

Welcome & Introduction

Welcome and thank you for being here today.

Today is a day of celebration for our institution, to honor our history and traditions while glimpsing at the future with confidence and hope.

It is a day of reflection about the great leaders and the traditions that have brought us to this point. Today we begin a new chapter and I have the singular privilege of becoming part of our history while forging a path to our future. I acknowledge and accept the presidency of this college with deep gratitude. You've entrusted me with this leadership role and I embrace it with eagerness.

Thank you

No one arrives at a moment like this without the help and support of a great many people. Please indulge me while I take some time to acknowledge and thank them.

- To the Inauguration Committee led by Michelle Riggs for your months of work in making this a memorable event for me and for the campus
- To the Finkelstein Family for your generous donation of the land on which we sit and for your continuing support of our students
- To Our Partners for believing in us and for providing the time, talents, and treasures that are crucial to our students' success
- To Our Alumni for being part of the Crafton family and for the delegates here today who represent our 40 year history
- To Our Former presidents for your stewardship of the institution
- To Our Board of Trustees, past and present, for your commitment to the District and to the public we serve
- To My Crafton Colleagues – the Faculty, Classified, and Managers who are the strength of this institution

- To Kelly Bingham and Cheryl Cox for your unwavering support, your willingness to put up with me, and your friendship
- To My Senior Management Team for your wise counsel, passion, energy, dedication, authenticity, and humor
- To My Friends and Colleagues – from so many parts of my life – for your encouragement and guidance
- To Charlie and Kaylee for the reflections that I will remember for years to come
- To Yvonne for being a role model and an amazing sister
- To Gary, Eric, and Carl for being here as family today
- To Caroline and William for your great love of a working mom
- And most of all, to my husband, Patrick, for your understanding, leadership, and love – all of which have helped me grow into the woman I am today

Please accept my heartfelt and deepest gratitude to all of you.

My Path to Educator

The path that led me to becoming an educational leader has been filled with twists and turns. I didn't start out with the career goal of becoming a community college president. Now as I look back, I can see when the seeds were planted. One of my clearest childhood memories is of sitting on my grandparents' porch in El Paso, and my granddad telling me that no one could take your education away. My parents believed in education and always expected us to go to college, with full confidence that we would have meaningful careers. These positive messages about education were reinforced by my own natural love of learning.

As with many young adults, I had no clue what I really wanted to do and picked a major because it sounded good. At least three majors later at multiple colleges, I settled on psychology because I wasn't failing those classes and the topics were interesting. When I discovered that a bachelor's degree in psychology qualified me for a job in a pizza place, I floundered for a while and later made the decision to pursue a master's

degree in industrial/organizational psychology. This was a choice I have never regretted.

As a result of an internship during my master's program, my career path shifted towards organizational training and development, but these jobs were never completely gratifying. It wasn't until I accepted an adjunct position at Cal Poly Pomona that I fell in love with teaching. Once I entered the classroom and saw the light bulb go on with students, I was hooked. This began my now 20-year career as an educator.

After another brief detour into private industry, I had the opportunity to work on an economic development grant at Mt. San Antonio College and leapt at the chance. My path had finally led to the community colleges and I have never looked back.

Nearly 8 years later, I left the grandeur of Mt. SAC for a small college in Yucaipa, California as the Vice President of Instruction. You might be familiar with it. For the second time in my career I fell in love – this time with the beautiful setting and remarkable people at Crafton Hills College. For the past 6 years, Crafton has been an integral part of me. My work here has partially fulfilled my personal mission of growing people and organizations while my affections for this campus have compelled me to become a champion and steward. I have grown as an educational leader and my allegiance to the field of education is resolute.

Role of Education

You see, I believe education is one of very few interventions that can truly transform lives. Education provides the tools for achieving our biggest dreams and empowers us to be better people. Education contributes to social justice, but even more importantly, it contributes to the achievement of one's full potential. Education unites opportunity with excellence.

The very nature of our work inspires hope and invites criticism. Over the past ten years community colleges have experienced increased scrutiny and accountability. Our detractors have had a field day pointing at our success rates while forgetting our

mission of access. Within the community college system we have responded, as we always do, by examining ourselves to determine what we can do better. The increased visibility has forced us to be very clear about who we are and what we do. We understand that true equity only comes when every student has the opportunity to succeed and we've put solutions in place to address the gaps.

I am very proud to be part of the community college system and part of Crafton Hills. Our resiliency and fortitude as a campus community is demonstrated by working magic every day with limited resources. I'm not afraid of accountability measures because I am confident about our determination to ensure access and success for our students.

Our Commitment to Students

To our students in the audience today, I want you to know that you are indisputably at the center of our work. I exhort you to continue your education and reach your goals. You see, there is no app on your phone for answering the deep questions of life or for succeeding in a career path. We want you to gain new perspectives and a deeper understanding of the world and of yourself. We want you to be culturally competent and clear communicators. We want you to be critical thinkers and problem solvers by reasoning through problems rather than around them. Most importantly, we want to ignite in you a deep desire to learn for the rest of your life, to continue with inquiry and discovery as you create your own path. We hope that by the time you leave Crafton, you will be ready and willing to embark on your own unique journey. Along the way, remember the wise words of Steve Jobs: don't waste your time living someone else's life.

CHC's Future

For the educators in this audience and our partners, the challenge I've given students demands our very best work. This is a time for reinventing education – not the essence of what we do but how we do it, how we teach, how we organize ourselves, and how we

support student success. Our job is to create the conditions under which students will be inspired to succeed. We must enlighten and empower them to reach their goals.

At Crafton, we will be physically transformed over the next five years with new buildings. My hope and my aim is that our physical transformation will be symbolic of our continuing transformation as educators. As a college, we must also push to reach new heights. We must enhance our connections with students because we know the power of engagement. We must direct our efforts to close the achievement gap between students who know how to navigate our complex system and those who don't. We must continue our spirited dialogue that results in better solutions. We must be role models of professional and respectful demeanor. Indeed, we must be learners ourselves and stretch beyond what we thought we ever could be.

Closing

As president, I am committed to leading Crafton with vision, integrity, and courage. I vow to protect and polish this jewel, the emerald on the hill. As a campus, we have our momentum and our ambitions. Let us now move forward together with determination and turn dreams into reality.

Thank you all for being here today to share this moment with me.