Dear Colleagues:

**Thirtieth Anniversary of the Presidents’ Round Table**
Over the weekend I made a quick trip to Pittsburgh, PA, to participate in the celebration of the Presidents’ Round Table (PRT) Thirtieth Anniversary. This occasion recognized the Founders of this African-American organization (PRT) of Community College Presidents. As the Founders reflected on the history of PRT, they emphasized the importance of the role that they have played in college leadership over the years. The organization started as a response to the low number of Black Presidents in the Community Colleges, but in thirty years, much growth has been made. As was customary in many professions, ascending to the highest offices in higher education was difficult for people of color. Thanks to the work of the PRT pioneers, many African-Americans have learned the road to the Presidency—especially in California. Today, the members of the Presidents’ Round Table continue to be concerned about the ascendance and success of ethnic minority CEOs, and much effort is being placed on supporting the next generation of leaders. Together with the National Council on Black American Affairs (NCBAA), the PRT has sponsored also a minority male initiative to help develop male scholars to be successful in higher education, in general.

Next fall, the PRT and the NCBAA will host their annual leadership development institute in the Bay Area and have asked Solano Community College to help sponsor this event. We look forward to hosting our colleagues and having some of our minority young men, as well as faculty, managers, and classified “aspiring leaders” participate in these activities. On the shoulders of others, we stand to continue to make progress. As we know, the better our leadership, the more we can further the education of all.

**Meeting with the Daily Republic Publisher**
Last week I had lunch with Mr. Foy McNaughton, the owner of the *Daily Republic*. I learned much from him, including the fact that he has helped raise funds for education (U.C. Davis) in the past. Additionally, Mr. McNaughton and his family host the “Prime Rib in the Park” event for the Lions Club. He personally sells tickets to the event (I should know because I have become a regular customer of his). We plan to further discuss future fund raising activities in the community.

**Visit to the School of Aeronautics**
Trustees Chapman and Martin, Executive Bonds Manager Sata, Corporate Training Coordinator Thom Watkins, and I visited the School of Aeronautics last week. It is always a thrill to visit this School as much progress has been made since it was on SCC’s discontinuance list. Although the site continues to be crowded, we are moving forward with plans for expansion. During this visit, we looked at a second building we could use as overflow for the program, as well as the land we want to purchase to build the new Aviation Center, along with the Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Museum/Education Center.
Meeting with Solano EDC President
Sandy Person, President of the Solano Economic Development Corporation (Solano EDC), and I met last week to discuss the possibility of the College participating in a presentation on workforce training with the Solano EDC. The College has much to contribute given our training program in Water and Waste Water Management, our impending launch of the Corporate Training Center (Workforce Development and Continuing Education), our production of training technicians for the Biotechnology industry, and our potential for quick training for airplane maintenance and repair. We are looking forward to our participation with the cadre of faculty we will showcase.

Presentation to Winters’ Rotary Club
Trustee Martin, Leigh Sata, and I addressed the Winters Rotary Club and explained the plan and progress we are making with Measure Q. Winters’ citizens voted overwhelmingly for the measure and we were pleased to have the opportunity to thank the business leaders of Winters for their support. At the Rotary Club, we met the City Manager and are going to provide an update to the City Council of Winters as well. We intend to present to all City Councils in the near future.

Meeting with School of Applied Technology and Business
I met with the School of Applied Technology and Business last week as part of my ongoing effort to better connect with the faculty and staff this year. I discussed with them some of our College initiatives and answered their questions. For example, I told of the visit we made to the Stonedene Mansion property across the street from the Fairfield Campus, as there has been a lot of interest in our looking at this property. We discussed AB955 (this bill would, until January 1, 2018, authorize community college districts to establish and maintain extension programs at specified community college campuses during summer and winter intersessions) and there was support for the College to explore what we can do to provide better access to our students. I greeted Professor Diana Plant who is retiring this year after admirably serving the College for many years. (Despite her education from Kansas State University versus THE University of Kansas), she made us all proud and she will be greatly missed. It was asked of me at that meeting by a member of the faculty if I knew how inappropriate was my Monica Lewinsky’s quote from last week’s SPD. I did confess that I did not know it was inappropriate. This was the second such comment I received regarding the Lewinsky comment. I explained that I was simply looking for quotes with the words “government shutdown.” I only found two: One from former President Clinton and one from Ms. Lewinsky. I had no intention of ruffling any feathers by featuring an American citizen like Ms. Lewinsky. Believe it or not, she is a part of our history.

