Dear Colleagues:

Several reports and movements have aligned to make things rather interesting and peculating for us at the community college level. There is the recognition that we have a completion problem. Nowhere is it more evident than the latter part of the semester when everyone throughout the U.S. can park closer to the buildings. But, in general the documented achievement level for our students is low. With about 69% in retention, we have 31% not making it. The graduation statistics are more sobering with 25-30% achievement. There is not just one reason for the lack of success; it may be as varied as the individual student or as complicated as the methods we use to document the success. We also have national policies such as not allowing students who attend part-time to be eligible for some types of financial aid; that hinders progress. Each of us can document multiple reasons for the low achievement.

Several national organizations that represent us throughout the country have come together to initiative the Completion by Design, among them the Association of Community College Trustees and the American Association of Community Colleges. They have signed a pledge that expresses their beliefs, their commitment, and their expectations for completion and what they can do about it. Just this week, the Community College League of California issued a long-awaited report, “Vision 20/20” where it is expressed that in order for the state to be competitive, the California Community Colleges will need to graduate 1,000,000 more students over the next ten years. The Commission on the Future believes that the additional million graduates must be achieved through both access and success. More of the students we now have must complete a degree and certificate as we attract many more who have the skills to succeed, but lack the direction to enroll. In all of this, the issue of achievement gaps among ethnic groups must be addressed.

Several powerful foundations have come forth with the promise of financial support to help community colleges: Lumina and the Melinda/Bill Gates Foundation are two such funders. Solano Community College was invited by the Contra Costa Community College District to partner for a grant from the Gates Foundation. Dr. Susanna Crawford, Mathematics; Professor Diane White, History; Professor Jeanette McCarthy, Business; Dr. Jeffrey Lamb, and others joined forces to submit the joint proposal. I am grateful for their dedication. We are awaiting the results.

Finally, there was the survey of Californians and the results were that they feel that higher education is not well-funded and are willing to support community colleges more. That was very encouraging news and the level of expressed support for the community colleges exceeded that of UC and CSU. The public thinks we are doing well.

What does it all mean for us at Solano? To participate in the million additional completers, we will need to graduate 6,700, according to some early, but not definite estimates. There are certainly steps we can take and should take and will take in the near future to bolster our graduation rate. One of the first steps is to remind our students that we are a two-year institution (if they take a full load) and to move on. We have explored several student success activities, but have not moved forward with hardly any. We need to start implementing some of them. Do we have impediments and barriers to student success that have nothing to do with sound pedagogy or learning? We should look at them and be courageous to make the changes necessary. Are we practicing the best enrollment management models possible? Not according to the data. We will need to implement sound enrollment management practices to be able to afford the new students and help keep more of them with us.

For this season of Thanksgiving (lasting three weeks), I want to let you know how thankful I am to have each of you as a colleague and a companion for this most wonderful ride at this particular time of our college history. I am thankful for each of you! Happy Thanksgiving!

Jowel C. Laguerre, Ph.D.
Superintendent-President
Board of Trustees Meeting Report

The meeting was held on November 17, at the Vallejo Center.

Students and Faculty Speakers: Three students, two from the same family, spoke of their appreciation for the Vallejo Center.

- An aunt who was laid off and decided to finish the college career, gave credit to the proximity of the Center for her success.
- Her nephew never intended to attend college until he learned that there was a college in Vallejo he could attend. An average student in high school, he is now a straight A student at Solano.
- A student with mobility disability said he had gaps in his education because he needed to find ways around his disability, and, thus had to overcome multiple gaps in his education. He barely made it out of high school. He said the College has anticipated his needs and he has no more gaps in his education because magically, everything is here for him. He now is an outstanding student pulling A’s in his classes.
- Professor Brenda Tucker was the faculty speaker. She continued the theme of the importance of the Center to students in Vallejo. One of her points is that students have walked from near downtown Vallejo to the Center. If they had to walk further, it would have been near impossible.

These remarks were very moving. It was the moment you could say, “We are transforming lives.”

