



LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE
FOR
TOMORROW

YOUR VOICE

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LAURIE HASSOLD
Faculty, Orange Coast College
SCULPTURE

Fossils From the Future:
What secrets would these petrified clocks share about our current Anthropocene Era paradise, the in-between period that may be humanity's long, last day in the sun?



DR. DING-JO H CURRIE
Director - LIFT

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Ding-Jo H Currie is the distinguished faculty of higher education leadership and founding director of Leadership Institute for Tomorrow. She is former Chancellor of Coast Community College District.

We are excited to share LIFT Your Voice with you in learning about the diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and best practices of your loving work and service.

Leaders are found at the heart of every human being. Leadership Institute for Tomorrow – LIFT – develops new generations of extraordinary multicultural leaders who own change agency, uphold justice, and value character and integrity. We aim to include the voices of classified professionals, faculty, and administrative leaders.

Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez’s “Moving the Needle on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Anti-Racism” anchors the mission *LIFT Your Voice* as the launchpad for the spirits of the brave, radical, strong, diverse – but also those silent voices who have yet be heard and take flight.

LIFT honors the arts as universal power tools to connect, express, and influence people’s experiences,

dreams, and aspirations. In this edition’s front cover, we feature the artwork of sculptor Laurie Hassold, a faculty member at Orange Coast College in Southern California’s Coast Community College District.

“Fossils From the Future,” in Laurie’s words, “captures the imagination of cross-breeds that traverse social, biological and psychological barriers, and reconciles the alienation I feel between humanity and the natural world.”

And we remember an unsung hero of the recent past with Pam Walker’s tribute to her dear friend and leadership colleague Denise Swett. In Denise, we honor the groundbreaking legacies of all our predecessors, whose work we echo and model after.

We welcome your reactions, and your suggestions for future voices. May your 2022 be lived with the utmost joy and peace in fulfilling your leadership passion and purpose.

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FRANCISCO C. RODRIGUEZ

*Chancellor
Los Angeles Community College District*

Leadership matters, and our time to lead is now.

For those of us who have the audacity and courage to call ourselves educators, transformational leaders and change agents, the anticipated threats to higher education's traditional tenets of access, equity and affordability are real. The Covid-19 pandemic has intensified inequities and shined a bright light on health and economic disparities, especially for the most vulnerable students, who were already under-resourced before the pandemic.

While California's economic recovery is much stronger than early projections, the recovery has been lopsided, favoring those who are educated, employed, connected to technology, housed and insured, and worsening the environment and conditions for those least capable of navigating it. Many of those in the "worse" category are the students and families whom we serve at Los Angeles Community College District and at community colleges nationwide.

Basic student needs, such as food security, housing, employment, mental health, technology, and emergency aid needs have increased and disproportionately affected underserved groups that make up the lion's share of our students. Our urgent clarion call is to do things differently.

At LACCD, we are using our "Framework for Racial Equity and Social Justice" as a district-wide effort focused on taking action to root out racism and internalize anti-racist policies and practices across the nine colleges. The framework embodies the values of our organization; it directs specific actions and commitments to create conditions for the colleges and district to actively build anti-racist organizational capacity and resilience, and embrace a more socially and racially just academic community.

Why does it matter? Because inconsistent leadership and lack of consensus on issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism impact the performance of underprepared and under-resourced students.

Without a major shift to be anti-racist in higher education, our profession further bifurcates and passively perpetuates inequality and educational disparity. We run the risk of furthering the very inequalities and disparities that we seek to eliminate, unless we have frank dialogue about power,

privilege and positionality; who teaches and what we teach in our classrooms; and an examination of our own leadership praxis.

