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## A Special Employee Appreciation Day

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### Human Resources



When I was asked to write a community message for Employee Appreciation Day, I knew immediately I wished to express my deep gratitude and admiration for the tremendous fulfillment of duty, courage, honor, and commitment achieved by our colleagues during the recent days and nights of fire, loss, closed roads, long commutes, etc.

President George H.W. Bush was known to favor the saying sometimes attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, "Preach the gospel at all times, and if necessary use words."

I watched—we watched—our students watched as you demonstrated selflessness in the image of Christ. Facility workers found their way through fire and embers to respond to student needs; public safety officers faced flames with hoses to protect our community, and shuttle drivers pressed through to staff shuttles for our students. Faculty members flexed back and forth in modality ensuring their students would command the course material regardless of circumstances. Student Affairs staff shepherded students to shelter-in-place locations and

attended to their needs throughout the night. This is but a short list of the heroic efforts so many have done and continue to undertake.

When riding a mountain bike, one learns to notice and note dangerous depressions or barriers that arise in the path, but not to stare at them; instead the rider must fix his eyes on the path ahead he wishes to follow, where he wants the tires to go. By noting the challenges—that which causes fear—but focusing on where safety lies—that which represents duty, that which is good—the rider and the bike naturally follow the right path.

You all did that through the fires and continue to do it in the aftermath. You did not focus on the flames, or the traffic, or the rain, but on the duty before you, fulfilling your roles to serve our students, and, in the process, demonstrating an alluring selflessness our students will not soon forget. I am deeply thankful for all of you and proud to serve alongside you.

*"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things"*

Philippians 4:8

**Phil E. Phillips**

Executive Vice President



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