



CalPolyPomona

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Dear Colleagues,

It's been just over 100 days since I began serving as your Dean of the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences. These few months have been a time of intense learning and listening and my affection and admiration for students, staff, and faculty of CLASS has continued to grow. While there have been changes in University leadership, my faith and certainty that I am in the right place is unchanged. At CPP CLASS, I get to work with innovative and engaged teachers and scholars, curious and intrepid students, and dedicated and expert staff. Nowhere is without obstacles, and nowhere else has the capacity to overcome those obstacles with intellect, humor, and collegiality. I am grateful and appreciative for the gracious welcome offered to me. You've given me your time in department meetings, come to the Dean's Office, had patience with my questions, and shared your concerns and goals. Your honest conversations are a gift through which I can continue to learn about the strengths and challenges of CLASS and CPP.

As I reflect on these first few months, I want to emphasize the values that guide my leadership approach: transparency, inclusivity, and optimism.

Transparency is essential to justice. Transparency can bring constructive conflict, as assumptions are surfaced and questioned. In my meetings with departments, chairs, faculty, and staff, I have made it a point to share what information I have and be transparent about the principles that will guide my decisions. While I may not always be able to bring good news, I will do my best to provide accurate and authentic information. One result of this approach can be found in our newly created Professional Needs/Development funding document accessed through Faculty Resources SharePoint link on our [CLASS>Contact Us page](#). This document, and other documents in that folder, resulted from intentional collaboration with faculty, staff, and chairs. Through that same collaborative process, we will continue to streamline and institutionalize practices, provide everyone with equal access to important information, and ensure that guidelines are applied consistently.

I have met many strong advocates for diversity, equity, and inclusion in CLASS. However, while individuals can advocate, we must also embed diversity, equity, and inclusion into all our processes, structures, and aspirations. To that end, I have begun reviewing the accomplishments led by the [CLASS Strategic Plan](#) and will be asking for your help in identifying those accomplishments. Our next step will be creating a new plan that considers the current external environment, recognizes our strengths, and lays out new aspirations that both call out and integrate diversity, equity, and inclusivity. If you are interested in sharing your experiences of the previous plan or contributing to the 2025-2030 plan, [please share your interest here](#).

As I look towards the rest of the semester, I am excited to learn more about our people and our programs. I have met with new faculty, chairs, college committees, department staff, Academic Senators, lecturers, student leadership, [Dean's Circle](#) members, and many other faculty leaders. I've stood in rooms packed with students at the [Ahimsa Center](#) open house and student research forums. In every space, I have learned about provocative, innovative, and community-engaged scholarship and pedagogy, including study abroad, internships, and [PolyX](#) courses. Staff and faculty have voiced deep concern for our students, and everyone vibrates with impatience to bring back the sense of community of pre-COVID days. In addition to on-going collaborations, I have seen opportunities for new partnerships that will enrich CLASS. I look forward to meeting with the rest of the departments and joining your events, including attending performances of [Love and Information](#), [music](#) performances, World Philosophy Day, [GIS Day](#), [CLASS Council](#) events, and thought-provoking speaker presentations. Meetings with all of you are the highlights of my days and each conversation feeds my optimism.

While this has been a period of learning, we have also begun taking actions to address immediate concerns. Under the leadership of Associate Dean Brienne Dávila, CLASS has new intentionality around recruiting first-time students to our majors, with the goal of increasing the number of students who apply to our programs by November 30. In addition, with the chairs, we are doing a deep dive into the College instructional and operational budgets to understand how we can fund our strategic priorities. Finally, with our new communications specialist, Ashley Bagwell, we are broadcasting our contributions and accomplishments across the campus and to our community of supporters. This messaging is one step towards building new collaborations that place CLASS at the center and bringing resources to CLASS. The [CLASS Kudos](#) newsletter and [Bronco Launchpad](#) represent the beginning of our work. Please share your work and events [here](#).

In closing, I want to return to my comments from our first day together at the fall conference. As participants in the higher education mission, we can provide immediate and meaningful solutions to the epidemic of loneliness and prepare our students to solve the world's long-term problems with empathy, creativity, and brilliance. Thank you for your physical and intellectual presence and your contributions to the "friction and flow and fluency and friendship" of a vibrant academic environment. I am honored to be your colleague and I look forward to continuing to work with you towards our common goal of helping all students succeed.

Kind regards,


Camille Johnson