So, what can we do? Leading by example means making structural and permanent changes to root out the ill effects of racism and bias from our classrooms, our curriculum, and our workplace. Here are some ideas of what we can do to show up when it comes to modeling diversity, equity, inclusion and embedding anti-racist practices at our colleges:

- 1. Leadership Starts at the Top.** Set a positive tone and consistent example for the organization when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion issues.
- 2. Make Diversity, Equity and Inclusion an Institutional Priority.** The hiring, promotions and advancement of diverse employees at all levels, followed by key investments to advance and embed diversity, equity and inclusion practices, is the most dramatic and visible demonstration of our commitment. Start with reviewing and revising current policies that promote your district's core principles and practices. Are such principles reflected in key documents and statements? The need for support and allyship from the governing board and key constituencies in this work is also essential.
- 3. Build and Sustain Mutual Trust and Respect.** Ultimately, the institutional success and the collective impact facilitated by trustees and CEOs and carried out by key constituents are inextricably intertwined and interdependent. It starts and ends with mutual trust and respect, and is short-lived without it.
- 4. Lead by Example.** Take personal responsibility for your public actions and behaviors when engaged with your professional role as trustee, CEO or educational professional. Those we serve are paying close attention to our actions, our statements and behaviors and are assessing whether our actions are consistent with our intentions. The call for transparency and accountability has never been stronger and more necessary.
- 5. Language Matters.** Craft, adopt and use language in your policies, key documents, websites and social media, and at public meetings that is empowering, aspirational, inclusive and anti-racist. Say what you mean and follow-up with what you say. Also, listen respectfully to the concerns and recommendations of others; it is perhaps the most important communication tool.
- 6. Create a Safe Place.** "Culture eats strategy for lunch," it has been said. Encouraging and facilitating constructive conversations on these topics takes courage and can

be risky, depending on the culture and history of the institution, but is essential to creating institutional and psychological safety and situational awareness, to shaping culture and moving the needle.

7. **Disaggregate the Data.** By breaking down your student enrollment and performance data and your employment data, especially among faculty and administrators, disparities, gaps and opportunities for improvement are likely to emerge. Build a coherent and monitored strategy to address these gaps and disparities with clearly stated goals and timelines, and invest in its success.
8. **Grow Your Own.** Investing in the professional development of district employees to be culturally proficient and responsive can result in the best outcomes for shaping and sustaining an institutional culture that improves student outcomes, grows a diverse staff and faculty, improves the optics of your district, and lowers the exposure and liability of your district.
9. **Acknowledge Success and Reward Results.** Diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racist work is a journey, not a destination.
10. **Show Up.** Use the authority and influence you possess and never disavow your personal agency. Your narrative is value-added. Advocate with intention, clarity and purpose.

Lead as Yourself.

Bring your whole self – all of your identity – to the table, not just the parts that make people feel comfortable or accommodated. As educator-activists we must be deliberate and purposeful in educating about equity and anti-racism. We must acknowledge that racial equality and social justice shows up in how we build our schools and colleges, how our streets and colleges are policed, and who has access to education, healthcare and jobs. Developing, trusting and using your leadership voice and ethos can serve as an inflection point for transformational change at our colleges.

As a community college leader, displaying consistent, authentic leadership can be your strongest and most effective asset. In these delicate and at times racially-charged roles, taking the lead, using and positioning your leadership voice and ethos on principle and strategy can lead to significant institutional progress.

Lastly, if you bring a change agenda in whatever capacity you hold, expect to be criticized, thwarted or even threatened professionally, no matter the color of your skin or gender. Never underestimate the resistance to change. And because of that potential for sustained impact, it is worth whatever criticism and consequences may arise. Yes, it can be laden with fear and ambiguity, but do it anyway.

Our students deserve nothing less.



AJANI M. BYRD, PH.D.

*Dean of Institutional Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
Chief Diversity Officer
Foothill College, Los Altos Hills, Calif.*

Life is about transitions: Leaving the comfort of home for the first time, graduating from college, landing the first job, making a first major purchase – transitions can propel us into uncertainty.

No crystal ball can predict what lies on the other side of change, and that can be scary. One can look at the possibility of changing jobs with two distinct mindsets: Opportunity or Threat. Whichever approach one leans into, it won't be without some level of trepidation. Even the most resilient among us, those who seem to have it all figured out, are not immune from self-doubt. I am no exception.

Over the past nine years, each transition brought its own set of challenges, moving from the California State University

to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, then to the West Valley-Mission Community College District in Saratoga and now Foothill College in the Bay Area.

