

Open Letter to Foothill College's Academic Senate

To Foothill College Academic Senate,

As **student advocates**, we believe it is important to reach out to Foothill College's faculty leadership and communicate our stance as the students you all serve. There is much **racial unrest** in our very own homes right now, **which affects all of us**. We hope that you are responding to the current national crisis with urgency and care in acknowledging the current events. As Academic Senate, you all represent Foothill College's leadership, and we hope that you operate **with the goal of shifting the culture of colleges toward a mindset of success for all students** and moving the needle on student completion and closing educational attainments gaps.

Foothill College's core values are honesty, integrity, trust, openness, transparency, forgiveness and sustainability. Foothill College's purpose is to provide access to educational opportunities for all with **innovation and distinction**. President Nguyen reached out to Foothill College students in the "**Black Lives Matter at Foothill College**" letter expressing her concerns for students' wellbeing as well as committing her work to **racial equity**. It was disappointing that we have not received an official statement from Foothill College's Academic Senate of faculty commitment to racial equity. We hope that you can also mirror President Nguyen's sentiments and make an effort to work towards racial equity as a **learning opportunity** with our faculty.

We believe that there is a consensus amongst students that their school should be addressing the current situation. We suggest taking action to show the support of our goal of racial equity with the following:

- Educators need to address topics such as systemic racism, social activism, and service leadership in classrooms. We believe these discussions can take place across disciplines and should be addressed not only in classes with a more obvious association to racial inequity, but even in disciplines such as STEM. The students in these courses, who will eventually go into health and STEM careers, need to be prepared to address equity and be anti-racist in their fields.
- The Umoja program's curriculum emphasizes African American culture, experience, and history- this curriculum should be present in other English, history, literature, and philosophy classes that are not a part of the program. Hearing diverse perspectives is monumental in shaping our views against anti-racism.
- History classes should accurately address uncomfortable topics such as the unjust slave history that precedes this country, as well as conversations about movements fighting systemic racism such as Black Lives Matter. Racism can only be effectively countered through education- the mission of Foothill College as an institution.

- Our sister school De Anza has a robust intercultural studies program, with course offerings such as: [Race, Ethnicity and Inequality](#), [An Introduction to African American Literature](#), [Asian American Experiences Past to Present](#), [The Chicano/a and Latino/a and the Arts](#), and [Native American History](#). These courses are not offered at Foothill, thus limiting the perspectives of these backgrounds. Students benefit from seeing their culture and ethnic backgrounds represented in the classroom, and studies suggest that the relevant subject matter encourages students to be more engaged in the coursework. We ask that you have a plan to offer similar courses at Foothill for the future and perhaps eventually create a new Intercultural Studies department, by addressing this in the Equity Plan 2.0.
- The aforementioned Equity Plan 2.0 needs to be revised and put in motion- equity is of utmost importance for our institution, especially being in one of the most diverse areas of the country. To truly cater to all students of diverse backgrounds, this Equity Plan needs to be carried out- words need to become actions.
- We also must ensure that the faculty and staff of Foothill are adequately trained and educated in regards to implicit/ unconscious bias, systemic racism, white supremacy, white privilege, and social activism. We are asking that all faculty and staff are educated on these topics in a mandatory training session. The training sessions should be a 2 hour mandated event for two days. There should also be a panelist of students speaking to faculty in regard to their experiences in the classroom and on campus.

Overall, we believe our college would benefit from receiving an official statement from our Academic Senate, addressing our concerns stated above. We would feel reassured and proud to attend this college if we were reaffirmed of our faculty leadership's commitment to equity and diversity.

Thank you for your continuous hard work in leading Foothill College's faculty. We would love to further discuss ways we can work together to further advocate for racial justice at Foothill College. Feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

In Solidarity,

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