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As we prepare for the upcoming semester, it seems appropriate to begin the year with a brief reflection on learning itself, a topic of hot debate going all the way back to Plato's Republic. There are many ideas out there about the means and ends of a good education. For instance, thousands of years after Plato, John Dewey offered his own educational credo in an essay entitled "**My Pedagogic Creed**." In this 1897 statement of beliefs Dewey writes: "I believe that much of present education fails because it neglects (the) fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life." Given our mission at the community college, this notion of community-based learning seems right on target.

Of course, Dewey also offered less popular ideas about education. That's one of the challenges, '*education*' is many different things to many different people across various time periods, forms of government and cultures. This is also one of the challenges the Academic Senate faces as we embark on an exciting new initiative this Fall 2019 semester as a result of Resolution **S19-A** carried at the April 4<sup>th</sup> senate meeting. This faculty resolution, passed unanimously, calls for "a robust transformation of institutional culture at all levels to adequately redesign programs and processes, pedagogy, and strengthen student supports" and offers support for the creation of a teaching and learning center.

Given our dedication to academic and professional matters, the Academic Senate looks forward to working with other constituency groups to pursue such a place dedicated to doing our jobs with excellence.

In order to begin to foster faculty conversations this semester on what might be some of the emphases of a center for teaching and learning, there is a series of **Undergraduate Education Workshops** being offered to all full-time and part-time faculty. These workshops support collaborative curricular development across traditional academic disciplines and focus on instructional skills, learning models and innovative pedagogies which narrow equity gaps, help overcome educational barriers and motivate students to succeed through self-agency.

YCCD Board members are cordially invited to work alongside MJC faculty in these workshops as we explore our own beliefs and experiences regarding the best educational theories and practices and also work together to fulfill our college mission and support excellence in teaching and learning informed by the latest scholarship.

Perhaps Dewey's rather profound definition for *'educator'* is a good place to end; he writes: "I believe that every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth."

In this spirit, the MJC Academic Senate looks forward to an academic year of public service as we promote the growth of those we serve. We also look forward to working collaboratively with the YCCD Board to assure the dignity and quality of a public education, support the vibrancy of our community of learners and focus on the success of our students.

## **Handouts**

- Academic Senate Resolutions [S-19A](#) supporting a center dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning at Modesto Junior College
- [Invitation to Undergraduate Education Workshop Series](#) (Fall 2019)
- John Dewey's "[My Pedagogic Creed](#)" (1897)