Many applications never materialized into interviews. For every interview, countless employers never called me back. I suffered from imposter syndrome, battling my inner dialogue at every rejection. It was getting increasingly difficult to continue applying for positions that I knew I could do. My mood was changing, and I could tell I was becoming increasingly cynical. I needed to change my approach.

Today, I better manage the stressors that accompany deciding to leave an organization and then interviewing by understanding my sphere of influence and knowing my personal career agreements – my PCAs.

Understanding my sphere of influence helped me through job application processes without being tied to the outcomes. To be clear: Not being wedded to the outcome does not mean that I do not want the position; rather, it is the realization that I can only influence a limited aspect of the recruitment process.

I can control what I submit in my application packet; I cannot control how the committee reviews my work. I can prepare for an interview by doing research and answering questions completely; I cannot ensure that the committee will like my answers or believe I am the right fit for the organization.

By letting go of what I cannot control and accepting what I can, I free myself of the pressures of being perfect. This mindset has not only transformed my approach to interviewing, but also how I protect my mental wellbeing.

A mentor once told me that a career is a marathon, not a race. Don't go chasing money and fancy titles. Rather, seek out new experiences as you build the skills you need for your next position. When it is time for you to lead, you will have the foundation needed to succeed.

Inspired by Don Miguel Ruiz's "The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom," my PCAs help me reflect and determine whether my position is serving my needs. My three personal career agreements – feeling valued, having the opportunity to grow professionally, and making positive change – have developed over time, and have helped me self-reflect and prioritize what is important to me as a professional.

First, feeling valued is essential. If organizational values divert away from the ideals I subscribe to, if a supervisor does not acknowledge my feedback or if my contributions are not received with the same level of consideration as my peers, it may be time for me to go. Moreover, if I am asked to be the de facto voice for all people of color on campus or if racial microaggressions go unchecked, my future at the college will be in doubt. What refills my cup is knowing I

am a valued contributor to my organization, and that my identity as an African American will not be tokenized or used to placate those with political agendas.

Next, I subscribe to a growth mindset ideology. I religiously seek out opportunities to learn and receive feedback to

refine my craft as a scholar-practitioner. Though I have a tenacious desire to learn and grow, my internal locus of control can only take me so far. I need others to be invested in my growth as a professional, specifically my supervisor.

If I am going to continue to evolve as a professional and be the best version of myself for my team, my college and the students I serve, I need to be exposed to experiences that will challenge my intellect and sharpen my skills. Being a part of an environment that encourages creative risk taking, without fear of retribution or backlash, allows me to think more creatively while also giving me the latitude to inspire my team to dream even bigger.

I need a supervisor who supports independent decision making and provides constructive feedback, rather than a manager who seeks codependence as a control mechanism. Professional growth is critical to me because I have a hunger for knowledge that needs to be continuously fed, or else I begin to feel complacent. If so, it may be time for me to go.

Last, I am purpose driven and believe in contributing to the common good, so I need to believe my work is meaningful. Whether that is with program participants, uplifting my staff around me in support of their professional goals or serving on campus-wide committees, finding value in my work is critically important to me. I enjoy creating new programming.

DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION BEST PRACTICES



JERMAIN PIPKINS, Ed.D.,
DEAN OF STUDENT SUCCESS,
DALLAS COLLEGE

Proactive Advising for Black Students

Based on research conducted on two campuses to examine Black students' experiences and engagement in proactive advising, these best practices for supporting Black student success are recommended:

- Provide proactive advising for Black students that encompasses relational and developmental advising components;
- Diversify your campus and assign same-race advisers;
- Train non-Black advisers to build meaningful relationships with Black students;
- Increase personable student interactions with proactive advisers.

For more information about the study, contact jpipkins@dcccd.edu

I deliberately seek out opportunities to improve upon antiquated systems. I want to see my community succeed. If I am not able to see the fruits of my labor, it may be time for me to go.

These three PCAs help me determine if my core professional values are being met. Each transition over my career was initiated when one or more of my personal career agreements were not being fulfilled. Knowing my professional needs has helped me maintain my mental health, while also searching for new job opportunities with a clear conscience.

