

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD  
MERCED, CA 95343

August 18, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

My term as Senate Chair concludes today. I would like to thank everyone who served on Senate committees during this unusually challenging and unpredictable year, particularly the committee chairs and members of Divisional Council: Asmeret Asefaw Berhe (D&E Chair), Michael Dawson (At-Large Member), Maria DePrano (LASC Chair), Carolin Frank (FWAF Chair), Erin Hestir (At-Large Member), Linda Hirst (CoC Chair), Patti LiWang (CAPRA Chair), Josué Medellin-Azuara (At-Large Member), Jesus Sandoval-Hernandez (D&E Chair), Michael Scheibner (CoR Chair), Jay Sharping (UGC Chair), Lin Tian (P&T Chair), Nella Van Dyke (CAP Chair), Christopher Viney (CRE Chair), Jan Wallander (RCAP Chair), and LeRoy Westerling (GC Chair). I am also very grateful for all the hard work done by our outstanding Senate office, including Fatima Paul, Simrin Takhar, Naoko Kada, and Melanie Snyder. An emphatic, special “thank you” goes to Robin DeLugan, who has been a terrific Vice Chair this year and, as of August 19, will assume the role of Chair of the Academic Senate. Along with her incoming Vice Chair, LeRoy Westerling, Robin brings a wealth of Senate experience, competence, and leadership skills. The Senate will be in great hands!

I would also like to thank our administrative counterparts. In my Welcome Letter, I claimed that shared governance continues to improve on our campus. The onset of the pandemic could easily have led to backsliding, but Interim Chancellor Brostrom, Chancellor Muñoz, and Provost Camfield continue to manifest the belief that we are all in this together and that our campus is at its best when Senate and Administration work together. I am deeply appreciative of their willingness to solicit, listen, engage, and respond to Senate input, even under the most trying circumstances.

I must admit I am less sanguine about the role of faculty in governance at the systemwide level. It is hard not to see a pattern in how the Regents approached the Senate this year. From the rejection of the recommendations made by the Senate taskforce on standardized testing, to the minimizing of the Senate’s role in this year’s search for a new President, to the bylaw revisions that reduce the role of faculty in future Chancellor searches, it is apparent that the current Regents may not be convinced of the utility of Senate input. I would encourage future Senate leadership to work on strengthening the Senate’s relationship with the Regents and making the case for the value of faculty contributions to governance.

Fiat Lux,

Tom Hansford, Chair  
Merced Division of the Academic Senate