Dear Colleagues:

What an accomplishment! Monday the California Community College Board of Governors declared that Solano Community College was awarded one of the 15 spots for community colleges awarding the bachelor’s degree. This designation puts us in outstanding company among the great community colleges in the state and the nation. The requirements were stringent and we met them all in the end. To add to the excitement, Governor Brown himself went to the Board of Governors’ meeting to support our program and the other two that were awarded.

Despite what we have suffered over the past three months, nobody can take our accomplishments away from us. It is up to us to not let someone else define us, but to be strong and hold on to our integrity. Protests, accusations and untrue statements should not get us down. We are Solano and we have strengthened ourselves. We are one of fifteen community colleges in the state to be bestowed this honor. Congratulations to all who worked hard to make this day happen.

Super Saturday and Superb Outcomes: I continue to believe that we need to provide more—not fewer—opportunities for the public to access Solano Community College if we want our enrollment and our access to be what they need to be. Along that line over 200 individuals and family members came to the College for our Super Saturday event. I was very impressed to see the numbers that were coming in. Also impressive was the number of Solano Community College employees who were there. This event was led by Shemila Johnson. Prominent were the likes of Shirley Lewis, John Yu, Cynthia Simon, Jocelyn Mouton, Melissa Reeve, and Shawn Carney. Additional support came from the following: Ahmer Ali, Barbara Pavao, Carmela Logarta, Carolina Rico, Carolyn Pleasant, Cynthia Simon, Debra Berrett, Erik Visser, Janice Eaves, Jeffrey young, Jenny Gonzalez, Judith Burtenshaw, Karen McCord, Linda Kelly, Lisa Brasley, Marcie McDaniels, Maria Hernandez-Becerra, Priscilla Hernandez-Neil, Rebecca LaCount, Rosie Monroy, Ruth Rich, Salvatore Abbate, Songhai Deveaux, Susan Beavers, Tonya Kent, Tracy Gross, Kamber St. Maria, Nick Cittandino, and Amy Daffenback.

I want to thank all those who came and helped serve our students.

Phone Banking a Success: One of the decisions we made was to call students who had left us without completing a degree or certificate. With the help of Pei-Lin and Peter from the Research and Planning Office, we identified over 1,300 such students. Our team of callers, also led by Shemila Johnson, reached 93% of the students. These students were grateful that we care enough to contact them, and we anticipate getting a good number of them back. This is part of our
strategy to not only meet the 8500 FTES goal, but to exceed it. It is the type of work great community colleges do.

Shemila Johnson, Julie K-Swingle, Dylan Pollard, John Siefert, Tracie White, Maureen Mason-Muyco, Joleena Lewis, Yashica Crawford, Laurie Cheatham, Gale Anderson, Tonya Kent, Tracy Gross, Geff Freire, Lisa Brasley, Rudy Chery, Shirley Lewis, Peter Cammish, Pei-Lin Van't Hul, Jeff Young and Antoinette Payne were the members of our team who took on that responsibility. Thirteen hundred calls were made. We are going to follow up to see the efficacy of these contacts. You are all true SCC heroes and believers in its future.

I hope you can get excited with us as we launch toward 8500 FTESD or more. Please do your part to make it come true.

**Appreciation Breakfast:** We hope that you had a great time this morning at the Appreciation Breakfast. As I previously stated, we need to celebrate all of our successes as often as we can. We are truly fortunate to have a campus full of outstanding faculty, staff and administrators. I would like to thank Yashica Crawford, Tracy Drake, Michael Wyly, Jim DeKloe, Jeff Lehfeldt, George Olgin and Tina Abbate for putting their thoughts together for this event. Congratulations to ALL the Presidential Award winners and especially to Donna Meyer for receiving the Presidential Courage Award for speaking up to defend our institution.

**Hispanic Student Graduation:** Dr. Jose Ballesteros and Julie Martinez held a graduation ceremony for the Latino students on Friday. Fourteen students participated in the ceremony, and I shared a few words of encouragement with them. I am looking for this event to continue to grow as our Hispanic student population has risen from 14% six years ago to over 25% today. If you want to see accomplishments, do not miss this gathering. As I shared with the graduates and those in attendance, with the Latino population increasing, it is important for us to educate more and more of them as they are going to become the faculty and administrators of our colleges and universities, or lawmakers of our states and country. I am so sorry we did not have a strong faculty and staff presence other than Nick Cittadino, the only one I saw. Next year, let us go and support our Hispanic students. They are 25% of our student body and deserve our support.

**Student Testimonials:** We are often fortunate to receive inspiring letters from current and former students about their experiences at SCC. We are looking into ways that we can display this good news more prominently. Here is just one example that Dr. Philip Summers shared with me that he recently received:

“Dr. Summers …… your class was one of the most interesting and one of the most challenging classes I had ever taken. I was proud to get an A in your class. Your class is also the reason I decided to be a bio major and select NBP as my major in Davis.”