I share my mindset and PCAs because instead of seeing job transitions as threats, I now welcome them as opportunities to explore and become the professional I want to be.

This shift in mindset did not come over night; rather, at the guidance and support of mentors and my tribe. I consider myself privileged having the opportunity to learn from

mentors and others who I have admired from afar.

As an African American administrator in higher education, I am often the exception and not the norm in the room during meetings. This sense of isolation is frequently the same whether at conferences or other networking events.

Finding mentors who share many of the salient identities I hold dear has not been easy. Acknowledging that there are far fewer people of color who are available to mentor others, I freely share this information to uplift folks who may not have had the same access that I have been afforded.

Embracing Michelle Obama's words, "When you've worked hard, and done well, and walked through that doorway of opportunity, you do not slam it shut behind you.

"You reach back, and you give other folks the same chances that helped you succeed."



I recently moved to an apartment two blocks from Skid Row in downtown Los Angeles, a place synonymous with homelessness and poverty. Nearly 5,000 homeless people live there, yet I didn't know much about the Skid Row before I taught classes at the California Institution for Women, a state prison in Chino.

One of my inmate students was born and raised on the streets and experienced horrible things I could never fully understand.

Needless to say, I learned much from my teaching experience at Chino.

Teaching in prison made me walk into the prisoners' world. My previous world was like day and their world was like night, just like Chinese yin and yang. As an educator spreading Chinese language and culture in the United States, my job is to increase mutual understanding, promote interaction, and take practical actions to eliminate prejudice and discrimination.

I personally witnessed the power of cross-cultural communication. For three hours per week, I taught 12

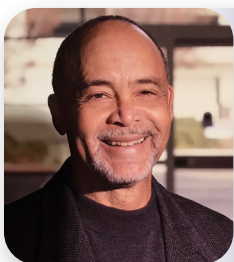
Chinese culture topics to prisoners in English. One semester later, a student said with emotion, "I used to deeply misunderstand the Chinese and their culture. What we have learned is not only Chinese culture, but also our culture. We are one family in the United States."

Confucius once said, "Teaching and learning grow hand in hand" [jiao-xue xiangzhang 教学相长]. Like all of his sayings, this one is very wise, but is vastly open to multiple interpretations. To me, it simply means interaction: Teaching without constant feedback from students may lead teachers to lose touch with those we attempt to teach. Not knowing how our students are digesting the information sent their way, how can we succeed in making learning happen?

Learning, in the Confucian sense of the word, is a multi-directional activity. As our students learn, we the teachers, must always be aware that we are also learning from our students.

My prison teaching taught me that the key to success lies in interaction – frequent and in-depth interaction in all contexts and with everyone who is involved in the learning process. I have no doubt that I am not only a better instructor from this experience, but also a better human being.

My only hope is that my students experience the same kind of life-changing personal growth that I have. Together we can change the world for the better, one meaningful interaction at a time!



JEROME HUNTER

*Retired Distinguished Lecturer, College of Education
California State University, Fullerton*

My full-time career in higher education began in 1974 as a classified employee at Santa Ana College.

I was assigned as the affirmative action representative to a screening committee for a support position in Disabled Student Services. During the deliberations, it was clear that the committee members had an able-bodied part-time employee who was heir apparent to the job.

Although I did not have a vote on the committee, I was able to help them understand that having someone with a disability in the position would communicate volumes to the students. After the deliberations, the committee recommended a young lady in a wheelchair.

I learned that one can have power without authority.

Later in my career as a college president in San Diego, I faced resistance from some teachers in my attempt to improve the diversity of the full-time faculty. The opinion expressed to me was that they were “educators, not social architects.”

The local chamber of commerce complained that students coming from community colleges, although technically competent, were not able to communicate across cultural lines. I was able to use this concern, and the faculty accepted their role in preparing educated students who were comfortable with diversity in peer and leadership positions.



DANIELLE MAJAM-FINCH

*Program Advisor
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Female Asian American Pacific Islander leaders in higher education institutions share many critical issues. The intersection of race, ethnicity and gender presents unique challenges.

