggestion by discipline faculty. As your elected academic senate leaders, we're excited and optimistic that this will give us much needed time for critical cross-district collaboration.

It is no secret that California Community College faculty are facing tremendous challenges as we work to meet the needs of our students. This is a time of rapid changes in technology, the Bay Area economy, and community demographics. We're also being asked to make changes due to new data about how our pedagogical and curricular practices impact student success. As faculty district-wide have struggled to meet these demands, many have told us that meetings with district department counterparts would be helpful to collaborate on pressing issues such as:

* planned/scheduled course offerings for 2020-21 academic year and beyond
* opportunities to align course curriculum, particularly for sequenced courses, that would make it logistically easier for students to complete their degree/certificate requirements within the district
* degrees, certificates, and course pathways that are offered by both colleges' department counterparts
* the local impact of statewide initiatives such as AB705, Guided Pathways, and Vision for Success, California Virtual Campus - Online Education Initiative.
* evolution in our understanding of how students learn, and how we can most effectively facilitate their learning via different modalities (F2F, hybrid, online) and pedagogical strategies
* evolution in fields and industries that we prepare students for, and how departments respond to these changes
* strategies for outreach/marketing to build student understanding and interest in majors, degrees, certificates, and course offerings
* other issues/matters as the departments determine

Departments may choose to meet separately to attend to campus-specific business from 1-2:30PM and then meet jointly with district department colleagues from 2:45-4:30; alternatively, district department faculty may choose to meet jointly during the entire 1-4:30PM block. No matter which option you choose, we will arrange appropriately-sized meeting spaces at Foothill, so no need for you to worry about room logistics. Also please note that opening District day is a negotiated Flex day. All full-time FHDA staff and faculty are obligated to attend. Part-time faculty will be compensated for attendance; check with your Dean for details. Lunch will be provided.

At this time, we would appreciate your help in doing the following:

1) Take this information to an upcoming department meeting and discuss possible agenda items; subsequently,

2) Reach out to your counterpart (or close counterpart) department chair at your sister college to begin planning a jointly set agenda for the District joint department meeting.

3) Let us know that you have connected and whether you plan to meet separately first, or to meet jointly during the entire 1-4:30PM block. We will then work on securing Foothill room(s) for you.

If you are not sure who your near-counterpart department &/or chair might be, please also reach out to us.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns regarding these new joint District-wide department meetings.

Sincerely,

Karen Chow, De Anza Academic Senate President (chowkaren@fhda.edu)

Isaac Escoto, Foothill Academic Senate President (escotoisaac@fhda.edu)

Carolyn Holcroft, FHDA District Academic Senate President (holcroftcarolyn@fhda.edu)