In the meantime, please feel free to share these good news items with Dr. Crawford.
**May Revised Message from the Chancellor’s Office:**

“Colleagues,

This morning the Governor released his May Revision to the proposed 2015-16 budget. The actual revenues that have accrued to the state treasury over the course of the current fiscal year have significantly outpaced estimates made at the time of the Governor’s January proposal. The increased revenues have a strong upward effect on the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee – a cumulative increase of $6.1 billion over the 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 fiscal years. Of this amount, $2.7 billion is attributable to the budget year.

While more detail will be available in the coming days, the key highlights of the Governor’s revised budget relevant to the California Community Colleges are as follows:

- $49.7 million to increase access from 2 percent to 3 percent ($156.5M total for 2015-16).
- A decrease of $31.3 million to reflect a downward adjustment in the COLA from 1.58% to 1.02%
- $75 million to support an increase in full-time faculty hiring. Funding would be allocated per FTES, but districts with relatively low proportions of full-time faculty would be required to hire more than districts with relatively high proportions of full-time faculty.
- $141.7 million in additional funds for support of district general operating expenses, bringing the proposed total to $266.7 million for the 2015-16 fiscal year.
- $274.7 million in additional one-time funds to pay down prior mandate obligations, bringing the proposed total to $626 million. These funds would distributed on a per-FTES basis.
- $148 million for deferred maintenance and instructional equipment. Of this amount, $48 million is attributable to the current fiscal year. No local match is required.
- $60 million in one-time funds for the Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation Program. These funds are intended to improve basic skills instruction through adoption and/or expansion of evidence-based models of placement, remediation, and student support that will aid the progress and success of basic skills students. More detail will be available in the forthcoming trailer bill.
- $15 million increase for Student Equity Plan funding, bringing the total proposed increase to $115 million for the 2015-16 fiscal year. Concurrently, provisional language will require the implementation of SB 1023 (Liu, 2014), which authorizes a pilot program to provide additional support of foster youth who participate in EOPS.
- $15 million increase for the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative. Of this amount, $3 million will go toward technical assistance and the remaining $12 million is for the development and dissemination of effective practices. Provisional language would prioritize development of curriculum and practices for members of the California Conservation Corps and for inmates pursuant to SB 1391 (Hancock, 2014). There will also be language included in the budget encouraging districts to offer up funding to enhance inmate education efforts.
- $2.5 million to fund the COLA for the EOPS, DSPS, CalWORKs, and the Childcare Tax Bailout programs.
- $2 million in one-time funds for a pilot program to foster collaboration between colleges and CSU campuses relating to basic skills instruction for incoming CSU students.
• A decrease of $825,000 in energy efficiency funding pursuant to the California Clean Energy Jobs Act (Proposition 39, 2012). This reduces the amount available in 2015-16 to $38.7 million.

• $25 million increase in Proposition 98 funds for the Awards in Innovation in Higher Education. This would bring the proposed total funding to $50 million for the 2015-16 fiscal year (half Prop 98, half non-98). The May Revision would also reclassify $23 million in current year awards as Proposition 98 funds, reflecting awards coordinated by community colleges. The May Revision further proposes to allow community colleges to be lead applicants for awards.

• The May Revision makes various other adjustments to the general apportionment, such as the inclusion of funding for projected FTES restoration and revised estimates concerning property taxes and fee revenues.

• Concerning the adult education proposal, forthcoming trailer bill will propose various modifications, perhaps most notably the elimination of the allocation boards that were proposed in January. Each consortium will instead be required to propose a transparent governance structure for joint approval by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Chancellor. It will no longer be required that each consortium have a fiscal agent, allowing for direct funding of member agencies if so desired. Language will also specify and clarify various reporting and funding deadlines. More information will be provided on these changes as details become available in the trailer bill.

The Governor’s proposal to increase funding for the California Community Colleges at the May Revision is excellent news. These resources will aid us as we continue to recover from the devastating reductions of the economic downturn. Those funding reductions forced colleges to cut course sections, turn away hundreds of thousands of students, reduce crucial student support services, and tighten operational budgets, all the while dealing with new proposals to extend our reach, through the development of transfer degrees, the offering of baccalaureate degrees, to increase distance education courses, etc. For many of our state’s citizens, community colleges offer the best hope to escape poverty and build a brighter future, and this mission can only succeed with adequate state investment.

Even with this good May Revision news, it is important to remember that the colleges have not yet fully recovered from the bad times. We have not completely restored access and college operational budgets are still approximately $750 million below where we were, accounting for inflation. Further, college budgets will face additional stresses in the coming years, as PERS and STRS obligations are scheduled to increase rapidly and the state faces the sunset of Proposition 30 revenues. Given these circumstances and our knowledge of the volatility of the state’s revenue system, we suggest that districts plan carefully now so they are prepared to meet the challenges ahead.

Next steps in the budget process include a response by the Legislative Analyst’s Office, review by the budget committees of each house, and a legislative conference committee to iron out differences between the two houses. It is expected that the budget will be approved and signed by the Governor prior to July 1, 2015.
Regards,
Dan Troy
Vice Chancellor, California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office

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

“A graduation ceremony is an event where the commencement speaker tells thousands of students dressed in identical caps and gowns that ‘individuality’ is the key to success.”
– Robert Orben