My 2021 study, “Breaking Barriers and Changing the Narrative: AAPI Women Leaders in Higher Education

I learned the value of using outside resources.

As the chancellor of a large community college, the issue of LGBTQ+ rights was one of great emotion and sensitivity. With encouragement from a faculty group, I used my monthly message to state strong support for all students and employees despite their romantic orientation. The message stimulated membership in campus student support groups. I moved forward with this communication despite recognizing that some members of my board did not share my position. It is sometimes necessary to do the right thing even without universal support. Looking back, I believe that the actions outlined above were successful due to environments that exhibited trust, a shared vision and open communication.

I am not confident that these three factors exist to a high degree in organizations today.

People today appear to be less willing to accept opinions that vary from their own. External information is disregarded by questioning its source and individuals advocating unpopular positions are ostracized to a higher degree than in the past.

Successful leaders in the current environment must work harder to understand the ideological support system of peers and subordinates, and be prepared to accept that their interpretation of a situation may not be the only one.

According to recent articles, it is now necessary to establish a higher level of trust for individuals to accept the validity of outside information.

The job of advocating for improved equity and inclusion has never been easy. It is more difficult in the current environment of multiple realities, poor communications and rampant mistrust. However, current leaders must summon the courage to steadfastly do the right thing, even without universal support.

Leadership,” reveals that dispelling Asian woman stereotypes, balancing family expectations and professional goals, strong mentors, and hard work influenced by immigrant roots are all components that AAPI female leaders use to advance through and transform their institutions.

These dynamic factors are essential to AAPI women transcending complex barriers within their institutions, and highlight unique challenges that these women face as they advance within higher education.

As colleges and universities embrace equity and inclusion, it is essential to advocate for proportionate representation among senior leaders. I recommended equal employment opportunities to create, retain, and sustain diverse employees. In addition, I recommended mentors, either

formally or informally, to build and stimulate personal growth and institutional change. Also, provide professional development programs specifically aimed at AAPI women to empower and diversify leadership within higher education – and continue to address the equity issues of representation and retention.

My final recommendation was to create a family-friendly culture backed by policy, to provide support for AAPI female leaders as the primary caregivers within their families.

Doing all this will reinforce the commitment to the career mobility of AAPI women.

AAPI women have revealed polar extremes that have been perpetuated throughout every industry: AAPI women are either hyper visible or invisible, according to Dina Maramba of Claremont Graduate University's School of Educational Studies. They are either too quiet or too loud. They are either extremely empathetic or too cold and businesslike.

The one polarized example which they do not reflect are leader or follower. It is my hope that my study has demonstrated that AAPI women can be strong, effective leaders in whatever capacity they choose. As educational leaders who work tirelessly for just, equitable, and inclusive practices, it is our responsibility to see them, advocate for them, and watch them transcend.



Remembering DR. DENISE SWETT

Dr. Denise Swett, who died of cancer at age 67 on October 17, 2021, touched many lives during her 38 years in higher education, including four years as a LIFT mentor. Starting in administration at University of San Francisco (where she was also a doctoral student), she became dean of student services at Chabot College in Hayward. She then held student services vice presidencies at Cañada College in Redwood City and Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, and was adjunct faculty at California State University, East Bay, in Hayward. Denise's colleagues remember her:

Meeting Denise

Fall 1994 was our first course of a doctoral program at the University of San Francisco. Denise and I sat next to each other in a classroom on the Lone Mountain Campus.

The course was organizational development and we considered aspects of guiding people, understanding behaviors, and developing teams. By the time the course ended, I had a lifelong friend and professional colleague. I witnessed an “activist educator” emerge, and our journey from that time would be about supporting others and driving change!

– Senior consultant for PPLPros and retired executive vice chancellor for educational programs and services, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Denise as a forward-thinking leader

When Denise had a new idea, she got me involved. She'd call and say, “I've got this new technology program that will really help students and I think you should join me.”