Other Actions

Check Presentation: Ms. Rhuente Alums, President of the Solano Community College Education Foundation, presented a check to the College on behalf of AT&T for outreach activities to the high schools. The grant amount was $10,000.

Personnel Action: The Board approved the hiring of Mr. Yulian Ligioso as Vice President of Finance and Administration with a starting date of January 10, 2011.

Measure G Audit Report: The Board received the audit report on Measure G for the year 2008-2009.

Amendment of Building 1300 Contract: The Board amended its contract with tBP Architecture for Building 1300.

Clinical Experience: An agreement for clinical experience with Fairfield-Post-Acute Rehab Center was approved.

MOU with Solano County Office of Education (SCOE): A Memorandum of Understanding between the College and SCOE was approved to allow SCC to work with middle school and high school students and faculty on Water/Waste Water Management curriculum.

Facilities Use Fee: Amended the Facilities Use Fee by decreasing the rate for use of the swimming pool by 20%.

Information Items

- Information on the 2010-2011 budgets was presented.
- Emeritus policy was heard. It would allow the College to formally bestow on retired faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees the title of Professor, staff (appropriate title), administrator (appropriate title) and trustee emeritus.
- Assembly Resolution No. 138 to encourage the District to support Adjunct Faculty based on institutional practices and compensation based on improved funding.

The next Board meeting is a Study Session, open to all, to be held on December 1 at 6:30 pm on the Fairfield Campus and addressing the following topics: Environmental Sustainability (Dr. Julian); Completion Agenda and Vision 2020 (Dr. Laguerre), and Long-term Planning (Winters Caldwell and Flores).
New VP of Finance and Administration

Mr. Yulian Ligioso, was announced as the new Vice President of Finance and Administration by Dr. Jowel C. Laguerre, Superintendent-President of Solano Community College District (SCC) at the SCC Board of Trustees regular meeting on November 17, 2010. Mr. Ligioso is currently the Vice-President of Administrative Services at Chabot College in Hayward. His previous positions include serving as Vice-President of Administrative Services at Evergreen College in San Jose, Director of Fiscal Services at the College of Marin, Business Manager at Ventura College, and Accounting Business Manager at Modesto Junior College. Mr. Ligioso earned his Bachelor’s degree in Business and Accounting from USC and received his MBA from the University of Pacific. Not only is Ligioso a resident of Solano County but his three daughters have all attended Solano. His eldest Solano alum transferred to UC Berkley while his remaining two daughters are both current Solano undergraduates. “We are thrilled that Mr. Ligioso has accepted to join Solano Community College. He brings such great intangibles to the position. He will bring us the stability we need in the office and play a prominent role in transforming the College. He will be a major loss for Chabot College and a major gain for Solano,” said Dr. Laguerre. Mr. Ligioso will begin his duties on January 10, 2011.

Career Information Day on Campus

Career Information Day – Sponsored by Tech Prep
Article from Daily Republic
By Andres Navarro

Education grant opens door to green career opportunities

At one point Jim Wasielewski taught a biotechnology class at Vacaville High School. The class is no longer offered but Wasielewski is still looking for a way to expose students to the field. Solano Community College's career information day on science and biotechnology professions gave Wasielewski a chance to explore the potential of directing students Wednesday to green careers. The event was geared toward teachers and counselors from Solano County middle and high schools as part of the college's Community Collaborative/Workforce Innovation Partnership and Tech Prep grants. Experts in the field spoke to guests about the emergence of green careers in the Bay Area and the importance of distributing those possibilities to students who are still in school. “It's always been a passion of mine,” said Wasielewski, Vacaville School District technology coordinator. “Now the question is how get it back to students and expand it to all schools.” These careers are especially suited for those students who don't plan on attending a four-year university, he said. It's a misconception that every student wants to pursue that type of education, he said. “Kids want skills they can use right out of school,” he said. “These are perfect, credible options for those students.” The opportunities to head into fields such as water and wastewater management open up new directions students can take, said Marissa Halbach, a Rodriguez High School counselor. “A lot of the time students are more aware of regular jobs,” she said. “This gives us the knowledge we need to take this back to the schools and offer new careers for students.” Suzanne Huddleston, a Benicia Middle School instructor who teaches a career-focused course, said it's inspiring to see these opportunities for students. “There are more of these jobs opening up,” she said. “There is hope for a lot of the students.”
Filipino American Chamber Mayors and Businesses Sustainability Conference at the Vallejo Center

