Dear Colleagues:

The Curtain Came Down For the Last Time
Kudos to Professor Esther Pryor for an accomplished career and one that has awakened talent in the lives of many students at our College. Over the years, many of us have enjoyed dance recitals by Esther, Professor of Dance at Solano Community College. This past weekend, we saw her virtuosity for the last time as a full-time professor. She has thrilled audiences consistently for thirty-eight years. As a testament to her dedicated teaching, she has had her students choreograph several pieces. Her list of accomplished alumni is as long as the memories of her splendid performances. Though I hope we can see her perform a few more times, especially when the new theatre opens; for now, I want to join her friends and colleagues to wish her the very best in retirement. Esther, we thank you for all of your hard work and for instilling in us a love of dance!

Rotarians Converge at the Vallejo Center
Approximately 200 Rotarians from San Ramon to Chico converged at SCC’s Vallejo Center on Saturday for a Rotary District 5160 Summit. Chuck Eason and I, members of the Fairfield-Suisun Noon Club, were in attendance. This was the third such gathering of Rotarians at the Vallejo Center. The Rotarians have appreciated using the facilities so much that they donated 200 chairs to the Vallejo Center, as we lacked seats to accommodate large groups. Thanks to Ray Tanaka, as well as Sam Maher, who helped with technology; and thanks to J.J. Eaves from Community Services for working to assist the Rotarians.

Meeting with Admiral Cropper and his Administrators
Last Friday, Dr. Jerry Kea and I met with Admiral Cropper from the California Maritime Academy to re-start conversations we have had previously with the Admiral’s predecessor, Dr. Bill Eisenhardt. We re-established our priorities for cooperating on various programs. These priorities include the regular, traditional transfer from the College to the Academy, but also particular programs we want to initiate in a Two + Two process. Potential programs include:
- Engineering Technology
- Chemical Engineering
- International Business and Logistics
- Global Studies
- Joint admissions of International Students

Following the meeting, I took the Admiral to see a piece of property the College may buy in Vallejo where we could build new facilities in the future for our partnerships with the Academy and Sonoma State University. We are now drafting an MOU to allow us to start working on the partnerships right away. The timing is excellent as we are completing our master plans, and we would like to be able to incorporate these partnerships into the existing plans.
ESL Mixer Reaches Out to Vallejo
Professor Jane Berger invited students, faculty, and administrators of the Adult School in Vallejo to attend the ESL Mixer coming up this evening, but had little success. The good news, however, is that Adult School Superintendent, Dr. Ramona Bishop, agreed to work harder to bring students to SCC and Chief Academic Officer, Mike Santos, said that he would be pleased to attend, illustrating the power of persistence on the part of Professor Berger and the strength of good relationships with our feeder programs. Given the disappointing lack of RSVPs, we could have just dismissed the event, but Jane chose to continue the outreach efforts as she is confident that we must continue to encourage access to a college education to these students. Additionally, I shared with Dr. Bishop the idea some of us have to co-locate the Adults School with the College when we build new facilities. The idea was well received.

Meeting with Middle College Fairfield-Suisun Schools
SCFA and our sister unions in the Fairfield School Districts, as well as several administrators from the Fairfield School District, met last Monday to iron out a path to institute a Middle College High School at the Fairfield Campus. We discussed several issues, including SCC faculty participation and the role of the District pertaining to the proposal for the Middle College High School. At the end, we agreed that it was too late to start the program for the coming fall and that even a spring start may not work. We then agreed to have the program debut at the beginning of the fall semester in 2014. I have been in touch with Superintendent Janice Adams from Benicia to be an additional participant in the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District’s Middle College program.

Meeting of Solano County School Boards
The Association of Solano County School Boards met last Monday. Since the College was a co-host, we were asked to provide an update on the College. Professors Spoelstra, Santiago, DeKloe, as well as Vice Presidents Ligioso, White; and Rob Barthelman from STV/vbn, joined me in giving a thorough update of our Facilities Master Plan, our Educational Master Plan, our Energy Savings Plan, and some of the trends in higher education affecting incoming students. The presentation was well received and helped us put in perspective the implementation of Measure Q.

Hiring Applause
I want to express my gratitude to Interim Deans Dr. Rennée Moore and Genele Rhoads, and the faculty in Mathematics and Science for completing their recruitments for faculty positions and the search for an Academic Dean, which is ongoing. SCC is always competing with other colleges for some of the same candidates and it behooves search committees and Human Resources to move as quickly as possible with the process to get our preferred candidates. The pools of candidates were very rich this year and we lost very few to our competitors. We were able to offer positions to faculty members in Mathematics, Anthropology, General Biology, and Physiology. With thanks to the rigorous work of the Committee for the Dean of Liberal Arts, we were able to hire an extraordinary Dean, Dr. John Freeman, who is currently in Australia, pending Board approval.

