Would you please pass this request out to faculty at your college?

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***“February is always a bad month for TV sports. Football is gone, basketball is plodding along in the annual midseason doldrums, and baseball is not even mentioned. It is a good time for building fires, reading books, watching movies, and cranking up random sex orgies with the neighbors.***

 ***Not even pigs will come out of their pens in February. They would rather stay inside & wallow around in their own excrement than venture out in the bitter cold for a breath of fresh air…The human animal needs a Good Reason to get out of bed on a wretched morning in February. Nothing is moving out there on the icy streets except drunk drivers, desperate criminals, & people who don’t have the imagination to call in sick for work. Hell, there are plenty of good reasons to wake up sick this time of year: the flu, Ague Fever, shin splints, Chicken pox, projectile vomiting, Rickets – even Black Hairy Tongue Disease, which is extremely contagious.” Hunter S Thompson, February 2001***

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Hello My Friends,

“May you live in interesting times.”

That’s an old expression passed around in an ironical vein since it implies that un-interesting times of peace and prosperity are less interesting and challenging than times with chaos and conflict either brewing under the surface or blasting out like a scalding geyser into frigid winter air. It’s sometimes called “The Chinese Curse” although there is no such proverb in Chinese languages.

Well, we certainly live in such interesting times. And if we think these times are interesting, imagine how our students feel about them. Our jobs often involve modifying our coursework into practical applications for these interesting times, perhaps even explaining those times to our students as we try to help them navigate their lives into meaningful jobs or smooth transition to university.

This is a call for articles, papers, opinions, creative ideas for teaching. We’ll include articles submitted onto our FACTC newsletter. FACTC Focus is a special interest publication produced by the Washington State Faculty Association for Community and Technical Colleges.

Last Spring’s issue of the FACTC Focus included articles about a free tuition forum at North Seattle College, Bates Technical Colleges celebration of its 75th anniversary, all-gender restrooms in the works at North Seattle, Grays Harbor new president Jim Minkler, a welding sculpture competition at Bellingham College, a speech showcase at Centralia college, among other informative and interesting items.

Now you, too, can contribute to the broad cultural milieu of Washington’s 34 community and technical colleges. Feel free to showcase the accomplishments of your college. Share your creative ideas or methods for teaching with partners who are always looking for new ways to inform their students. You should also feel welcome to include your concerns about the state of higher education in this troubled time in the form of an opinion piece or letter to the editor regarding articles you have read in FACTC Focus, other publications, or perhaps heard on the air.

You can support or oppose a stance taken by another writer, an elected official, or the FACTC Focus itself. You can comment on an issue currently under debate in Congress or the state legislature. You can speak to praise or blame articles or positions taken. You can correct any mistakes made or complete information to avoid misrepresentation of an issue. You can do any or all of these things but make your item an informed, responsible learned gloss. It’s OK to be controversial or though-provoking but please, no profanity, slander or libel, no personal attacks and nothing unreasonably long. If you’re going to rant, make it an informed rant.

One might ask, how long should these articles or letters be? My go-to response to students when they pose such a question is “long enough to make your point.” But figure 150-500 words is probably a good measure. Remember Aristotle’s Golden Mean (“Neither too much nor too little.”) and also our friend Will Shakespeare who wrote “Brevity is the soul of wit.”

Become part of the popular culture. Your ideas and opinions matter. Share them with your colleagues in a vibrant publication. Contribute to the marketplace of ideas. You never know where your influence can have an impact.

Send your articles, opinions and/or items of interest regarding your college to Rob.vogel@scc.spokane.edu. Write in the subject line “FACTC Focus.” Include your name and college but if you want your name withheld (or abbreviated) for a particular reason that you should explain, let me know.

Deadline: Friday April 28, 2017.

*“****My mind is a raging torrent, flooded with rivulets of thought cascading into a waterfall of creative alternatives.”***