Meeting with the Vallejo Intertribal Council
One of my highlights last week was the meeting with the Vallejo Intertribal Council (VIC). This is an organization of Native Americans in the Solano area. I shared with them my experience of working with Native Americans in Minnesota through my former institution, Lake Superior College, which had a very strong program supporting Native American students in Northern Minnesota where the largest minority was Native Americans. Our program was called Services to Indian People Program (STIPP). I expressed the need for the College to be more acquainted with the needs of Native American students and to support the efforts of the Native American people generally. We have been approached by the VIC to host their Pow-Wow July 11-13, 2014. This Native American celebration had been held in the Water Front of Vallejo for many years. However, due to increased fees from the city of Vallejo and a general lack of funds, the Pow-Wow did not take place this year. The College will be requested to be a co-sponsor of the event next year (it will be held on the lawn facing Suisun Valley Road) and we intend to ask the Governing Board to approve. If you have been to a Pow-Wow, I know you will not want to miss
it, and if you have not been, you are up for a great education in discovering the heritage of the people who populated this land long before our European ancestors arrived here.

**Progress in Distance Education (D.E.)**
This week, I wish to report on the progress that we have made in Distance Education as reported in our ACCJC 2013 Follow-Up Report. The D.E. Committee, headed up by Professor Dale Crandall-Bear, has assembled much evidence to validate the work that they are doing to document that D.E. and face-to-face (F.F.) classes are comparable. With faculty training ongoing, the D.E. Committee is committed to a plan of action that can only result in sound education for our D.E. students. Prior to Spring 2014 semester, the D.E. Committee will:

- Develop a more intense (and mandatory) orientation for students enrolling in online classes.
- Develop a survey to measure student preparedness for online learning (technical competency, time management, etc.). The survey will be implemented for Spring 2014 classes prior to class registration.
- Continue to survey students at the end of the semester to assess satisfaction with online courses.
- Post course syllabi to the SCC Web prior to student registration to illustrate the comparable difficulty of online courses to face-to-face courses.
- Develop a common program for all online courses for the first three days of class. Students would be required to log into the class on day one or two and must participate in an activity by the end of the third day, or they will be dropped. This program is to bring the online classes more in line with what happens in face-to-face classes (no-show attendance policy).
- Develop a welcome email message that will be sent to all online students a few days before classes begin that clearly explains login procedures and instructor expectations and guidelines for student participation.

Thanks to Dale Crandall-Bear and the D.E. Committee for your work to improve distance education.

**College Student Loan Default Rate Increased**
Financial Aid program policies historically require that a college default rate be kept below 25%. At 25% or above, the federal government expects a college to submit a plan for reducing their default rate; if the default rate increase persists, the institution may not be authorized to offer any loans to students and/or face additional sanctions. Recently, the United States Congress increased the college default rate to 30%, but also increased the years of monitoring that rate from two to three years. Monitoring the default rate for an additional year, coupled with a bad economy, saw default rates increase at colleges all over the country and certainly in California and at Solano Community College.

