Dear Colleagues:

**Hiring Flurry At SCC**
As many of you know, we have been actively engaged in hiring faculty and staff in the past few months, and the work continues. Overall, the hiring processes have been working well at Solano and only minor issues have caused some delay. The staff in Human Resources have worked hard to keep the processes moving forward and to ensure that the process is inclusionary. Recommendations for new employees are coming forth on a daily basis. I want to thank members of the hiring committees who have worked diligently to accomplish our hiring goals. We can only benefit from increasing our ranks and welcoming the fresh perspectives that new employees bring to the College.

**Substantive Change and Accreditation**
I thought it important in this issue of SPD that I concentrate on an aspect of the accreditation process that we do not often recognize; that is, “Substantive Change,” which is a formal aspect of Accreditation that is critical to a college’s compliance with Federal guidelines. First, I would like to identify characteristics that underlie Substantive Change and second, I would like to address how each of you may help to identify programs that qualify as “substantive change” here at SCC.

As you know, the primary purpose of the accreditation process is to encourage institutional improvement as we engage in ongoing evaluation of what we do at our College. To quote the Commission, “The ACCJC expects institutions to undertake change responsibly. In order to maintain their integrity, institutions must guarantee the quality of their programs and services, even as they make changes.” Federal law then mandates that the Commission require institutions to obtain accreditor approval of any substantive change in the operation of their educational programs and/or services. Furthermore, we must verify that the substantive change is consistent with the institutional mission and integrity of existing programs and/or services and adheres to ACCJC Standards and Eligibility requirements.

ACCJC specifies a variety of specific conditions that require “substantive change” approval, to include, for example, a change in the intended student population of the college, the establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50% of an educational program, a change in the degree level of the institution, any change in the official name of the institution, and so forth. Colleges must be always mindful of changes that might constitute what the Commission views as “substantive” and report such changes.

Many colleges set up formal structures in which to identify substantive changes. At some colleges, for example, a member of the Financial Aid Office will sit on the Curriculum Committee. Her/his role is to
simply advise the committee whether a particular program or certificate is eligible for financial aid; therefore, provide that financial aid is made available to students who enroll in the program or individual courses. The reason that the Financial Aid Officer carefully monitors any changes is that the U.S. Department of Education has established strict guidelines on what courses or programs may be considered for students to receive payments. If there is a program change, the Department needs to be notified of such program changes.

Occasionally, the U.S. Department of Education will contact the accreditation body to find out whether a program being offered on a campus meets accreditation standards and has been approved by the Commission. As stated earlier, the changes might not be only curriculum based, but also constitute a change in the location where the program is being offered or must comply with what the Commission states as being a “substantive” change.

In order, then, to offer new and sometimes “revised” programs, the institution must submit the specific changes and requisite documentation to the Commission in the form of a Substantive Change Report. If the institution fails to receive approval for offering a particular program, the institution must repay, in some cases, any financial aid disbursed to students. Penalties can be substantial if the institution is not in compliance.

Recently, I/VP White and Accreditation Coordinator Dambrosio submitted to the ACCJC a list of potential “substantive changes” at SCC. The Commission responded that we must write a Substantive Change Report on our Auto Tech program, a program that has been recently revised by new hire Professor Paul Hidy. If you are not aware of this newly revised program, you must visit the program’s shop in the former Wilson-Cornelius Ford dealership (we have a three-year lease) at Georgia Street and Solano Avenue in Vallejo where the equipment (largely funded by Measure Q) is state of the art. Professor Hidy has rewritten the entire curriculum and the program promises to attract many students and to contribute to the workforce of our economy. Eventually, we will build a facility for this program at the Vallejo campus; in the meantime, check out our Auto Tech program, as you will be impressed. The program is an excellent example of a “substantive” change at SCC.

SCC’s Auto Tech Report is due to the Commission at the beginning of next week. As we look to create more innovative programs and student services in SCC’s future, we must be aware of the need to report substantive changes. We must also work closely with the Financial Aid Administrator, Associate Dean Robin Darcangelo, to keep her informed of the changes and modifications in our various curricula in order to remain eligible for financial aid consideration.

Karen McCord Appointed to the UMOJA Board of Governors
I am pleased that a long-time member of our faculty, Professor Karen McCord, has been appointed to the UMOJA Board of Governors. Karen’s continued support of the UMOJA Community is well recognized and her appointment is indeed an honor for the College.

Academic Performance and Exercise
President Kennedy promoted physical fitness in our schools over fifty years ago. First Lady Michele Obama is promoting fitness for all of our children. If you missed the short video on the importance of physical fitness sent out by Professor Jeff Cardinal, Solano College Soccer Coach, I thought I would send the link again. Sometimes we are so caught up in our deskwork that we neglect the importance of physical activity. The video reminds us of the important connection between physical education and enhanced academic performance.
Jowel C. Laguerre, Ph.D.
Superintendent-President

“Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.”
— Albert Camus