



UNITED FACULTY

of the Contra Costa Community College District

CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE

DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE

LOS MEDANOS COLLEGE

August 14, 2020

Dear 4CD Trustees:

On behalf of our district's 1500+ full-time and part-time faculty, United Faculty commends the 4CD Governing Board for the forthright nature of the Board's recent self-evaluation. We are writing, however, to express our concern that the Board's acknowledged divisions, including members failing "to treat one another with respect and civility" and to "behave in accordance with the Board Code of Ethics and other District policies and procedures," have distracted the Board, politicized important recent discussions, and led to decisions that may ultimately harm students, employees and our colleges.

The Board's recent decision not to renew contracts for our vice chancellors of finance and human resources, for example, risks undermining good labor relations and destabilizing our district during a period of crisis, which would be bad for students and all employees. We ask that the Board reconsider and takes steps as soon as possible to extend contracts for all senior administrators whose performance records and evaluations so warrant.

As you know, our district (including managers, staff, faculty and especially students) has benefited for more than a decade from sustained labor peace and a general spirit of collaboration and partnership between constituency groups. In our most recent collective bargaining agreement, following productive but often difficult negotiations that included both vice chancellors and with the support of the 4CD Governing Board, we addressed many long-standing issues, from distance-education policy to academic freedom to pay inequity (especially for part-time faculty). We raised salaries without sacrificing excellent employee health benefits. And since the start of the Covid19 crisis, our vice chancellors and interim chancellor have worked in partnership with faculty and staff to make prudent and appropriate decisions. We do not always agree with senior management, and we have many issues yet to resolve. But we find our district's senior administrators to be transparent and honest, well-informed, and willing to work with faculty leadership to solve problems. The relationships we have built are helping us to navigate current challenges, and we ask the Board to recognize the value of keeping those relationships intact for the present.

We are facing a moment of multiple crises when our ability to work together in a spirit of cooperation has never been more important. As you know, we are facing:

- a public health crisis (with many hard decisions still to be made);
- a human-resources crisis (with many of our employees losing assignments and income upon which they were counting this fall);
- an economic crisis (with bad budgets looming on the horizon);
- an enrollment crisis (with demand down despite high unemployment);
- an educational crisis (with many hundreds of faculty and many thousands of students planning for all-online classes for the first time);
- a social-justice crisis that should have us reviewing all our policies through an equity-lens;

not to mention long-standing issues such as our over-reliance and exploitation of part-time faculty and our district's need to review and improve how we handle misconduct investigations.

Addressing these issues will require focus, hard work, and collaboration between all constituency groups. This is not the time to be changing our senior management team, especially when we are all working productively together.

None of our district administrators is perfect. We do not always reach consensus, and there are areas where fresh perspectives are needed. UF fully supports and has long advocated for a complete review of hiring and evaluation procedures for managers in our district to improve diversity and accountability.

Equitable accountability, however, requires clear evaluation criteria and due process. In the case of our vice chancellors, their evaluations clearly support renewing their contracts. Their track-record of working through difficult problems collaboratively with constituency groups clearly supports renewing their contracts. The public, politicized non-renewal of their contracts serves only to undermine confidence in our systems and to make of 4CD a less attractive place to work.

Our part-time faculty unfortunately know all too well that one can work hard, get great evaluations, and still be laid off (or in official-speak, not rehired) without explanation. But this lack of job security for so many of our professors is one of the great weaknesses of our system, and something we have been fighting hard to change. Let's not begin to extend a lack of job security to everyone else!

We urge the Board to start addressing the issues your self-evaluation reflected and to reconsider at the earliest opportunity renewing the contracts of Vice Chancellor Dio Shipp and Vice Chancellor Jonah Nicholas, so we can get back to solving the multitude of matters that need addressing during these difficult times without distractions and with the confidence that our Board fully supports good labor relations and productive, interest-based collaboration among constituency groups.

Sincerely,

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President, United Faculty of 4CD

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