Dear Colleagues:

**California Community College Chancellor’s luncheon:**
This past week I attended the Chancellor’s Luncheon at American River College. The California Community College Chancellor hosts a monthly luncheon in the north or the south to provide updates to constituents. Usually Senate Presidents and Foundation Executive Directors attend these functions. The luncheon rotates to various campuses. With me at the luncheon were Curt Johnston, Educational Foundation Interim Executive Director; Cynthia Garcia, Grants Manager; and Susanna Gunther, Academic Senate President.

Chancellor Brice Harris laid out for us the opportunities and challenges we are facing with the Governor’s budget and he rightly pointed out that the Governor has been successful at getting done what he needs to be done. Furthermore, he reminded us to look at what happened to redevelopment agencies that have been abolished. With that in mind, at SCC we need to be mindful of some initiatives Governor Brown put in his budget:

- **Transitioning Adults Education programs to the community colleges:** Adult Education programs are currently offered by the public schools. Absorbing these programs will need careful planning.
- **Limiting students’ credits:** The proposal that students who earn 90 credits will pay for any extra credits beyond the 90 credits at full cost to them. For SCC, students who earn 90 credits may be paying $189 per credit (after they have reached their 90 credit cap) as opposed to $46 a credit.
- **Distance Education:** Providing credits for all distance education courses. The challenge for us is whether to award credits to students who take free online courses. As an article on NASDAQ news (February 5) indicated, there is a strong movement toward making more courses available online:
  - “Lately, MOOCs, or "massive open online courses," have become the hot topic for educators and policymakers looking for ways to expand access to higher education. Harvard, MIT and Duke are among the growing list of institutions that offer these free online tutorials, through partners such as Coursera, edX and Udacity. The courses typically offer a certificate of completion, but few offer credit toward a degree.
  - That could change. Last October, Antioch University in Los Angeles launched a pilot partnership with Coursera to offer several MOOCs for credit. And the American Council on Education has begun evaluating the creditworthiness of a number of Coursera MOOCs. If approved, those courses would have enrollees take an identity-verified exam (for example, via webcam) and pay a fee.
  - For now, look to accredited degree and certificate programs to pick up a credential -- and participate in MOOCs for the love of learning.”
The existence of these MOOCs is certainly a sea change in higher education and SCC has to be ready for them by clarifying and strengthening our core values, as well as standing by our academic standards of excellence.

In addition to learning new information from Chancellor Harris, our SCC group was favorably impressed with the completely renovated Student Center at American River College. Their student center was architecturally inviting for students to spend time on campus and seemed to combine what we currently have in the 400 and 1400 buildings on our Fairfield campus. It is apparent that the proximity of the various services and the physical amenities has made the building a great success. In addition to its character of open space, I reflected on our minimalist student center and realized that we really just have a cafeteria and some space for student government. As one observer said, “You really have just a school cafeteria.”

**Accreditation training in Los Angeles:**
Ferdinanda Florence and I attended a formal training for accreditation visits last Monday. The training provided us with excellent reminders of what we need to do as an institution to continually be in step with accreditation standards. As you know, I am leading an accreditation team to visit Hartnell College in March. I will communicate the results to you as soon as I have them and will present them at to the Board as well.

**SCC Open Forum last Tuesday:**
Last Tuesday I held an open forum that was well attended throughout the District, including Vacaville and Vallejo. While the original intent was to report to you on accreditation, at that time, we had not heard from ACCJC. Instead, we used the time to speak of other issues affecting higher education in general and issues pertaining to Solano Community College. We discussed SCC’s reorganization that is being implemented July 1, and spent a great deal of time on the implementation of the Student Success Taskforce. On the latter, there will be more discussion forthcoming as the picture is changing quickly at the state and federal levels for our students. The era of the traditional, lifetime professional student is coming to an end (or, at least, it will be very pricey and have little support from taxpayers). For starters, there are more restrictions on the length of time students may receive financial aid. In California, the Board of Governors Fee Waiver used to be a “come and take it and don’t worry about any consequences” practice. Now students must demonstrate that they are making adequate progress toward their academic goals to continue to receive the waiver. The bottom line here is that there will be a cap on the overall number of credits the state will pay.

**Meeting with the Sheriff’s Office:**
The Solano County Sheriff, Tom Ferrara and his Under Sheriff, Gary Eliott, and I met last week again. We have established a timeline to work together for an expanded training program and discussed safety and security cooperation. The Sheriff and local law enforcement agencies will conduct an exercise at the College in the fall that will address emergency preparedness.

**Measure Q Updates:**
At the last Governing Board meeting, there were several speakers addressing the subject of Measure Q. The strongest sentiments were in regard to the size of the Science building and whether current plans are sufficient to house both mathematics and the sciences. The major
concern is that we need to have a larger Mathematics building and one not necessarily together (in all or in part) with Science. Our original intention was to move all Science programs to the new building. Given the current concerns, we will resume our thinking here.

As I have said before, we need to look at our building program with Measure Q as a way to enhance our facilities for future generations. I applaud the Science and Mathematics faculty that want to see more modernized facilities with better technologies for all of our students, to include our veterans. I am appealing to all faculty (not only Math and Science faculty) to evaluate their current needs and to participate in discussions that look toward the future. This past week alone, I identified two additional programs with major facilities needs that have not yet been articulated; Measure Q affords an opportunity for transforming our College and now is the time to voice your needs.

**Vallejo Education and Business Alliance (VEBA):**
VEBA met last Friday and has announced the installation of officers for March 9th at the Car Museum in Vallejo at 6 p.m. VEBA is in support of a biomedical “pipeline” from secondary school to medical school through Touro University. This pipeline will go through Solano Community College. We look forward to further dialogue on the subject, and are considering a potential launch within a year.

**Meeting to Promote High School School Debates:**
Professor Glines, Speech and Debate coach, and I met last week and discussed how Solano Community College Speech and Debate teams could work to promote debates in the high schools in Solano County and Winters. Glines would also like to make the debaters available to service clubs in the area for speaking engagements as involvement in our communities is one way to showcase some of the best of SCC.

**Meeting with ICON Aviation:**
Trustees Chapman, Martin, Dean Lewis, Interim VP White, and I met with Laura Kuhl, Vacaville City Manager, and the ICON Aviation Company to discuss ideas regarding how the company and the College could partner. The company would give hands on experience to students by sharing facilities and would serve as a potential source of employment for our students after their training. In addition, ICON is exploring the possibility of manufacturing leisure airplanes at the Nut Tree Airport. The owner of the company will make a presentation to the Board of Trustees at the February 20th meeting in Vacaville.

**Support College Basketball at SCC:**
There is one last chance to see your men and women Falcons play basketball this year. They are doing really well! The next game is this Friday at 5:30.

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

**In Honor of Black History Month:**
"The battles that count aren't the ones for gold medals. The struggles within yourself—the invisible, inevitable battles inside all of us—that's where it's at."
-- Jesse Owens, Blackthink (1970)