



# President's Communiqué

FROM THE DESK OF THUY THI NGUYEN

## Happy New Year - 2018, A Year of Civic Engagement (Service Leadership)

Happy New Year, Foothill College!

Hope are having a fun, relaxing winter break.

Most people across the political spectrum described 2017 as “worrisome,” “chaotic,” or “hellish” while a smaller number described it as “great”, according to an online survey reported by The Hill.

For me, 2017 was not a normal year in our country – to say the least.

*fires, north of us...fires, south of us.  
hurricanes on the mainland...hurricane on the island.  
mass shootings...massive protests.  
on the field, taking a knee...online, twitter storm.  
hate speech...free speech.  
banning travel entrance...threatening dreamers' exit.  
climate change...change in political climate*

Some of you may have seen my tweet on New Year's Eve.



Foothill President  
@FoothillPrez

New Year's Resolution: must not let 2017 be the new normal.

Newton's first law - Every object in a state of uniform motion tends to remain in that state of motion unless an external force is applied to it. ❤️🇺🇸

12/31/17, 8:29 AM

Yet what is the role of higher education (in general) and Foothill College (in particular) to be the positive change we want to see in our country and in the world?

Foothill College's *Mission Statement* defines our role with strong language such as "empower students," "democratic society," and "global citizens."

*Believing a well-educated population is essential to sustaining and enhancing a democratic society, Foothill College offers programs and services that empower students to achieve their goals as members of the workforce, as future students, and as global citizens.*

Foothill College's mission is grounded in the principles of civic engagement. As we celebrate Foothill's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this academic year with 60 *Service Leadership* projects, keep in mind that the *Service Leadership* initiative includes civic engagement. Remember Foothill's nine Science Marchers last year: "Science not hate, makes America great!"



Our strategic objective this year is to implement a new college-wide theme (brand) of *Service Leadership* whereby each student at Foothill will have at least one opportunity to harness his/her leadership skills

through service projects within the college community, locally, statewide, nationally, or globally.

**Background:** The college's Education Master Plan states, in part, as a goal: "Strengthen a sense of community and commitment to the College's mission" through efforts to "encourage student participation in leadership and activities outside the classroom (including service/work-based learning) that engages students with the College and the community."

Foothill identified *Community/Global Consciousness and Responsibility* as one of its four core competencies (4-Cs), Institutional Learning Outcomes: "Social perceptiveness, including respect, empathy, cultural awareness, and sensitivity, citizenship, ethics, interpersonal skills and personal integrity, community service, self-esteem, interest in and pursuit of lifelong learning."

Foothill's *Service Leadership* initiative creates a college-wide theme for such efforts described in these various planning and mission statements of the college. The initiative also creates a common thread among existing activities on campus, while increasing the number of such activities college-wide and ensuring that each activity identify with intentionality the student leadership learning outcomes.

For the past 60 years, Foothill College has been serving the college and larger community through various service projects. These projects become opportunities for students to learn about the world while developing their leadership skills.

During the December – February 2017 period, I introduced the initiative at PaRC, Administrative Council, and Managers College. I also facilitated a half-day meeting of college leaders interested in the topic whereby 100% of those in attendance and 87% of the management team at a subsequent Managers College meeting agreed that the college should embark on such *Service Leadership* initiative.

### **Why is Service Leadership important?**

Throughout the years, Foothill College has earned a strong reputation for academic excellence and innovation. Nationally, Washington Monthly's 2017 ranking placed Foothill College #3 in the country for community college education.

Yet the skills needed to succeed has become more focused on leadership, soft skills such as emotional intelligence, interpersonal, growth mindset, grit, and teamwork. Even within the career technical education programs at community colleges, employers have consistently ranked non-technical skills (i.e., 21<sup>st</sup> Century Competencies) as critical for hiring and advancement in the workforce. Our students also need to have a strong sense of community and build community as they navigate work and life.

A by-product of the *Service Leadership* initiative is two-fold: 1) students feel more engaged with a stronger sense of a community (which leads to student success and equity); and 2) the local community sees the value of Foothill College as contributors to the community (bringing "community" back into community college) and is thus more likely to support the college financially.





As I reflect on 2017, these images of Foothill come to mind — with many of them being images of our students doing Service Leadership projects, including civic engagement activities.

How can we increase civic engagement at Foothill College? I would love to hear your ideas!

If students are currently doing civic engagement work, please let us know. We want to highlight civic engagement projects for our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Check out pictures of what we have so far: #60for60 <https://www.foothill.edu/60yearsofservice/>.



Thank you, Foothill for the joys of 2017. Look forward to seeing you in 2018!

Of Service,



Thuy

*Thuy Thi Nguyen*  
President  
Foothill College

650.949.7200  
*Twitter:* @FoothillPrez  
pronounced: <https://name-coach.com/thuythinguyen>  
12345 El Monte Road  
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022