STATEMENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
(Read at the June 11, 2018, meeting by Board President Bruce Swenson)

The Board would like to make a statement in response to email communications we have received from faculty and students regarding negotiations over compensation with the Faculty Association. We have decided to respond to all emails in a public and open manner rather than responding to individual emails.

We believe it is entirely appropriate that members of our community communicate with us and appreciate the effort they have taken to express their views. We understand the frustration and agree with many of the points made in these communications.

Nearly all the emails, even those that are sharply critical, have provided well-meaning input. However, several emails lead us to believe that some faculty members are not fully informed about the status of negotiations.

For example, several comments assert, "...the district is not willing to discuss any action on a one-time cost of living increase for faculty and staff..." That is not accurate. The District has communicated clearly it is willing to continue negotiations on salary increases and remains open to doing so.

The Board, district management, the FA, and all of the other employee organizations share an interest in providing salary adjustments, both to honor the work of District employees and to maintain salaries competitive with other Bay Area community colleges. We have the highest regard for the quality of the district’s academic and classified professionals, as well as its administrators. We know the outstanding reputation of our colleges rests on the high-caliber work done by our employees and understand that this is critical in attracting and serving the students who come to us.

Community colleges up and down the state are experiencing enrollment declines. For us that has meant almost certainly the largest structural budget deficit in the District’s history, projected at more than $17 million per year under the current state funding formula. Such a large deficit will inevitably lead to loss of programs and support services in the coming year, including the projected elimination and associated layoffs of more than 100 positions.

Making the decisions required to balance the budget is extremely difficult for everyone. The District is fortunate to have budget reserves to mitigate impacts and provide stability as we phase in our multi-year budget reduction plan. Prudent use of our financial reserves gives us the time to make this transition smoother and restructure our District in a way that continues to ensure quality and maximizes our ability to maintain an environment attractive to students. As in years
past, the District’s ability to fulfill its mission is contingent on effectively managing its resources. Our mission is on the line as we take on this enormous task.

A key factor in the timing of any compensation offer is clarity on the fiscal year 2018-19 state budget allocation for our District. The Governor’s FY 2018-19 budget proposal includes a new allocation model for funding all California community colleges. While the newly updated model may provide short-term benefits of one-time dollars for our District through application of the “hold harmless” funding that is included, if current declining enrollment trends continue, it could have severe adverse consequences for our District in the long run beginning with the 2019-2020 fiscal year. This model gives cause for great concern among community college districts throughout the state and may be altered after initial implementation in the 2018-19 budget year.

The state budget conference committee met on Friday to act on the proposed agreement. Following the committee’s actions, the budget will be presented to both houses of the Legislature for approval, with a deadline of June 15 for their actions. If it is approved, it will be presented to the Governor for his signature. We will not have a final definitive picture of funding for our district until that time.

Once the final budget is released with the governor’s signature, the Board will be better positioned to make informed budget decisions, both on salary and other allocations. We appreciate the urgency of a timely resolution of this issue. On June 18 the Board will hold a special closed session to further refine the District’s directions regarding negotiations. The Board is committed to uphold the standards of civility and respect found in Foothill-De Anza’s culture and values, and we hope all partners do the same.

In closing, the Board recognizes that while the District is going through a difficult period of enrollment declines and budget reductions, its employees are foundational to Foothill-De Anza being an outstanding educational institution. We greatly respect and value the contributions district employees make and want to continue to honor the high-quality work they do. We look forward to working together to serve our students, address our enrollment issues, and once the state budget has been finalized, to make informed decisions on our shared compensation concerns.