Associate Dean of Financial Aid, Robin Darcangelo, offers the following explanation:

“The Department of Education (DOE) has recently released the Three-Year Cohort Default Rates (CDR), and Solano Community College is at 31.29%. Larry Eddie from the DOE requested a special meeting with senior management to discuss the seriousness of the issue and explain that this [default rates] is a College responsibility and could impact all further Title IV funding in the future. The DOE gives schools three years to make changes before it results in serious consequences. I have already teamed up with The John Pierson Group in the Chancellor’s Office, and am looking at some additional tools with outside vendors to assist in helping us find solutions to reduce this default rate.
I made significant changes to the loan program shortly after I began work in 2011-2012 at SCC that will continue to make a positive impact. At this time, I will be developing a plan of action and create a CDR Task Force team to move forward in meeting DOE regulatory requirements, making adjustments and provide additional resources and services to students.”

The Chancellor’s Office contracted with Parker, Pierson and Associates to help all the institutions that are facing a similar problem free of charge. They met with us on Monday, October 14, to help us develop an action plan. There are some simple steps we need to make to lower the rate by working with former students who are in default and our staff has already initiated this work.

In the next couple of months, we will give you a full briefing about the steps we are taking to reduce the default rate and to prevent it from happening again, although the economy may continue to put a strain on our students. To give you some perspective, nursing graduates used to have multiple job offers prior to graduation. Over the past four or five years, these graduates have not had such options (options are even worse for other graduates). The College is mindful of the student loan default situation and is taking a proactive approach to the issue by working directly with the students whose loans have gone into default.

**SCC Education Makes a Difference**
Sociology Professor Tonmar Johnson shared a letter sent to him by a former student. I am reproducing an excerpt from the letter as a reminder that SCC does transform student lives:

“You may not remember me, but I was your student for three classes one semester a couple of years ago. I transferred to the University of San Francisco and will graduate this semester (in December). I was able to graduate a semester early because I took so many Sociology classes at Solano and they counted towards my Sociology electives. I also wanted to say thank you and that I learned so much from you and your classes. Many of the things I learned in your classes have helped me in my classes here, and I now have a new appreciation for the education I received at Solano.”

**Phone Bank Outreach to Students**
SCC’s phone banking project has really taken off. Our goal is to contact former SCC students and encourage them to enroll again in SCC. Last week, we had eight students from the Academic Success Center’s Student Ambassador Program, run by Professor Chuck Spellner, ASC Coordinator, as well as SCC softball team members, headed by Professor Terri Pearson-Bloom on the phones. In addition, Counselor Amanda Greene, A&R expert Tonya Kent; Dr. Shirley Lewis, Peter Cammish, Roger Clague, Barbara Pavão, Barbara Fountain, Robin Darcangelo, and Shemila Johnson were also making calls, scheduling counseling appointments, answering Admissions and Records inquiries, and contributing to the success of the outreach effort. The project is already a huge success (over 800 calls were made on the first night of the project) and J.J. Eaves reports receiving calls from students who want additional information about re-enrolling in SCC. The phone bank outreach project will continue through Thursday, October 24, and it may resume, Monday, October 28, through Thursday, October 31.

**Upcoming SCC Commercial**
Shemila Johnson, SCC Outreach and Public Relations Manager, wants to inform everyone that on October 25 and 28 at the Fairfield Campus you may see a camera crew shooting various areas of the campus for our upcoming SCC commercial. In addition, we will shoot at the Vacaville Center on October 29. Faculty, staff, and students will participate, as the purpose of the SCC commercial is to advertise our
College to our local and surrounding areas. The commercial will air in Vallejo, Fairfield, Vacaville, Dixon, Winters, Woodland, and West Sacramento. In addition to television, SCC will be advertising our College via Internet Radio, local radio, various online sites, email, and print.

**ACCJC Team Visit**
I received word yesterday that the ACCJC Team will visit our College on Monday, November 4. The final version of our 2013 Follow-Up Report, including SCC’s EEO Plan, Student Equity Plan (SEP), and all evidence is posted on our Web.

Jowel C. Laguerre, Ph.D.
Superintendent-President

“Hating people is like burning down your own house to get rid of a rat.” - Henry Emerson Fosdick