

Dear Laura,

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to respond to the Faculty Senate's most recent declaration.

I value Stockton's tradition of cooperation and agree that trust is essential to every working relationship. During my three years in office, I have endeavored to embrace both of these ideals and to create opportunities for dialogue. It saddens me that there are members of the faculty who have a different interpretation of my leadership style. I appreciate, however, the Senate bringing faculty concerns to my attention, so that I can work to improve communication and collaboration moving forward.

Ensuring that faculty feel supported and prepared to do their best work is at the center of academic success. There are, of course, many ways in which to do so. When administration and the faculty union last extended the coordinator's agreement, it was understood by all involved that changes to our structures could make for a stronger, more effective academic enterprise. When I designed an example of organizational changes, which I shared with the campus community this fall, it was with these ideas in mind.

It is clear to me now that it is time to rethink my approach. Consequently, as was announced earlier today, SFT and management have agreed to extend the first section of the coordinator's agreement for another year. This section of the agreement governs Undergraduate Program Coordinators and Track Coordinators, Interdisciplinary Minor Coordinators, and Graduate Degree Coordinators. Doing so will provide more time for us to find the best ways to work together.

It is my hope that together we can form a collaborative steering committee, assess current institutional needs, share research about leadership models, and reflect on the findings of the Faculty Senate Task Force on Faculty Leadership Positions. This additional time will also offer an opportunity to renegotiate those faculty leadership positions outlined in the remaining portions of the coordinators agreement in light of this ongoing research and discussion, and ensure that these positions are ready to go into effect by fall of 2020. I look to the Faculty Senate to provide guidance on establishing a collaborative process.

This has been a challenging term, and I appreciate that conversations about faculty leadership and possible new structures have taken place against a backdrop of unrest. Please know that I have heard your message. It has caused me to pause and reconsider how we approach this important work. There are still critical and difficult questions in front of us, but we are much more likely to reach decisions that can be broadly understood and supported if we work together to, as you note, "collectively shape a more promising future for Stockton."

I think that with further dialogue, we can find common ground and I welcome that opportunity.

Lori