There are few college administrators who see system deficiencies and then go find the answers. Telereponse was one of those great ideas – or as we used it, as the “ASK program,” and it was a game changer. Now most colleges have “bots.” Just saying Denise was ahead of her time.

– Pam Walker

Denise and her humanistic approach

Denise never lost focus on college goals, but more importantly she always remembered to care for the people she led.

Denise mentored so many and, with me, well she made my dreams come true. I came here from another country and had many life challenges raising my family, but I wanted a career in higher education. Denise saw things in me that I didn't see. She sent me to LIFT to learn from others, and then continued to guide me. I have always believed her to be both "realistic and a dreamer" of what higher education leaders should be. My dear Denise was such a rare jewel.

Ever since starting my undergraduate degree in '92 as a first-generation student of color at USF, and now a doctoral student, Denise Swett or "D" sees me. D approaches all students with a humanistic and wellness lens best described by Maya Angelou, the American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Denise embodies this meaning through her invisible labor and promotion of intra-connected and interconnected relationships where all students, especially those who have been marginalized, feel valued and part of something bigger than themselves.

– *Nazy Galoyan, dean of enrollment services at DeAnza College in Cupertino*

Denise as a lifelong learner and practitioner

Since retiring, Denise took on several major projects supporting companies and organizations that championed causes she believed essential for community colleges. Her advocacy regarding mental health supported telemedicine, professional development had her providing a wonderful organization called Innovative Educators with material affirming contributions for national distribution.

Denise always saw the "light" in everyone and everything. This light was her beacon for direction, and our beacon to her that led to sustained connections across the state and country to individuals and companies deploying the absolute best for students.

I had an opportunity to hear the author Wes Moore speak at an Achieving the Dream Conference years ago. One thing he said never left me: "When it is time to leave, make sure it matters that you were here."

Denise's legacy lives on.

– *Sylvia Dorsey-Robinson, retired vice president of student services, West Hills College in Lemoore.*

Caring for students

Denise Swett used education to reimagine a world that values the experiences and lives of all people, but especially Black, Indigenous, and other students of color.

She somewhat followed the wisdom of author Herbert Kohl: Students "do not care what we know until they know that we care," because we always knew that Denise cared.

And borrowing from the poet Audre Lorde's use of anger, what Denise did for us was liberating and full of enthusiastic energy. Denise responded with anger regarding issues around social justice, leadership, and radical equity because she knew it was time for everyone to step up and do better!

– *San T. Lu and Gail Rulloda, professional staff, Napa Valley College*

Conclusion

And so if we believe in the impact of our friend, colleague and mentor Denise Swett, then we must continue to tell Denise Swett stories and live in the essence of her ability to sustain partnerships with organizations and people. If we do this, then it means her voice will long be heard. It is our collective love and experience with Denise that allows for us to make room for others.

– *Pam Walker*

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O N T H E C O V E R



ARTIST LAURIE HASSOLD

My sculpture imagines “Cross-breeds” that traverse social, biological and psychological barriers, in an attempt to reconcile the alienation I feel between humanity and the natural world. The marriage of rock, bone, tree and flesh attempts to bridge the divide between life and death. Once living, but now bonded to the earth between millennia of geological layers, they have become fossilized voyeurs that bear witness to the evolutionary parade.

We excavate skeletal remains to discover the mysteries of our biological past, but what if it became possible to discover fossils from the future? What secrets would these petrified clocks share about our current Anthropocene paradise, the in-between period for humanity's long, last day in the sun? Will there perhaps be a stain from the collective human drama for future species to study, and will they be able to unlock the secrets in our bones?

Laurie Hassold, Orange Coast College art faculty, lives in Costa Mesa, California where she shares a home and studio with her husband, painter Jeff Gillette. Selected museum exhibitions include Confronting Mortality with Art and Science, Historic Halls of the Antwerp Zoo, Antwerp, Belgium; The Shack Show, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, California; Extreme Materials II, Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, New York; and Peace on Earth, Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, California. She exhibits her work nationally and internationally and is proud to have sculptures in the collections of Guillermo del Toro; Suzanne Vielmetter; the Sam Maloof Sculpture Garden and Begovich Gallery.

