

**Inauguration of Martha J. Kanter
As Chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza
Community College District
November 19, 2003**

Thank you for joining us this afternoon.

Let me first acknowledge the founding and former trustees of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District that are with us today. In 1957, they broke ground on this campus, opened De Anza college ten years later and serve as role models for all of us who have dedicated our lives to the education of community college students.

I would also like to thank the Foothill-De Anza Board of Trustees who serve our district today and who placed their faith in me to assume the responsibilities of chancellor. All of these individuals, like many of you in this room, are public servants. Our trustees chose to become trustees because they are committed to the leadership role that our colleges play in providing opportunity for students and increasing the intellectual resources of our community.

Would all of the founding, past, present and newly elected Foothill-De Anza trustees please stand and be recognized.

Thank you. Please be seated.

Let me also extend my appreciation to our faculty, staff and administrators who rededicate themselves daily- to the education of more than 45,000 students at Foothill and De Anza. These educators are extraordinary leaders in their own right. They are dedicated to our mission of excellence and opportunity. They have committed themselves to the values of academic quality and integrity. They possess that indomitable sense of optimism that makes teaching and service to students simultaneously a joy and a challenge each and every day.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to other colleagues and friends who are here with us today. You represent our national, state and local leaders from all sectors of the community: education, business, government, and non-profit organizations. Over the years, each of you has assumed a leadership role in

preparing people to become vital participants in our society. The partnerships we have developed together enable us to do the job that we do. These partnerships will be needed more than ever during difficult economic times. We look forward to working with you in the years ahead. Thank you for your leadership.

I also want to express my deep affection and appreciation to my family, my sister Dr. Laura Kanter who is here with us this afternoon and my husband Carl Brown without whose support and encouragement I would not be standing here with you today. It is my deep love for my husband, family and friends that has enabled me to accept the challenge of leadership while understanding that the genius of leadership rests in the empowerment of others.

Today, 45,000 Foothill-De Anza students are realizing their goals for a better life because of what all of us do together, rather than what any one of us could hope to accomplish alone.

Finally, I am thankful to our students because time and again they achieve far beyond their initial hopes and dreams.

Last Wednesday I met with one of our students, Jessica, a single parent in her early twenties who is raising her one-year-old daughter. This summer she faced an unimaginable decision. On welfare with little education and fading hopes for her future, for months she tried to get child care for her daughter so that she could attend college, earn a degree and obtain a well-paying job. No opportunity for child care was available. In late summer, she made the agonizing decision to give her daughter up for adoption. Her child, at least, would have the quality of life she was not able to provide.

Immediately thereafter, she received word that a space had opened up at the Foothill-De Anza child development center. Jessica was able to keep her family intact, enrolled in college and is now excelling in her classes. She told us that she is on her way to achieving a lifelong dream—to become a business executive. She will. Of that I am confident.

Stories like this inspire us. As educators, they sustain our optimism about what is possible.

In assuming the position of chancellor, I have been given a precious gift. It is the gift of leadership and the privilege of working with a group of remarkable educators to deliver an extraordinary education to each student who arrives at our doors. Dr. Bernadine Chuck Fong and Dr. Judy Miner are now charged with the enormous responsibility of leading their respective colleges during one of the most tumultuous times in our history. They in turn are supported by the highly talented, diverse faculty and staff I told you about. Our colleges are recognized as jewels among America's community colleges because everyone in the Foothill-De Anza family has a deeply personal commitment to give an exemplary education to our students.

So if we have all of this in place, you might ask: what does a chancellor really do?

That is a question I asked myself for many years, working for and with a fair number of chancellors in my career, first as a teacher at San Jose City College, then as a program director at Monterey Peninsula College, then as a dean, a vice president, a vice chancellor and a president for a decade. I never asked that question when I taught high school because it was easy to figure out that the principal did everything that the teachers and staff didn't do.

After more than 30 years as an educator, this spring, when I accepted the offer to serve as the fifth chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza community college district, I realized I had been preparing for this new set of responsibilities for decades. As some of you know, my husband and I take care of bonsai trees. We have been doing this for nearly 20 years. As Carl and I and our trees have grown and matured together over the years, I have come to understand that my purpose is to enable our trees to flourish despite unforeseen circumstances like frost, wind and heat. In much the same way, my role as chancellor will be to develop and sustain

strong leadership at all levels of our institutions through both good times and bad. In this way, we will ensure the highest quality education for our students.

In the time remaining, I want to tell you about what I expect to accomplish. But first let me set the stage.

