The Senate regrets not being able to receive Board Chair Tamez in February, and we wish to formally extend our condolences to her and her family for their loss. We do wish to extend her an invitation to join us in March, if she desires.

The Faculty Conference on February 6th was a tremendous success, judging by the amount of positive feedback we have received. We want to again thank those members of the Administration who attended (led by Chancellor Maldonado, Senior Vice Chancellor Zamora, and Vice Chancellor Beatty, as well as Interim President Burillo of Southwest College). We also would like again to publicly thank our guest speaker, Jo Ann Fleischauer, for making the keynote an experience we’re still discussing today. And naturally, we want to thank Trustees Capo and Glaser for joining us early on a Saturday morning.

Every member of the Senate remains committed as individual faculty to the Wildly Important Goal of increasing student success, and we are busy within our respective programs working towards that end. As a body, the Faculty Senate remains committed to its own Wildly Important Goals of upholding shared governance and maintaining academic rigor, both of which readily support the Imagine HCC 2019 vision. In particular, we are pleased that Dr. Beatty is taking time to listen to faculty with regard to the faculty contracts, and we look forward to her return visit to the Senate in March, when she will update us and receive the Senate’s input on the subject. We are also very close to being able to put out our survey on academic rigor to the faculty, which will serve as our touchstone for our effort to make HCC a compelling place to learn.

Now I’m painting a nice picture here, and there’s a lot of good going on, but many of you know that there are some issues that have consumed more than their fair share of the Senate’s time and energy lately. It’s often said that “culture eats strategy’s lunch every day,” and we are finding out the truth of this. Trustees and administrators alike, let me bend your ear on what’s dragging faculty morale downward.

What’s holding us back now are processes. Let me give you two examples. More than a few of you are aware of the extreme heartburn the Senate endured over making the Faculty Conference happen. We hold this event every year, and yet every year it becomes a giant headache, as if we’ve never done this before. To me, this makes no sense. The travel process is another sore point with faculty. I’ve learned that difficulties involving travel affect high and low alike. Many faculty feel discouraged, despite the Administration’s generous grant of professional development monies for things like travel. Some faculty are even declining to attend local events because of the headaches involved in the approval of travel.

It all comes down to processes. I know that Dr. Maldonado shares the Senate’s concern that innovation is being stymied by “the same old, same old” from the people who are supposed to be supporting the college’s mission and the faculty who carry out that mission. When his administration signals that the time has come for the processes to “get with it,” the Senate hopes that the Board will give its whole-hearted support. We all want to make the college great, but that means some things need to change even more than they already have. The Senate is hopeful that this sort of transformation comes sooner rather than later.

Thank you.