Dear Colleagues:

**Reaching Out to Foster Youth**

If it is said that the strength of a chain lies in its weakest link; the strength of a community may be said to lie in the wellbeing of its most vulnerable citizens. In Solano County, a part of that link is comprised of our foster children. Hearing then how the courts may sometimes liberate foster children with very few or no resources can only break one’s heart… and for many foster youth, their lives are an uphill struggle. For several years, however, Solano Community College has had a focus on helping these youth. The College’s focus has been directed by SCC Professor Kamber Santa Maria.

Kamber is known as a strong advocate for these youth and nothing has stopped her dedication to this cause. She has advocated strongly to get funding for these students at SCC. One of her greatest concerns is to make sure that these young people get transportation to the College. When she was told that we could not use College funds for that purpose, she did not get discouraged and she went looking for other sources. She has now received a $40,000 grant for transportation. After becoming a full-time faculty member at SCC (she was formerly an adjunct), one would think that Kamber would have slowed down. Au contraire, mes amis, she has been pushing harder and is seeking a $400,000 grant that would expand placement of Foster Youth in another community college in the area, and also in a California State University campus.

Entering the picture with over forty years of experience in the same foster youth field is Dr. Sarah Chapman, Governing Board President. She has been a foster mother for many years. Her dissertation on the topic of foster youth has added much to our understanding of these young people. Solano Community College is fortunate to have both Professor Santa Maria and Dr. Chapman serving as models for foster youth education.

**Meeting with Felicia Nopamuceno, National Advisor, Community College Center of Excellence/ Workforce Solutions, University of Phoenix (UOP)**

When I saw Felicia Nopamuceno on my schedule, I thought, “Ah! UOP is coming for a visit like Brandman has done.” So Felicia came and reminded me that we met at the Association of American Community Colleges (AACC) in San Francisco in April and agreed to meet (I had forgotten!), her purpose being to advocate for our career tech students to upgrade their skills and find a path to higher wages and greater opportunities in industry.

At our recent meeting, Ms. Nopamuceno informed me about what UOP is doing with business and industry education and identified the many companies that have gone to them for support.
because of UOP’s effectiveness in practical instruction. Because of the relationship between AACC and UOP, the latter has paved the way for many colleges to participate in industry specific activities. Ms. Nopamuceno then gave me the example of an airline company that has been working to identify community colleges that offer aviation programs. She suggested that our College, along with Sacramento City College, make contact with the airline company. Here is a piece of data she shared with me:

“Solano Community College Transfer Trends to University of Phoenix”

a. Historical transfer = 3,754 as of academic year 2012; most popular transfer program is management, followed by psychology.

b. Median loan is available through phoenix.edu under each program description, comparable to private and public universities across the nation.

For a couple of years, the SCC Academic Senate has been looking at recommendations on how to interface with or not work with for-profit institutions. We know that in working with any institution, we need to have the interest of our students and SCC in mind. With UOP, there are two things that Felicia proposed: (1) the assurance that students coming to UOP finish their Associate Degrees (her data showed that the majority of the students transferring to UOP from SCC have not completed their degrees. UOP wants that changed and is ready to return the students to us who have not completed degrees). (2) UOP wants to provide for our graduates solid pathways to industries which will benefit our Applied Technology students’ career mobility.

**Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (EIAC)**

I attended the meeting of the EIAC last week. A great deal of time was spent on critiquing the ACCJC visit (as both Staff and Student Equity were part of the Report). The EIAC group started almost three years ago, but was not as actively engaged in the work that should have been done until Dr. Annette Dambrosio, Accreditation Coordinator, started working on the Report. Now, and thanks to the efforts of Dr. Dambrosio and the Committee members, there is a plan in place that can be implemented and developed by the time we have another Accreditation Visit. For example, the Committee is currently surveying SCC students regarding the SCC resources that are most useful to them. Of major concern to the Committee is the search selection process for hiring and the greater understanding we all need to have regarding this search process.

**Chancellor’s Office Statewide Default Prevention Initiative**

The Chancellor’s Office of the California Community College is promoting a Statewide Default Prevention Initiative for all schools to participate in to reduce student loan defaults. This initiative is absolutely unprecedented in the country. Student loan defaults are not unique to California schools, but the CCCs are particularly affected because of our “open door” enrollment policy. As a result of the new initiative, Solano Community College has partnered with the Chancellor’s Office and John Pierson & Associates to develop a Default Prevention Plan.

The Solano Community College Default Prevention Task Force is comprised of a diverse group of faculty, Student Service staff, and administrators. The Task Force is analyzing data from prior years to develop interventions that provide support to students and to prevent loan default. The Default Prevention Initiative aligns also the Student Success Initiative, SB1456, which community colleges are currently addressing. We hope that our efforts will prove to be an opportunity for improved student success.
**Harbor Theatre Meeting with the City of Suisun**
IVP White, Executive Bonds Manager Sata, and I met with Suisun City Manager Suzanne Bragdon and her staff to discuss the future of the Harbor Theatre. We agreed to pursue a temporary arrangement for the next three years that includes Harbor Theatre productions and considered whether the College should own the Theatre or continue to lease it from the city.