The Third Annual Mayors Conference on the Economy was well attended and the College and the Vallejo Center were center stage. The proceeds from the event will go to Solano Community College for student scholarships. Dr. Jerry Kea, Executive Director Bostic, and Green Grant Coordinator Paul Fair were also in attendance. Mr. Fair was one of the presenters along with Larry Asera from Asera Company, Sandy Haggerty, and Mayor Elizabeth Patterson.

Meeting with William Berry

Mr. Berry was the principal person assigned to Solano Community College for Measure G. We discussed the work he did for the College and the cost. He is going to provide us with some necessary information for a “Report to the Community on Measure G.”

Zeltin Scholarship Awarded

Mr. John Zeltin established a scholarship to honor his parents, who were long-time residents of Vallejo. His scholarship contribution is matched by his employer, American Express. I made the check presentation on Friday to Garrett Badajos.

Counseling Faculty Judy Nash Receives Award

Judy Nash won the Solano Transportation Agency (STA) Advisory Committee Member of the Year award for her work on the STA Advisory Committee and her work with the Senior and Disability communities of Solano College and Solano County. We congratulate Professor Nash for this award and thank her for representing us well in the county.

Journalism Students Won Awards

By Mary Mazzocco

Former Tempest staff members Arturo Ramos and Delia Miles won awards Saturday at the Northern California Conference of the Journalism Association of Community Colleges.

Arturo took second place for news photograph and second place for sports feature photograph. Delia won an honorable mention for opinion story. All the awards were for work published in the Tempest in spring 2010.

Two hundred and twenty-five delegates from 15 colleges participated in the conference, which featured a keynote speech from Dan Gillmor of the Knight Digital Media Center on the ways new media are forcing us to be more critical consumers of the news.
Solano Sports at Home

Go Falcons!

- December 3 – Men’s Basketball (Reedley College)
- December 10 through 12 – Women’s Basketball (Solano Showdown)

Bowl and Playoff Soccer Games

The football team had a great season under the leadership of quarterback Boy Humphrey and Coach Floyd Burnsed. The result of the bowl game was a tough loss to San Jose City College. Meanwhile the soccer team won its game over Yuba by a score of 3 to 0, ensuring Coach Cardinal another post-season win to top off a nice finish to the season.

Adopt a Basketball Player

As a way to support the women’s basketball program, Coach Borchert organized an “Adopt-a-player” concept. There are several possibilities for sponsorship. If you are interested in supporting a player, please let Judy Spencer know. Sponsorships range from $50 to $175.

SEIU Potential Partnership

By Barbara Fountain

“SEIU is the union representing most Kaiser employees. One of the benefits Kaiser provides for employees in that union is paid training for various classes. They pay enrollment fees, instructional material fees, parking and books and they offer their students counseling and tutoring through their organization. They recently reached out to us to begin working more closely with Solano in an effort to help further their student’s educational endeavors. We should expect 15-20 students for Spring 2011. Their representative, Maggie Newcomb and I, spoke and we hope to increase that number dramatically over the course of the next few terms. I think this is an exciting and positive new partnership for us and I thought you might all like to hear about it.”
Executive Vice Chancellor Erik Skinner of the Chancellor’s Office issued a statement last week that is giving us pause. I am sharing a portion of the message with you below:

“Informed budget watchers knew we were not out of the woods yet, but this week brought troubling news of just how large the state’s remaining fiscal challenges are. On Wednesday, the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO), the Legislature’s nonpartisan budget and policy advisor, released its annual Fiscal Outlook which provides an assessment of the state’s current fiscal condition as well as a five-year economic and budget forecast. In the report, LAO projects that, absent corrective action, California will face a two-year budget shortfall of $25.4 billion. Of this amount, $6.1 billion is attributed to 2010-11 and $19.2 billion is attributed to 2011-12. In reaction to this news, Governor Schwarzenegger announced that he will call for a special session of the Legislature to address the current-year shortfall. More details are provided below.

