Recognition of Trustees in Attendance:
- President Denys Honeychurch
- Vice President A. Marie Young
- Trustee Jim Claffey
- Trustee Rosemary Thurston


I want to thank the Admissions and Records staff that have worked very hard for registration; the Academic Affairs staff--Deans and Deans’ Assistants; the Athletics staff for their hard work throughout the year for hosting teams from other places and make them feel welcome; the Financial Aid staff for quickly and cheerfully adopting new ways of doing business and for saving our financial aid program; the Fiscal Services staff for all they do to make sure we get paid; the Graphics Department staff for being so diligent in helping our faculty in difficult times, and the HR staff for their hard work. All these folks have Banner in common. Thank you for your bravery with Banner while you do your regular jobs. Thank you IT for supporting them.

You may not know this, but I picked up a part-time job at the college. The library reports to me. So, I want to publicly thank Ralphine Andrus for her tremendous work.

I want to recognize three folks today with a basket of natural products from Winters, CA. The symbolism here is that the citizens of Winters in Yolo County supports Solano Community College. But, we have but all forgotten its existence as a college. My Above and Beyond Falcons are like Winters: The first person is:

- George McGuire: George is a Theatre Professor who has used his reputation and friendships to support our students. Not only has he gotten $25K from Tom Hanks, he is bringing him here to the college for a program that should net the college some pretty good money. What a wonderful person! Professor McGuire
- The second person is Sam McKinney: He is a quiet, low-key person who gets along with everyone and is a real team-player for our Division and for Cosmetology. He is a "can-do" employee who always goes the extra mile for students, faculty and everyone else on campus. He is a unsung hero for the college
- Finally, this person has been doing a two person job for much longer than I have been at the college. People have fled this office and not only has she stayed, but continues to do two jobs. She has been ill and yet continues to do everything the person can without
complaining. Solano Community College, please help me honor one of our hardest working people, Ms. Pei-Lin Van’t Hul.

I love these moments. They are the ones that show that we care. We love one another deep inside and because of what we do we have sustained this place and will continue to do so until the last breath. As the beer commercial said, “I love you, man!”

My dear Colleagues! I appreciate the opportunity to give you a state of the college address after six months on the job. As the former NATO Supreme Commander, General Goodpaster once said: “A speaking engagement is a job sharing issue. My job is to speak to you; your job is to listen to me. And I hope that you have not finished your job before I have finished mine.”

I appreciated greatly how you received my first address to you in August. I continue to feel pleased and blessed to be with you and be your colleague at Solano Community College. I have not had any allusion of the extent of our challenges, but as I said to Tom Henry, this college is filled with people of good will and I count among them those who have had an opportunity to oppose or object to some of my ideas. I am pleased to be serving alongside you.

As I look at all the ills and challenges that we have had, we have maintained the core of our calling: serving students, educating students and supporting the work of our faculty. In these difficult times, our greatest asset is the confidence of what we can do and how we can overcome the worst of challenges.

I have a nice group of people to serve with. I want to thank SCFA President, Tom Grube; CSEA President, Cynthia Simon; Local 39 Steward, Ralph Meyer; Academic Senate President, Dr. Jeff Lamb; and ASSC President, Tara Norman for their cooperation and devotion to the success of the college. I want to also thank the Administrative Leadership Group for their hard work on a continuous basis.

I certainly see things changing as a visionary, but people in the community and some at the college have acknowledged that we are making tremendous progress. Nevertheless, we need to continue to work on:

- Refining our processes to ensure that our planning is understandable to our faculty and staff. It is incumbent upon my administration to work with the Academic Senate to ensure that the planning process and the results of the planning meet the expectations of our constituents and ACCJC.
- Using every ounce of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial capability to place Solano Community College on a solid footing. So, you will hear sometimes about things that I am doing that may not be part of our habits at Solano; I may be dealing at levels that may not be where we have been before. Just know that I am working not only for our present situation, but also for our future.
Furthermore, we need to work closely with all of you to promote your talent and your aspirations for the college through our proposal processes, our strategic goals and the activities that support them. We need to pursue the improbable, and though we will fail at times, we have to keep moving.

As I have quoted Roosevelt to you before, we cannot remain inactive because we do not want to make mistakes. We have to take risks if we want to get to a higher level.

**Semester Highlights and Lowlights:** We have experienced some highlights and a few low lights.

As George Calin said, “Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.”

I would like to accentuate a few of the positivies we experienced over the past six months:

We have had some great moments that took our breath away.

