

Dear Cate Families,

The Mesa is busy these days. We remain in steady contact with the County of Santa Barbara as well as State agencies tasked with establishing guidelines for residential programs. We have been told standards will be published shortly that will have direct relevance to our planned on-site opening and we will share those as soon as they are available.

Aside from such outreach and discussions, we have a host of focused projects nearing completion. The Bothin bathroom is one of those, hardly earth-shaking news to many but likely a source of great excitement for the students in Bothin. Savage Dormitory is now complete and looks fantastic. The Sunset Bench area is being re-landscaped and augmented so that we can savor all the more that remarkable view to the West.

And our newest teachers to Cate are arriving and moving into their homes on the Mesa: Hannah Solis-Cohen joining the History Department, Parker Lawlor leading our augmented Computer Science offerings, Ge Song taking over our Chinese Program, and Maude Bond directing our College Counseling effort. Avani Shah, our Director of Marketing & Communications, who began her tenure on Monday, March 2 while residing off campus is also moving on to the Mesa. What a whirlwind few months she and all of us have had. Perhaps that is why we are so eager to look ahead and imagine rituals and interactions that are more familiar.

This summer, we also surveyed our alumni community, asking for feedback about their experience on the Mesa and how we can continue to create a more inclusive campus. Since Friday, June 19, 437 alumni provided their insight, and we have created an ad hoc working group of seven faculty that will analyze the data, and prepare findings for a report to be shared with the community in early September. We look forward to sharing the full details of our Strategic Plan for Inclusion, which we generated over the last 18 months and which we had planned to publish last Spring, but we want to be mindful of the rich feedback we are receiving. In the meantime, [here are our high-level initiatives and the strategies](#) we will use for their implementation. We look forward to presenting our completed plans, including deliverables, metrics, and timelines once we have ensured that our plans fully encompass and address the broad range of feedback we have received.

Like all great narratives, the story of our School is still being written. That is the great opportunity before us. It makes me think, too, of another great storyteller, J. R. R. Tolkien and an interaction he captured between Frodo Baggins, the burdened Hobbit destined to save Middle Earth, and Gandalf, the wizard who supports and guides him on his quest. Frodo is bemoaning his fate, wishing the responsibilities and challenges of the moment away. But Gandalf sees the struggle differently. He speaks of destiny, of forces in motion beyond control, and of things that are meant to be. "All we have to decide," he reminds Frodo, "is what to do with the time that is given to us."

And so we are, confronting the challenges that are within our reach, preparing for the experience we want and expect to build for our students, remaining agile in the face of an ever-changing health and

safety landscape, and building our capacity to deliver on our commitments. From the marquis projects like Booth Commons, to the remarkable expertise building of teams of faculty and administrators on everything from epidemiology to online instruction, to the ongoing construction of an education that supports and affirms each student, to the mundane but meaningful augmentation and improvement of all of our HVAC systems, we are preparing and making ready.

As we do so, we are noting the COVID-19 infection rates in California at last declining, and the energy toward opportunities ahead at Cate growing steadily. What is education, we ask? We are living it. And soon, we will live it together on this Mesa.

*Servons,*

Ben



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