More than a century ago, in 1894, the junior college of Chicago University granted the first set of associate in arts degrees to students who sought admission to the junior class of the University of Chicago. During the next 13 years, Alexis Lange, dean of the school of education at UC Berkeley, and David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford, attempted, without success, to establish separate lower and upper divisions for their universities.. But based upon their efforts, in 1907, the legislature established California's community colleges.

Today in the united states, nearly half of all students in higher education are enrolled at a community college. Today, 1.7 million students attend a California community college.

Since we opened our doors in 1957, Foothill College and De Anza College have educated more than one million students. In September, we welcomed 45,000 students to college, but we turned away an estimated 5,000 students because our funding from the state is capped. In fact, our system offered about nine percent fewer course sections due to the education budget cuts we faced. Our state chancellor has estimated that this year, more than 175,000 students across California will be denied access to higher education at a community college, at a time when our population is growing. More than half a million more students will seek entrance to the California Community Colleges within this decade.

Today we see the fate of future students balanced precariously between ongoing educational opportunity and budget cuts which may close the doors to higher education and deny the American dream to our neediest citizens. For nearly a century, Californians have benefited from the privilege and assumed right to

attend a community college. But the landscape is changing. Our assumed right to affordable educational opportunity is very much at risk.

As chancellor, I will communicate passionately, widely and effectively about our expectations and needs in sacramento, in washington, and here at home. Most Californians don't know that after raising community college tuition by 60 percent last year, none of that money was returned to the community colleges to offset devastating budget reductions. Many are not aware that our local boards and community colleges are hamstrung by burdensome mandates that restrict our ability to leverage resources and innovate.

We are fortunate to be in the middle of a seven-year renovation and expansion effort made possible by so many of you here today when 72 percent of the voters in our community approved our Measure E bond in the fall of 1999.

For the first time in our history, Foothill and De Anza will have renovated every classroom and office on our campuses and will construct its first science buildings within which the future nurses, scientists, programmers, designers, dental hygienists and other members of our community's diverse professions will be introduced to biology, chemistry, veterinary science, environmental studies, geographic information systems, and a host of other fields. In the coming years, we will ask you for your support as we equip our buildings and create new endowments to sustain our educational efforts.

Another of my goals is to increase the business and philanthropic investment of our community in the work that we do. I want to triple the assets of our foundation in order to promote and sustain educational excellence and innovation. These investments are essential if we are to preserve the exemplary learning environment we have been able to provide for nearly 50 years.

By the end of this year I will bring to our board a proposal for a balanced budget for 2004-2005. To accomplish this, we are putting strategies in place to

redesign our programs and gain efficiencies, without compromising quality. We do this while planning for a multi-million dollar reduction in state funding.

I want Foothill-De Anza to continue to be known as one of the best places in the country to prepare students for careers, university transfer, and success in life, especially students from diverse backgrounds and cultures who have historically been economically disadvantaged. We are making significant progress in closing the academic achievement gaps among our diverse student groups, but we have much more to do in this area, and we will.

As chancellor, I want us to look back in ten years and be proud that we have put in place a sustainable funding base for future generations of community college students who will benefit from a core of full-time faculty, staff and administrators.

The next few years will be among the most challenging in our history. Like our sister institutions, we are reeling from the rising costs of health insurance, retirement contributions, salary obligations, and other fixed costs of education without any relief from Sacramento. We have lost faith in our leadership at the state level. We now need to engage all parties in rebuilding our trust and confidence in government as a first step in moving toward programmatic and budget stability.

Foothill-De Anza will play an important role in reforms at the state level. It is time—past time—that California Community Colleges have a place at the table in determining the educational future of our state. We are the engine driving this economy. The skilled service providers, technicians and workers who enable the productivity of our state are, by and large, products of the California Community Colleges. Preserving and expanding our reservoirs of knowledge, skill and talent ensures that our students are among the best-prepared in the country as they enter the workforce, advance in their careers, or transfer to a four-year college or university.

Despite the difficult realities of our time, we will meet the challenges of the day and move forward to exceed the expectations of our community and ourselves. We will work aggressively to preserve educational opportunities for the students who need us most.

In closing, I am honored to accept the privilege of advancing the legacy of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District. As we move forward, I will need the support of each and every person in this room so that we continue to provide educational excellence and opportunity to our students so that their children, and their children's children, will continue to enjoy the benefits of higher education at Foothill-De Anza.

Thank you for being part of our ceremonies this afternoon.