



# President's Message on Election

November 11, 2016

Dear Berkeley City College Community,

I have spent the last few conversing with family, friends, and members of our Berkeley City College community, hoping that the results of the election will finally sink in. It will take some time for me, and I imagine for many of you, to fully process the election results and the impact they already have on our communities.

In only a few days, there have been national reports of racist, pro-Trump graffiti painted inside a high school, hijabs being pulled off young Muslim women, and other incidents. These reports are deeply disturbing because they are counter to our college's commitment to diversity, respect for everyone and each other, and understanding the many rich and diverse cultures that make our learning community one of the best in California, if not the world. The foundations of BCC's success as a center for learning originate in our diversity and in our respect for each other, our love of knowledge, education and collaboration, and to lifelong learning for everyone.

We are strongly committed to education for civic engagement and social justice. Our shared efforts will be needed more than ever, particularly in the next four years. While we may need to practice self-care and individually reflect on the uncertainty that Trump's presidency brings, we also must care about members of communities who fear how a Trump presidency may affect them. These include but are not limited to communities of color, women, religious groups, the LGBTQ community, seniors, disabled, immigrants and undocumented residents. How do we, as educators and students who are committed to practicing social justice, help our students and members of our learning community, engage in the inflammatory rhetoric and complex questions raised by this historic election? More importantly, how can we, individually and collectively get involved with and build networks that connect to movements that will defend the rights of those who are the targets of bigotry, racism, sexism, and hatred?

In the last few days, I have closely followed the protests that are taking place, with hundreds of students walking out of their classrooms and marching in protest against the President-elect. In our area, they are from Berkeley and Oakland High Schools, from the University of California and San Francisco State University. People of all ages are marching and expressing concern over this historic turn of events. People throughout the United States and from all walks of life taking

such action lifts my spirits and renews my hope that we can achieve a society centered around love, dignity, shared responsibility, human rights and justice.

These challenging times remind me of an observation by Rigoberta Menchu, Guatemalan human rights activist, who stated, "During my most difficult moments and complex situations I have been able to dream of a more beautiful future." We must continue to dream and nurture local and national protests, marches, rallies, petitions to sustain and strengthen our commitment to create a just and equitable world.

Please join me in supporting the efforts of BCC's Undocumented Community Resource Center at the Jose Antonio Vargas presentation from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Tuesday, November 15, 2016, BCC's Auditorium (ground level). This will allow us to come together as a community, to offer a space for all of us to heal and begin a conversation about the next steps we, as activists and allies, should take to support groups that a Trump administration could seriously undermine.

We will also plan and send information about future post-election Safe Space Reflection events coordinated by the Office of Student Activities and Campus Life. We must provide a safe space for sharing and active listening of diverse opinions and emotions.

In community spirit,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rowena M. Tomaneng". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Rowena M. Tomaneng, President