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Dear Colleagues,

I've just submitted (with two hours to spare!) my final grades, so I want to take the opportunity to update you on the work of the Senate this fall. As many of you know, it's been a busy semester.

Perhaps the greatest time engagement has come with three working groups, on Academic Planning, Budget Policy, and School Restructuring/Reorganization. Each of these in different ways represents two of the Senate's goals, and each contributes to building our campus in two ways. The first is providing the campus with the faculty (both number and location) and the policies and infrastructure we need to effectively serve our growing campus. The second, equally important, is further integrating the Senate into planning processes, and thereby building stronger collaborative relationships with the administration.

Senate engagement with the administration is taking place elsewhere as well: there is now an Academic Governance Cabinet, where senior academic leaders meet with the Divisional Council and school executive committee chairs to address key challenges. We're still working out how best to use this group, but regular conversation helps avoid surprises – which is everyone's goal. Kurt Schnier, the Vice-Chair of the Senate, and I have also met almost weekly with Provost Peterson. These weekly meetings have helped us anticipate challenges and find solutions.

Of course, there is lots of other activity. Some of the highlights include a new Philosophy major that will be available this January; Graduate Council (GC) is reviewing proposals for four new graduate programs; the GE Subcommittee of Undergraduate Council (UGC) has been working on implementing the new GE curriculum; UGC and GC are implementing a new course request system. Finally, we are getting ready for our accreditation review, with the site visit scheduled for the end of February.

On the systemwide level, there has been extensive discussion of the fallout from last year's state audit. The [Senate website](#) has links to the Moreno report, commissioned by the Board of Regents; it also has links to the statements by President Napolitano and the Chair of the Board of Regents. The Academic Council (all the division chairs in the system, as well as the chairs of key systemwide committees) continues to discuss the best response by the faculty to the situation. Our priority is ensuring the integrity of the University, as well as its ability to advocate for the resources we need to pursue our mission of teaching, research, and service.

I hope that the semester break allows you all rest and relaxation. I look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

Fiat Lux,

Susan Amussen, Chair
Merced Division of the Academic Senate