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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION
TOM HANSFORD, CHAIR
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March 26, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Much like the Spanish Inquisition in a Monty Python skit, no one expects a pandemic to wreck the semester. I am deeply appreciative of the resilience, flexibility, and goodwill with which all of you are approaching these challenging circumstances. As this Spring Break winds down and you prepare to resume remote engagement with your students and colleagues, I'd like to emphasize a few things:

- Please be careful not to impose unreasonable expectations on yourself when transitioning to remote instruction. To quote Dylan Rodriguez, my counterpart at UC Riverside:

These teaching adjustments are temporary ones. Treat them as such... We do not need to magically transform ourselves into YouTube or TikTok stars! We just need to get through this period as functioning teachers. Don't pressure yourself to produce the equivalent of serial TED talks, Academy Award-winning documentaries, or high profile Netflix specials.

- I want to reassure you that the Senate is in constant communication and coordination with our administration and with the systemwide Academic Senate as we continue to respond to the various educational needs caused by the impacts of the Coronavirus.
- We are still working out of some of the details of how the rest of the semester will play out. Please be patient! You will hear from us soon on issues such as possible changes to grading policy and the delivery/proctoring of exams. We are particularly indebted to our Undergraduate Council for their continued efforts to develop and modify an [Emergency Course Continuity Policy](#).
- In recognition of the impact of the transition to remote instruction, disruptions to our labs and research activities, and general disturbance to our everyday lives, our Committee on Academic Personnel [issued a statement](#) about taking these unprecedented disruptions into consideration when evaluating future merit and promotion cases that encompass the activities of this semester.
- Finally, it will likely come as no surprise that the Spring Meeting of the Merced Division (on May 7 at 3 pm) will be convened remotely. Please plan to "attend." After all, Zoom will be second nature to you by this time!

Thank you for all that you have done, are doing, and will do amid a time of profound uncertainty and change.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at senatechair@ucmerced.edu

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Tom Hansford".

Tom Hansford
Chair, Divisional Council