**Biotechnology Building Discussions with Faculty**
Executive Bonds Manager Leigh Sata, Professors DeKloe, Re, and I met to discuss steps toward building the planned Biotech Center. We acknowledged that with the current demand for Biotech employees, we need to ramp up our training and physical construction. We are exploring the possibility of converting a classroom at the Vacaville Center that could serve as a second Biotechnology lab and to “fast track” the construction of the new building. We are looking at a strong partnership with U.C. Davis in this endeavor.

**Visit to Veterans Center at Sac State**
Amy Utt and three Veteran students attended a program at Sacramento State on Friday to learn what Sac State is doing with its Veterans Resource Center, to include programming. We came out with great ideas about what we need to do for our Veterans and the facilities that we are planning. Later that afternoon, I met with the SCC Veterans Student Organization to discuss programming for the Center. The students stressed the importance of having a welcoming Center where Veterans will feel at home. I encouraged them to have as one of their many foci Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine (STEMM). While Veterans think that these disciplines are important, they also want to see a broader scope that covers multiple disciplines. For now, we are happy to start planning the Center and to have established an inviting presence for our Veterans. Based on data shared with me, the official number of Veterans we serve is about 1,200; the total number of Veterans and dependents at the College is over 2,400.

**Visit to the Division of Health Sciences**
I visited the Nursing Department last Friday. The department is in the midst of a major curriculum review, along with the induction of several new faculty; in fact, almost half of the faculty are new. Nursing is also preparing for their own Accreditation Visit next week. I discussed with them the possibility of relocating to Building 300 after the new Science building is up and running. I impressed upon them the opportunities we need to continue to pursue, such as the training of health care providers in collaboration with the Workforce Development and Continuing Education (WDCE) program that is forming. I also pointed out to them that if we are going to expand our health care programs, Nursing will need to provide the lead for moving their division from Nursing and EMT to a full-fledged School of Allied Health. Finally, they asked me about flu shots and after I hinted that we are looking to hire a new nurse for the Student Health Center, they reminded me that we had a goodly number of nurses at the College and I was looking at them. Dean Lewis will be working with them to exploit our in-house expertise and to set up some flu clinics.
Adult Education Meeting
Janet Harden and Jay Speck of Solano County Office of Education (SCOE), Kris Corey and Sheila McCabe (Fairfield Schools), Dr. Shirley Lewis and I met on Friday to discuss the steps we want to take to form partnerships for adult Education programs in the county. We established a meeting to take place in early spring, and agreed to contact other school districts to seek their involvement in the partnership.

Measure G Bond Program Week of 11.13.13 – 11.20.13

FAIRFIELD CAMPUS:
• No major construction impacts are anticipated for this week.

VACAVILLE CENTER:
• No major construction impacts are anticipated for this week. The Center’s Parking Lot Expansion project will continue this week, with no impact to campus traffic.

VALLEJO CENTER:
• The Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) small repairs will continue at the Center. No major construction impacts are anticipated.

Remember the Victims of the Typhoon in the Philippines
Many of our students, colleagues, and friends hail from the Philippines. It is heartbreaking to see the horror the people are going through and we wish to express our love and our empathy. These tragedies know no boundaries: from New Orleans to New York and New Jersey to Haiti… to Japan… to the Philippines… to Chile… and we never know where next.

The Asian/Pacific Islander (API) Club is currently accepting donation boxes for the victims of the Super Typhoon Haiyan that ravaged the Philippines last Friday. The API Club contacted LBC, a mail service that many Filipino-Americans use to send packages to the Philippines. LBC is providing a free service to deliver donation boxes to the Red Cross through November 30. The API Club will be placing empty boxes at our three campuses (Fairfield, Vacaville, and Vallejo). The API Club has also agreed to coordinate with Shirley Lewis and Jerry Kea on an upcoming College-sponsored fundraising event. In the meantime, please contact API Club President Heidi Noriesta to arrange pick up of boxes or items by calling her at 707-639-6658.

Items that are critically needed include blankets, toiletries, canned food, and clothes.

I am asking that we all remember the victims of this disaster and reach out to our friends and families from the Philippines to assess any pressing needs. If you have Filipino students in class who need support, please refer them to the Counseling Center.

On behalf of SCC, I wish to express our sympathy to those who have lost loved ones and wish the very best for the country’s recovery.
Jowel C. Laguerre, Ph.D.
Superintendent-President

“Do not pray for easy lives. Pray for strong men (women).” President Kennedy