Dear Colleagues:

This is a second installment of the SPD that was sent on April 15th. In this issue I will continue to respond to some of the comments that were made at the board meeting and other venues. But, I will start with some encouraging news:

**Impasse Resolved**: Yesterday afternoon at around 5:30pm, a mediation session that started at 11:00 a.m. concluded in a successful agreement between the Solano College Faculty Association and the Solano Community College District. I want to thank the SCFA team of Sandra Rotenberg, Melissa Reeve, Jim DeKloe and Diana Lisi as well as the District team of Wade Larson, Yulian Ligioso and Scott Yarnell for working very hard yesterday to get the job done. I was able to join in the conversation and I am happy we ended up with a successful mediation session.

**Praise to Dr. Melanie Lutz**: Last week, during spring break, I had the honor and the privilege of accompanying Anthony Salazar (one of our engineering students) to Sacramento to receive the Phi Theta Kappa award bestowed on some California Community College students. Anthony was one of them. As I started talking with him about his experience at SCC, I asked him to tell me the name of the faculty member that has had the greatest effect on him. He immediately mentioned Dr. Lutz. Both his aunt and his mother started nodding in strong agreement with him. He went on to explain how Dr. Lutz would know when he needed support and would be there for him. At one point he was really discouraged about putting in an application, it seems, and Dr. Lutz either called him or texted him. He said that he was amazed because he did not even think she had his cell phone number. But, the real story is that he credited Dr. Lutz for saving his life and giving him a future in engineering that is strong. Dr. Lutz pushed Mr. Salazar as far as he thinks he could go, including an internship at the Colorado School of Mines last summer. Furthermore, with Dr. Lutz’s mentoring and urging, he had his project accepted for presentation at the International Convention for Engineering Materials (or something close to that) which took place in San Francisco. He left the award ceremony early so he could make it to the convention. Please join us tomorrow evening at 6 p.m. in the Back Half of the Cafeteria for a ceremony that will recognize students like Anthony and hear the amazing stories of our students and the effect that faculty and staff have had on them. This event is always a morale booster.

Below is a continuation of responses to some of the issues we heard from the last board meeting when 20 speakers expressed themselves about issues at the College:

- **Respecting Established Processes**: At the board meeting CSEA President George Olgin brought this issue up. I have asked our Human Resources team to examine this concern that was expressed and determine what was not done to the satisfaction of the unit.
• **Reorganizations**: There has been some criticism for too many reorganizations. The signs on the lawns express that sentiment as well. As I mentioned yesterday, I do not like making administrative changes just like some of you are saying you don’t like them. I must say, however, that the many reorganizations were answers to difficult budget situations we had. I reduced the number of administrators and support staff to the President’s office to prevent layoffs. We went through the difficult years of the bad state budget with one net employee layoff in staff and none in full-time faculty. The reorganizations served us all well. We still have issues to resolve as a result of overloading deans in some particular areas.

• **No Mentoring for Deans**: This was an issue brought up at the board meeting. The board has supported my efforts to provide professional development opportunities for our deans when requested, I have supported our deans’ obtaining mentoring and professional development, and we have provided training for our administrators. Leadership and managerial skills like everything else takes time and patience.

• **Presidential Priorities**: New initiatives that I have presented have all been shared and fashioned by our processes. The initiatives have primarily been to build greater institutional capacity. I realize that after almost six years as president, it is time to adjust and the feeling of uncertainty that has been expressed needs to be dealt with. I must seek ways to elevate the College, and that is what our initiatives are meant to do. Some will be immediately successful, some will fail and others will take time to come to fruition. But overall, the initiatives I have introduced are mostly what other institutions are doing to ensure a secure financial future. It behooves us to continue to nurture some of these low-cost, low-risk initiatives not as the President’s initiatives, but as institutional initiatives to be pursued with or without the current president. In the long run and much after my time, the College will be better off for them.

• **International Students**: There were some international students at SCC prior to my presidency. Although this has become an ongoing initiative for us, I urge our institution not to disparage our efforts as these students cover their cost and the cost of our efforts and do not take anything away from our current students. Intellectually, they are adding to the diversity of our institution and enriching the lives of our students through global exposure. Global connection is an indispensable part of existence as humans and we should support and welcome greater interaction with the world and especially Asian countries like China.

• **Hispanic-Serving Institution Designation**: In statements attributed to a faculty leader, the administration was accused of NOT recruiting Hispanic students. Ever since I became president, I saw that our Hispanic enrollment percentage did not reflect our county demographics. We initiated a movement to increase that number with the goal of becoming a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). To gain the designation, we needed to reach 25% enrollment of Hispanic students. Our percentage enrollment has gone from 16% in 2009 to 25% today. We have received a request for funds to apply for a grant because of the HSI designation.

• **Middle College High School Taking Space**: At the board meeting and among the twenty speakers is one who somewhat referenced Middle College High School students as taking space away from regular college courses. This issue was brought to my attention a couple of months ago by one of the deans. Space for Middle College High School should not be an
issue, not after the voters approved Measure Q. The research survey for Measure Q revealed that 80% of the citizens of Winters and Solano County favored this program. Measure Q funding ought to be used to provide classroom space for these students who are as much ours as they are the school district’s. I have asked for resources to be deployed to serve the students without taking anything away from our existing resources.

- **Comfort in the Classrooms:** Some students expressed the discomfort they and faculty are experiencing in the classrooms. Our Facilities team is working hard to ensure that students and faculty are comfortable on campus and will continue to address these issues.

- **Higher Salaries for Employees:** At the board meeting a union leader shared that our compensation for faculty is ranked number 52 in the state. If so, we are not number one, but we are not number 69 out of 72 districts, as has previously been stated. Regardless of where we are, having a competitive salary to attract and compete is important. Getting to a much higher salary level will not happen immediately. It will take years to build. We can establish a goal to achieve a certain level in a certain year. The sooner we can start working on that goal the better. I challenge our faculty and staff leaders to join the board and me in working on the goal. This is an ideal time for us to work TOGETHER on achieving salary parity with some of our sister institutions in the upper tier of the market salary.

My goal is not to refute every statement that is made, but I hope this gives you a sense of the distance between reality and unfounded rumors. While there are legitimate reasons for concern, the unchecked statements may sink morale unnecessarily.

As the College faced challenging times in 2009, I shared with you that there is no problem hard enough we cannot resolve if we put our heads together to resolve it.

**10 Paradoxical Commandments of Leadership by Kent Keith**

1. People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered. **Love and trust them anyway.**
2. If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. **Do good anyway.**
3. If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies. **Succeed anyway.**
4. The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. **Do good anyway.**
5. Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. **Be honest and frank anyway.**
6. The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest people with the smallest minds. **Think big anyway.**
7. People favor underdogs but follow top dogs. **Fight for a few underdogs anyway.**
8. What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. **Build anyway.**
9. People really need help but may attack you if you help them. **Help people anyway.**
10. Give the world the best you have, and you may get kicked in the teeth. **Give the world your best anyway.**

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