- Enrollment increased: No longer under Stabilization. What that means, in case you are not familiar with the concept, we will have a dependable budget and we need not do anything special. For this accomplishment, I would like to recognize the efforts of the Admissions staff and the Academic Affairs team led by Dr. Steinback.
- Filed for library with the state at 50% match.
- Filed for theatre renovation with 100% funding.
- Preparation for team visit.
- Participation in the development of a new strategic plan: Over one hundred of you participated.
- Getting a grip on Measure G and advancing projects such as the Fine Arts Building, Campus Security, etc.
- Hiring of a VP for Administrative and Business Services and a permanent Director of Fiscal Services.
- Ongoing conversations with faculty, staff, administrators and trustees to position the college well.
- I have come to know several programs with future opportunities of knowing them all before the year ends. I have gained insight with each visit where we are with different programs: Aeronautics, Welding, Auto body, Cosmetology, Kiln lighting.
- Our Debate team continues to represent us well and to show off talents that exist at Solano Community College. Let us continue to support the efforts of our faculty in that area as well as our students.
- Our sports programs are also a source of pride for us. Our athlete women or men have displayed some of the best behaviors that could be expected of them. Many are achieving high academically. The soccer team won its division and several players and Coach Cardinal received honors. Forward Brittney Cooper, a graduate of Fairfield High School, received the top honor of being an All-American. She is being honored
tomorrow at a ceremony in Philadelphia. As John Denver said of Christa McAuliffe, “She was flying for you ...” We can say of Brittney Cooper, “she is being honored for us at Solano.” Our college needs to be associated with positive outcomes; her accomplishment is one of them. Though she is not here and neither is her coach, let us recognize them in absentia.

Low Lights:

- Failed efforts to buy property at Vallejo and not including faculty or staff in the exploration of the site.
- The economy and the loss of funding: resulting in cancellation of over 140 class sections and the de-hiring of good adjunct faculty.
- Inability to have visited everyone at work or in the office. I believe that I have been around to as many places as I can at least once. But, my timing is often poor. You are either teaching or it is a day when most of you are not available.

Strategic Plan: Our strategic plan expired in 2009. This plan will replace the expired one. Over one hundred of your colleagues participated in developing the draft.

- College input: administrators, faculty and staff led by Rob Simas and Dr. Jeff Lamb
- Education input:
  - Higher education leaders (Berkeley, UC Davis, Sac State, Brandman, Phoenix)
  - K-12: Fairfield, Vacaville, Vallejo
- Political Input
  - County government
  - Suisun City
  - Rio Vista

Mission

Solano Community College prepares a diverse student population to successfully participate in today’s local and global communities.

We accomplish our mission by providing:

- quality teaching
- innovative programs
- effective transfer preparation
- economical workforce training
- services that are responsive to the needs of our students
Vision

- Solano Community College will be an acclaimed leader in educational excellence — transforming students' lives.

Values

- **Integrity** — firm adherence to a code of moral values in thought and behavior.
- **Critical Thinking** — the use of intellectually disciplined, logically sound processes involving data-driven decision making to carry out the work of the College.
- **Mutual Respect** — working with one another in an atmosphere of collegiality and with regard of the intrinsic worth of each person.
- **Collaboration** — working together, across areas of responsibility or interest, to achieve common goals and objectives.
- **Innovation** — the search for and use of new processes or procedures to improve outcomes.

Goals

**Goal #1: Foster Excellence in Learning**
**Goal #2: Maximize Student Access & Success**
**Goal #3: Strengthen Community Connections**
**Goal #4: Optimize Resource**

Institutional Core Competencies

I. Communication
II. Critical Thinking and Information Competency
III. Global Awareness
IV. Personal Responsibility and Professional Development

We are expecting feedback from your division meetings. Thank you for that. Our next steps include:

- Refinement of strategic plan
- Feedback from governance
- Approval by Governing Board
- Implementation

The implementation step is the most important one for us. Planning and execution of our plans are at the center of our weaknesses noted by ACCJC. Our approach will be starting the plan for implementation with the planning for next fiscal year.
The Challenges of the Year Ahead

- There is no sign that shows our budget woes are on the mend. None. The Governor gave us the only indication that we may not receive a cut, but would fund enrollment growth for next year. Here is why this is important and why we are asking you to advocate for this budget:
  
  o California is about to graduate the highest graduation class in many years.
  o CSUs have limited their entering classes and established earlier admissions deadlines.
  o CUs have increased their tuition by 32%.
  o Many middle class and poor families will depend on accessing the community college for higher education.

- Cautiously we are anticipating a potential 0% cut, 3% or some predict it could be 5%. We are basing our budget assumptions on those percentages. That was before the Governor released his budget. We are now revising our projections and if the Governor’s budget for the community colleges remains true, we will have less of a burden to accommodate additional students.
  
- We estimate a budget shortfall between $1.5M to $3.5M.
- We have accounted for savings from several general areas, including legal fees from a former high of nearly $700,000 to a low of $200,000; freezing some vacant positions, an early retirement incentive, shifting custodial work to a different shift, etc.
- I want to be certain, clear, sure and unequivocal to state that if things get worse, we will have to revisit what we do and it may hurt. So, what did he say: We are going to be okay, if the legislature follows the Governor’s lead, we will be okay. If not, we will have to make deep cuts.
- The area that continues to be hurt the most is categorical programs. Despite the college’s ongoing commitment to the programs, the state continues to cut their funding. That is one area that will be affected, unless a miracle happens from the state. This is an area that is facing major cuts and it will trickle down to what we can do in some areas of service.

