

Hey Humboldt!

I hope y'all are thriving at midterm. I have been marveling over the last few days at how the energy that students have brought to their work this semester has buoyed me through the sometimes mundane tasks of academic life, reinvigorating my love for this work and this space after each class meeting. I feel incredibly lucky.

In terms of the Senate, this week Chief of Staff Mark Johnson will speak to the body about redrafting aspects of the University's Strategic Plan, with an eye towards aligning that document with the major institutional shifts that have taken place since its writing. In order to achieve this, he will be reconvening the initial authors of the Polytechnic Prospectus, as well as a representative task force of students, staff, and faculty, to work towards a document that will include Polytechnic benchmarks and aspirations, while simultaneously thinking about how other efforts on campus (such as the emerging Institutional Anti-Racism Action Plan) can help to define and refine our shared intentions moving forward. If you are interested in being a part of this process, please email your interest to senate@humboldt.edu no later than October 20th.

We have a number of items currently being addressed by our standing committees at this point, but none that are ready for first readings or votes. This is something of a lull before the proverbial storm, though, as we will be hosting presentations regarding Construction, Procurement, and Metrics for Contracting, a Report on Enrollment, and the drafting process for the aforementioned Institutional Anti-Racism Action Plan. There is a lot of stuff on our collective horizon, and I look forward to talking all of this through with you.

I am going to move my weekly "weird art thing" into the Senate-Meeting-proper this week, after we have completed Senate business. My intention here is to provide an opportunity for those who have conveyed that they are unable to attend during the time prior to the Senate meeting, but interested in making weird stuff, a space to make weird stuff, together. My overall commitment to pursuing these silly little interventions is a desire to experience joy with y'all.

In reading Paolo Freire's piece "Teachers as Cultural Workers" with students this week, I was reminded of Freire's insistence that if we free ourselves to "surrender to the joy of living, without having to hide the reasons for sadness in life", so that we can more deeply prepare ourselves "to stimulate and champion joy in the school", collaboratively forging "a school-adventure, a school that marches on, that is not afraid of the risks, and that rejects immobility...a school that thinks, that participates, that creates, that speaks, that loves, that guesses, that passionately embraces and says yes to life... not a school that quiets down and quits." So we're going to draw some monsters together, and probably giggle. We will do a lot of serious stuff, too, I swear.

Best,
jim