



# President's Communiqué

FROM THE DESK OF THUY THI NGUYEN

## Plato's Critique

On Friday, professors **Sam White**, **Tracee Cunningham**, **Kimberly Escamilla**, and **Dokesha Meacham** along with **Andre Meggerson** and I joined ten students from our Umoja learning community at the annual Umoja conference.



One of the sessions was about the history of hip hop. The presenter was a community college counselor, and he talked about how Black culture invented hip hop that became an international cultural phenomenon. You may have seen my tweet of a student beatboxing — that is, with just his voice and

the microphone. Check out the amazing beat!



The session reminded me of my philosophy class at Yale in the 90s when hip hop was arguably at its height. I had heard then about a professor who was writing a book on how Plato would have criticized rappers for corrupting the minds of the young, similar to Plato’s critique of the poets for corrupting the minds of the young with their writings of gods doing immoral acts. As a philosophy major and fan of Plato, I found it disconcerting that Plato would criticize hip hop (a culture that I grew up in). I decided to take her course which was an exploration of her thesis. Half-way into the course, I raised my hand and said: Plato criticized the poets for fabricating stories about the gods, yet rappers often argued that their art form revealed the truth about what was really happening in Black communities around the country. Can the truth corrupt the young? As far as I know, that Yale professor never published such book.

Foothill’s Umoja students asked me if we could have something like that conference session at Foothill whereby students could tell their truth, their stories through hip hop. One student asked to me whether I would permit him to really speak his mind. He said he has a lot to say, as he is going through a lot in his life.

Are we ready at Foothill College to hear such truth from our African American students during our next “porch talk”? Many have expressed how they feel invisible.



Our session on “porch talk”, and Board of Governors member **Valerie Shaw** at our session.

Hip hop continues to have incredible influence on the young – including my own. Earlier today (Saturday), my family and I went to the YumeCon organized by Foothill College’s Anime Club. My daughter rapped and my son beatboxed in the background while both were wearing their anime costumes – quite a juxtaposition aurally and visually!



Video game room for YumeCon in the Toyon.

### **Dinner & A Show: Thursday, Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>**

Speaking of art and reality, our Theatre Arts program has a treat for us – a play about a populist candidate, promising to return the country to greatness, becomes president of the United States. Following last year’s successful evening of *Our Town*, the Theatre Arts Department is again offering a special FHDA staff performance of *It Can't Happen Here* on Thursday, November 9 at 7:30 pm in the Lohman Theatre. Tickets are free to faculty, staff and guests. To order your free tickets, email [theatreboxoffice@fhda.edu](mailto:theatreboxoffice@fhda.edu) or call 650-949-7360. All seats reserved.

Dean **Nanette Solvason** is helping to organize a no-host dinner before the show. Meet your favorite Foothill colleagues at Opa’s and enjoy Greek food at 5:30 p.m., Nov. 9th for a no-host dinner (325 Main Street, Los Altos). Then it’s back to Foothill College by 7:30 p.m. for the free showing of “It Can’t Happen Here”. Professor **Bruce McLeod** said the show is looking “pretty strong . . . have a great leading man and strong group of students.”

Order now for best seats!

**IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE**  
by SINCLAIR LEWIS  
adapted by TONY TACCOONE  
with BENNETT S. COHEN

To order click here!  
Tickets: \$5-\$20

November 2 - 19 only

A populist candidate, promising to return the country to greatness, becomes president of the United States, and then all hell breaks loose in *It Can't Happen Here*. This new play based on Sinclair Lewis' eerily prescient 1935 novel, couldn't be more timely!

"Deeply relatable. Harrowing"  
- *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Thrilling and grim. An argument for journalism as a basic pillar of democracy."  
- *The New Yorker*

A cautionary satire, *It Can't Happen Here* follows a liberal, middle-class newspaper editor who watches in disbelief as an unlikely candidate making wild promises becomes President. He trusts the system will fix itself - until it all comes crumbling down.

"A story of the indomitable spirit of those who can't simply stand by and watch this happen." - *Mercury News*

Tuesday is one year since the U.S. Presidential Election. You may recall our great team of political science and sociology professors conducted a panel discussion after the election and the room was packed. Well, the team is back for the one-year review this upcoming election day – Tuesday, Nov. 7th.

Political Science and Sociology Faculty discuss

## President Trump: A Year after the Election



Leighton Armitage, Political Science  
Patricia Gibbs, Sociology  
Mark Harmon, Political Science  
Meredith Heiser, Political Science  
Kurt Hueg, Business and Social Science Dean (Moderator)

**Tuesday, November 7, 2017  
12 – 1:30 p.m.**

**Foothill Hearthsides Lounge (next to Bookstore)**

Enjoy your extra hour! Mine was spent happily writing to you.

Of Service,

Thuy

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