While we had to cut several sections of classes and impacted some adjunct faculty, there is still an expectation on the part of the state that we focus on three areas of the curriculum:

- Transfer: To prepare students to transfer to four-year institutions.
- Career Technical Education: With the economy the way it is, our legislators and the Governor and the Chancellor’s Office all expect us to provide training for jobs. I must say that as of now, we are not doing too good of a job training a workforce.
- Basic Skills: Helping students to develop their literacy and mathematics abilities.
The sad news is that the legislative analysts are watching our schedules to make sure we are following these guidelines.

Vice President Carey Roth will hold several meetings to share the budget and the steps we are taking to resolve it. One of the items that has been an item of contention is our legal fees. Thanks to the depth of knowledge of our Interim HR Director, we have been able to reduce that cost and keep it down. The maximum projected expense is $200,000 compared to almost $700K we spent occasionally over the past couple of years. To keep this cost down, I will

- Continue to do my part to not refer everything to our attorney.
- Look for alternative ways in the next year to obtain legal advice, including the possibility of hiring our own attorney or some other combination. Many of you have asked for that and I promised to explore it and I shall.
- Continue to build an atmosphere of trust, collegiality and cooperation. I am offering the full compliance of my senior staff and managers toward that goal.

To build and sustain trust will take you to trust your colleagues; willingness to work in harmony; give trust a chance, focus on learning, service and on our broad mission. It is paramount that our administrators and managers understand the need to lead, to respect dissent, and to understand that all of our jobs are to support learning through those who dispense knowledge to our students, our faculty.

Resolving our budget issue:

Our budget and financial issues must be addressed through a combination of means:

- Building enough capital capacity to support faculty and staff innovative ideas.
- Saving some of our funds to meet future needs.
- Using the opportunity to grow as a means to get our institution on solid footing.
- Using sound enrollment management practices to maximize the use of our resources, including classes we offer.
- Entrepreneurial: Community Service and Contract Education: Not only should you cover your cost and have a healthy fund balance, but we expect you to help the college. This is possible with the right structure and support.
- State Government Support: No state projects ever?
- Federal Support: Ignoring the presence of Congressman George Miller among us.
- Local, State and Federal Grants: Leaving a lot of money for others to have: There are other districts with healthy fund balances – Above and beyond what they need to satisfy their policy.
- One of my greatest joys was to have received multiple emails in regard to opportunities to seek funding through our congressional delegation: We have FIVE possibilities – Three Congressmen and two Senators.
• Since we started to change our thinking, we have explored the following:
  o TRIO Grants: we wrote one
  o Title III: We are exploring writing one
  o Green Grant: We received it for $418K to help the college move forward with green education.
  o Received seeds to start an image campaign to more positively expose the greatness of the work of our faculty and staff to the community.
  o We put ourselves in a position to know what is going in Washington and are able to advocate for our institution.

😊
• Can we go over the hump and be a beacon for our community?
  o Community’s response
  o Community’s expectations

• Two important things:
  o Hold onto our responsibilities and not stay still and let the game go by us.
  o There will be times when you may not completely get where your Superintendent is taking you. Sometimes we just have to build the plane as it flies. Be patient and enjoy the ride.

Accreditation
  o Probation Report submitted.
  o Appearance in front of the Commission.
  o Waiting for results: Expect to be the same or higher.
  o We have not regressed.
  o One more report in April.
  o Start of comprehensive self-study.

*Your responsibility and my responsibility and the Board’s responsibility is to resolve all our issues by June.*

Conclusion
  o There is a lot for us to be confident about, despite great financial difficulties that lie ahead.
  o Meeting accreditation standards in several areas will take work.
  o Truly embrace and finish our planning processes, Student Learning Outcomes and review of our programs.
  o The good thing is that we control our destiny. We can make decisions and choices that can maintain and sustain the progress we have made.
It matters not how straight the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll.  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.

*William Ernest Henley*

- You all have an important work to do. Our staff and administration are here to complement it the best way we can. Let’s continue to build the plane to get us to our destination.

Thank you!

**Haiti**

I am not sure I can get through this without tears and an inability to speak. But, I am asking for strength to do it:

- Your prayers, your cards, your emails, your phone calls have meant a lot to me and more than you can ever appreciate. Please keep them coming. Don’t misjudge me if all of a sudden I start crying. My wife and I are experiencing deep mourning.
- My direct family is okay: siblings and mom are all in other countries. But, there remain cousins, aunts and uncles. We have received no news yet. Though, almost all of my wife’s family members are accounted for. The woman lives a pure life.
- I have friends who are like relatives to me. I am deeply worried about and some extended family members.
- Much in my neighborhood is destroyed. And people are missing.
- What you can do:
  - Two things
    - Please donate to the Red Cross or Yele if you would like.
    - I am working with a charitable organization in Vallejo to accept donations to help rebuild schools in Port-au-Prince.

Any efforts you want to organize at the college will be appreciated by the Haitian people and me. As with many efforts after a disaster, the rebuilding tends to get less help and I think that is where your support would be most impactful, other than your presence down there right now.

I want to thank the team that helped me with the presentation! Have a wonderful semester and I hope to see many of you at commencement.

Thank you!