LAO Fiscal Outlook

As noted above, the LAO projects a $25.4 billion budget shortfall over the 2010-11 and 2011-12 fiscal years, combined. Of this amount, $6.1 billion is projected for the current year, despite the ink on the current-year budget barely having dried. The cause for the major deterioration in the current year includes a variety of unrealistic revenue and expenditure assumptions that were included in the budget package adopted just a month ago. Major items include:

- Federal revenues overstated by $3.5 billion
- State General Fund revenues overstated (combined total of $447 million over two years)
- Underestimated prison costs of $965 million
- Loss of $800 million due to passage of Proposition 22 which prevents the state from borrowing from local governments
- Overestimated local property tax revenues (combined total of $400 million over two years)
- Underestimated Medi-Cal costs of $400 million
- Underestimated In-Home Supportive Services costs of $195 million

Implications for the Community Colleges

While it is too early to know how the Legislature and the incoming Brown Administration will react to these developments, it safe to say that the information included in the LAO report increases the probability of cuts in both the current year and budget year. The specific fallout for the colleges will depend on a number of factors; including how much of the budget problem state leaders choose to tackle in the current year, as well as the extent and timing of revenue solutions.

In any event, it is hard to imagine a scenario that does not include significant negative consequences for the community colleges. Accordingly colleges should be prepared for the likelihood of mid-year cuts in the current year. A realistic scenario is that the Legislature would take back the $126 million in enrollment funding provided as part of the recently enacted 2010-11 State Budget. For the budget year, even under the LAO’s baseline scenario, community colleges would likely face cuts of over $230 million (based on the colleges’ proportionate share of Proposition 98 funding). Again, there is much we do not know about how this will play out, including the extent to which new revenues might mitigate program cuts; however, districts are well advised to prepare for budget reductions.

If there is any good news to share, it is that state leaders are well aware of the important role community colleges are playing to provide the education and training Californians need to achieve their workforce, basic skills, and transfer goals. As long as we can maintain the focus on the colleges’ contributions in these areas, we will fare no worse than other sectors of the state budget and better than most. In the coming months, our advocacy—both at the state and the local level—will be key as we work to limit the negative impacts on our system.”

When we built the budget for 2010-2011 we did not use the enrollment growth as real money nor did we go back to think of the negative COLA as a positive. We will execute some options in the People and Things document to trim the budget some more awaiting the final word from Sacramento. Mr. Stutzman held a couple of budget forums to keep faculty and staff informed of the budget developments.
Visits to Dixon

The Administrative Leadership Group paid a visit to the City of Dixon. The City Mayor, the Chair of the Dixon Chamber, the Executive Director of the Chamber, a couple of school board members, and the Superintendent of Schools as well as some city officials were on hand to welcome the College and to share with us their interest in partnering. We picked up some immediate areas of cooperation: Teen Center for Academic Enrichment; the Options Program for Postsecondary Experience for high school students; a program in Agriculture, including Food Science; and a call for us to partner with the school district for access to Career Technical Education offerings. Faculty members Melissa Reeve and Susanna Crawford joined us and spoke of providing ESL courses as well as Basic Skills.

Discussions with California Maritime Academy

Center Dean Jerry Kea and I met with the provost and others at California Maritime Academy where they asked for our support to provide Basic Skills instruction for California Maritime Academy students from Solano County as well as other Solano County students who are in need of developmental education in Writing or Mathematics. This is in response to a requirement from the California State University System (CSU) that makes local communities responsible to remediate any potential CSU needs in the two subject areas mentioned above.

Meeting with Caldwell Flores Winters, Inc.

Several administrators and I met with this firm and discussed the possibility of working with it to update our master plans (educational and facilities). We will ask them to present to the Governing Board at the December 1 study session.

Tour of 1800 to See Labs and Mechatronics

Professor Mark Berrett gave me a tour of our industrial technology labs. I was very impressed with the programs we have and the potential to serve not only the needs of the workforce, but also to provide some skills to students that could lead to outstanding careers.