

Good Morning SBCC Colleagues,

This will be my last Things to Know and Ponder! Tomorrow morning Dr. [Erika Endrijonas](#) takes the helm of the college as the Superintendent/President. I am very excited for her and for SBCC ... as I have hope for all of you in becoming the college you are meant to be. Just as humans are works in progress, so are colleges, especially 109-year-old colleges.

Sometimes we have to experience a cycle of renewal and I believe SBCC has been moving through a significant period of pain and renewal, and while not perfect, it is part of a growth cycle. I hope you will continue to build the strength and sense of pride and purpose you once had, only as a more equitable, diverse, inclusive, accessible, and anti-racist institution of higher education.

So, the plan is that I am on contract as the Interim Superintendent/President until September 6, 2023 which will be my final day. President Endrijonas and I have a month overlap for me to finish some important items, and to help her transition smoothly. As I have been reading about successful CEO transitions, the importance of clarity of the roles is critical. Dr. Endrijonas and I have chosen to work together as a bridge from my leadership to hers. So some important things to know:

- She takes the front and center voice of the college as President on Tuesday, August 1, 2023.
- I will be where she wants me to be, and we have already agreed to some warm hand-off meetings with the groups that have requested a warm hand-off.
- Dr. Endrijonas will move into the President's Office, and Paulmena will do her scheduling effective August 1, 2023.
- I will do my own scheduling except for joint meetings and some leftovers Paulmena is working on. If you wish to connect with me starting tomorrow morning, please just email me directly and when I am on campus in the Institutional Research Office. As a reminder the president's office has been short staffed since March 2022 just like many other areas, so please be kind to Paulmena and Rita.

**So here is a revision of my comments at my last Board of Trustees meeting,** July 20, 2023, one of the most stressful and sad Board meetings of my life.

I have given a lot of thought to what I would say here tonight, as this will be my last board meeting with you and hopefully ever. I have never served as an Interim President so this was a new experience! And I also have never been in the situation we have found ourselves in today.

First let me say, it has been an honor serving with the entire Board and all the College constituencies, and especially the students.... So many of you will be in my heart as I retire. I cannot say enough about how our students deserve the very best SBCC we can be.

I want to take this time as I am leaving the Board and the College to share a few thoughts about my experience the last two years.

As a college president most people who know me, know I believe respect has to be at the heart of collegial and democratic processes. I firmly believe we can work through most anything if we listen and are respectful of others. We all fall down to meeting our highest aspirations, we all make mistakes, and most of us take responsibility for our actions, get back up and try again. That is the best part of learning to be a better person.

As the Interim President, I was aware of and expectant of the fact that I would have challenges, and that I was hired to move SBCC to help realize its great potential again. I will say I did not expect to find how bad systems and processes were. And the lack of accountability was very disturbing, especially the way people treated each other ... wow. So my job changed a bit, as the realization was we needed to do some deep accountability, processes, and systems work. I feel that I focused on that job, and it has created both positive and some negative feelings toward me, as well as having negative and positive impacts, and I can live with that as you don't become a college president to make friends, you become a college president because you care about students and the future of our communities, country, and world and our job is to grow future leaders. Sometimes the [Paradoxical Commandments of Leadership](#) hold a ring of truth in these jobs.

I have always prided myself in staying to my high standard of ethics when dealing with all those I report to and to those that report to me (and as I have learned pride is a double-edged sword). As I noted earlier, respect is critical to working effectively in a college and to ensure a democratic society. The way Board members treat their CEO and each other flows down through the organization. And the way I, or the college leadership flows down through the organization. That includes constituency leaders and leaders all over the campus. We must all hold ourselves accountable and each other accountable for the culture we want to live in.

And employees ask the question, "Why am I being held accountable when a Board member is allowed to be disrespectful to other Board members and the CEO?" "Why can a faculty member make a disrespectful comment to a classified employee, administrator, or another faculty member and get away with it?" "Why can an administrator make disrespectful comments to an employee and get away with it?" And those are really good questions. My favorite is how people treat the employees and leadership of human resources... What ever happened to lead by example? Accountability matters.

In my history of colleges I have also never seen the level of classism and racism that exists in a college as I have at SBCC, and for me that is deeply sad. Unfortunately classism, racism, and antiblackness are fed by the structural systems of higher education and we must intentionally seek to break them down. The amount of [othering](#) that goes on at SBCC is deeply disturbing considering our job is to create the conditions for student belonging, success, and achievement. Fortunately this toxic behavior is not the dominant culture, and it is an oppressive underlying culture and behaviors that keeps the college from excellence because it eats up the resources, time, and energy from all of us. When the college is engaged in chaos, it is not focusing on its students, vision and mission...

**And what gives me great hope is that the majority of the faculty, staff, leaders, and Board care deeply about SBCC and students and want to work in a culture that supports employees and students.** Three years of COVID and eight years of extensive national divisiveness have taken a toll on all of us. And it is time to take this awesome college and make it the institution of higher learning that it can be, should be. Your community and students deserve this. And so do you.

And I leave you with a couple of my learnings for leadership:

- (1) Just because it is, doesn't mean it should be.
- (2) You can never realize true diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and anti-racism when there is no accountability. Bullies will continue to oppress the people who are fearful to speak up.
- (3) We will make mistakes, hurt others, and mess up, and as leaders we must get up, apologize, learn from our mistakes, and try again.
- (4) Oppression is learned and we must unlearn it.
- (5) Perfection is one of the tools widely used as a way to deter equitable practices ... and reinforces oppression.
- (6) DEIAA work "the work" is deeply personal and we have to know our own biases, check ourselves and our impact on others. An awesome leadership goal is to be a better leader today than you were yesterday.
- (7) Integrity and respect are essential leadership skills
- (8) Gratitude is essential.
- (9) When you change the diversity of a group you change the conversation and you will make better decisions as the diversity increases.
- (10) Leadership is hard, requires intentional bravery, and is a very fulfilling experience.

Again, I sincerely thank you for your support, love, gratitude, and caring the last two years. I have such an appreciation for the Board of Trustees, the committed and dedicated faculty and staff that truly care about Santa Barbara City College and the students and faculty and students we serve. You have amazing students, needy students, and students who need every ounce of your time and support you can give. Many of you will be in my heart, in my text, in my email, and some of you have braved Facebook with me. My text and mobile and text are in my signature and SBCC will be part of my heart .... **corazón. Please be kind to each other, it only takes an extra moment.**

Congratulations Superintendent/President Endrijonas! I know SBCC will be a better college because you will be here.

In community,

Kindred