



**Public Statement to the Board of Trustees on Full-Time Hiring
By Marilyn Kennedy, Orange Coast College, English Professor**

“Inspiration. Innovation. Graduation.”

Those are the words that grace the Coast Colleges’ district logo. Words that appear to symbolize powerful and deeply held values.

“Inspiration.”: Coast Colleges have, over time, *earned* their long-held reputations.

“Innovation.”: We attract the very best transfer students and the most academically competitive ones. How do I know this? I know this by teaching here, being aware of our reputation, but I also know this personally having taught at other local community colleges. Our As are the highest As—our students the most academically competitive--and when a student transfers from our District, that student carries a gold premier education to his or her four-year university.

“Graduation.”: We inspire and innovate students to learn deeply, then transfer and graduate from four-year colleges, many going on to become doctors, architects, social workers—the gold of our state and nation. Orange Coast College has had the highest, or near the highest, in transfer rates in California Community Colleges for a long time. Our colleges also offer the highest quality career and vocational certificates for those ready to move into the work world of health care, hotel management, culinary arts, and a list too long to detail here.

How have we *inspired, innovated, and graduated* the best and the brightest in California community colleges? One answer—our full-time teachers. A college is first and foremost, students and teachers--for a college is in name only without strongly committed teachers and students.

We have inspired, innovated, and graduated with our gold of rings: our dedicated and highly educated full-time faculty who take immense pride in their work, contribute the use of their own personal time to their students, and reach in their own pockets for school supplies and tools to ensure their students’ deepest and most profound educations and successes. These full-time faculty have the academic and economic freedoms to dedicate fully and solely to their colleges and students. These full-time faculty work tirelessly on college committees and

curriculum and classes, participate fully in shared governance, and keep current in their fields-- often being leaders at county or state levels.

However, this gold ring will lose luster as the full-time faculty diminish in numbers, revealing a counterfeit and cheaply-held together educational core beneath, one unable to dedicate fully and wholly to the colleges, lacking in academic and economic freedoms, held together with intangible promises.

We will not be able to wear our reputational gold ring forever—as that gold wears away with the dwindling of our full-time faculty.

Will we be able to *inspire*? Will we be able to *innovate*?

Let us not be misled by the annual, hollow cries that predictably declare there is “no money for hiring” even when an accounting trend analysis of the numbers at the state levels reveal a much different story—let us keep a vibrant, strong educational teaching environment.