Meeting with Valero’s Sue Fisher Jones and Michael Goring
Ms. Sue Fisher Jones, Public Affairs Manager and Community Relations and Government Affairs, Valero Refining Company, introduced me to Michael Goring, a retired Engineer from Valero. Mr. Goring wants to volunteer his services to the College. He was not sure how or whether we could use him, but after brainstorming several possible services he might render, we agreed to pursue the matter. SCC can always use engineering expertise.
Meeting with Bond Ratings Agencies
VP Ligioso and I met with representatives from Moody and Standard and Poor to ask them for a rating of the first bond we will issue. The meeting was a presentation we made with the support of the Measure Q Financial Advisors and Bond Counsel. There are three or four categories the agencies take into account when rating a bond: the financial health of the institution, the financial health of the area being represented, the stability of the top management team; and, finally, the quality of the institution. Depending on the rating, a community can save substantial amount of money over the years. The ratings should be communicated to the College by the end of the week.

Student Awards Ceremony Tonight
The College is hosting its fourth Annual Student Awards Ceremony this evening. This activity recognizes the accomplishments of our best students college-wide. The ceremony starts at 6:00 p.m., in the Theatre.

Meeting with Jack Chirrick
Amy Utt, Veterans Center Coordinator, and I met with Jack Chirrick from Heroes Homefront, a non-profit organization that helps Veterans live the “American dream” through home ownership. Based in San Diego, the program is seeking expansion in Northern California. Our interest is to collaborate with the organization as we plan to build our Veterans’ Center and to share resources and knowledge to help our Veterans take full advantage of the resources they have earned. By the way, our Veteran’s student organization is fully participating in Measure Q planning. You may recall that we ran the bond with the promise “to support our students and veterans” and we are making sure that our promises are not forgotten.

The Three Musketeers
Adjunct Theatre Faculty Lee Hightower and his students put on a successful play, The Three Musketeers. I had an opportunity to see the play and was impressed with our students’ talent. With the change made in the Theatre program, I am pleased to see the shows continue and to see more SCC students involved in the productions. There is an ongoing search for two full-time faculty in the Theatre. Those new hires should put us back on track at substantial savings to the Institution and with much more student involvement.

Meeting on Aviation for Special Training
Ms. Shemila Johnson, Dean Shirley Lewis, Professor Kevin Spoelstra (Aviation faculty); IVP Diane White, Mr. Tim Loree, lab assistant; and I met and discussed the potential of offering some specialized training in Aviation for cohorts of students who could benefit from alternative classes that we might offer, in addition to our traditional program. The intention is to design alternative classes that might appeal to International students from countries where interest in aviation is increasing, such as China, Japan, and Brazil. We see great potential for the College and for students in such offerings. The renewed focus on Aviation will allow us to diversify and intensify our current offerings at the Nut Tree Airport.

EOPS/CARE Works to Graduate Another Group
Congratulations to Ms. Cynthia Simon, EOPS/CARE Coordinator, who has worked to assure that another group of EOPS students are on track to graduate this May. Often students come to us without the hope of obtaining an education and having already failed at many attempts to earn an education. However, thanks to programs such as EOPS/CARE, students leave SCC having achieved many educational accomplishments because of support they receive through the program. With special thanks to the
counseling and advisement of Ms. JoAnn Perry, EOPS/CARE counselor, and all others who work with these students.

**Recognition of Retirees and Emeriti**
Several retirees will be recognized this year as faculty or staff emeriti, including Trustees Young and Thurston who taught at the College for many years. We look forward to the return, as adjuncts, of many long-time employees who served the College handsomely for many years.

**Cinco de Mayo Celebrated on Campus**
The Fairfield Campus celebrated Cinco de Mayo last Sunday with music, crafts, and offers of services to our community. A special thank you to the organizers, especially Ms. Kayla Salazar, Student Trustee, who ensured that we attended this very special event. Several faculty and staff were in attendance, including Professor Jacobo Isaías and Professor Jim DeKloe; as well as two Board members (Trustees Brown and Young); Interim Dean Genele Rhoads (Math Division); Julie Martinez (Financial Aid); Dr. Maurice McKinnon (Interim Dean of Nursing); Mostafa Ghaus (Student Development); Curt Johnston (Educational Foundation); and Laurie Cheatham (Admissions and Records). Many others were all on hand to support the event (I am sure that I missed seeing many of you!). The event was truly a success.

**Graduation Gratitude**
Many of you have shared handwritten notes, emails, and formal letters from students who are about to graduate this May. I am always moved by the efforts of genuine gratitude that students express. One letter recently sent to Debra Berrett from a student said, in part: “Teaching can be a selfless profession...with many...challenges. The rewards...must outweigh the burdens. For it is only in ...making a difference in one student’s life that success can be measured...” Here I am reminded that all of us who work to educate engage in meaningful work.

Jowel C. Laguerre, Ph.D.
Superintendent-President
1988 Kansas-Christa McAuliffe Fellow

As we approach the end of the semester and recognize our students’ accomplishments, let us remember Christa McAuliffe’s words: “I touch the future. I teach.” (Christa McAuliffe, teacher-astronaut)

[And for those of you who do not engage in any formal teaching, your support contributes to the cause]