Dear Colleagues:

**Excellence in Achievement Student Awards**
The SCC celebration activities kicked off last week with the Excellence in Achievement Student Awards. Departments, Schools, and individual faculty and staff members recommended several students to be recognized. The list of awards was impressive as were the students and their accomplishments. Parents and significant others were on hand to support the students. The Awards Committee, led by Dr. Jose Ballesteros, put together a very lively program. I want to thank all the faculty and staff for the time they spent recognizing our students. For some of these students (with amazing stories of high achievement and the ability to overcome life difficulties) to stay in and succeed in college is a major accomplishment. These awards are especially meaningful for those of us who come from families where the high value of education is not embraced. Again, bravo for the faculty, staff, and administrators who took the time to make sure SCC recognizes our high achievers. I hope next year we will identify even more students to receive awards.

**Crime in our Community**
I used to live in Kansas City as well as near Washington, D.C., and I know that the latest crime activity in our community pales in comparison to the places cited above. While we are not those places, we surely do not want to ever come close to their criminal profiles. As I read the newspaper reports on the latest homicides in our communities, I wonder what we as a College can do to reduce the incidence of these terrible events. I would encourage those of you with constructive ideas to come forward. Your community needs you and we ought to respond.

**Solano County Education Initiative (SCEI) Meeting**
Dr. Karen McCord and I have been part of this group for over two years. The purpose of the SCEI is to promote education generally in Solano County. We have also added a student who used to fail until I connected him with a resource called “Where there is a will, there is an A.” He is now earning those A’s and B’s. At a recent meeting, a welcome surprise was the arrival of Coach John Nagle. The timing of his attendance was significant as a student was sharing ideas about a program that employs sports to help students achieve. We are pleased with Coach Nagle’s interest in participating in SCEI, as having sports included in the curricula will enhance the achievement of our goals, particularly as we revamp the program.
**Meeting with the Northbay Soccer League**
Thanks to the gentle encouragement and a push from Dr. LaNae Jaimez (Psychology), I met recently with the Board Director and Executive Director of the Northbay Soccer League, Mani Salimpour. Currently, the League provide clinics and coaching for young people ages 4 to 18, but they want to do more. They have high expectations that their players have good grades in order to participate in sports. Here I was reminded of one of the major goals in *A Nation At Risk* (1983), i.e., “…demand what is needed for success.” The League also wants to provide tutoring to students, but most importantly, they want to instill in players the aspiration to succeed in higher education and the ability to access higher education. They want for each student to have an Education Plan. Here the League is fulfilling another mandate expressed in *A Nation at Risk*, which stated, “…provide what is needed for success.” The organization wants to partner with the College to achieve these admirable goals. What a great opportunity for us to do something significant for our youngsters in the area.

**Softball Rocks**

It is not enough that our SCC Softball team ranks first in the state in its category. As we know, the Team followed Basketball’s undefeated season with one of their own. But, as Softball Coach Terri Pearson-Bloom remarked, the undefeated achievement is beyond anyone’s imagination. No player is batting less than .300 and the Team is outperforming their predecessors. This Team is having the best season ever and every game is a game performed with class and skill.

This weekend, the SCC Softball team will enter the play-offs (Regional Round #1) at home on the Fairfield campus: Saturday at 2 p.m. and Sunday at 12 noon. Cost for admission is $10, $7 for students, faculty, and staff, seniors, and children under 12. We are pushing for a major fan turnout to cheer the young women to victory. We can be that support to get them to a real sweet season by going deep, deep, deep, into the playoffs.

**Community College Pathways to Law School (CCPLS) Initiative**

As most of you are aware, Solano College was selected by the California State Bar as one of 24 California Community Colleges to participate in the Community College Pathways to Law School (CCPLS) Initiative. Completing both the initial and supplemental competitive application processes in the limited time available was a tremendous effort from everyone involved. Professor Joel Powell would like to thank all those who contributed time, effort, and information to the College's success in this initiative, especially Dr. Shirley Lewis, Diane White, Peter Cammish, Marcie McDaniels, Kamber Sta. Maria, Melissa Reeve, Brad Paschal, and Corrine Kirkbride.

Professor Powell also acknowledged that over the past few weeks there have been whispers of Solano's involvement and selection as part of the initiative; however, given the requirements from the State Bar, all selected institutions were requested to refrain from making public or even internal announcements until recently. This Thursday and Friday the State Bar will hold the CCPLS Law Summit to officially and formally sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the participating Community Colleges and the six participating Law Schools: U.C. Davis, U.C. Irvine, UCSF, Santa Clara University, Loyola Marymount, and USC. Being a part of the CCPLS is truly an excellent badge of honor for SCC.
Opening Our Eyes to Community Good
What a nice surprise to read a fine piece written by Professor Jim DeKloe in The Reporter (Vacaville newspaper). In this piece, Professor DeKloe reminded us of how far we have come in eradicating diseases, especially polio. Professor DeKloe commended the Rotary Club for directing their energies “full force into the eradication of the polio disease.” Furthermore, he reminded us of the enormous good of other such organizations like March of Dimes, the Gates Foundation, and the World Health Organization in funding the research necessary for eradicating the disease.

However, lamented DeKloe: “Complete eradication of eradication of polio remains excruciating elusive” (polio remains “endemic” in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nigeria). Aptly employing a fire analogy, DeKloe reminds us “if the last ember is not extinguished, it could blaze again into a forest fire.”

DeKloe closed his excellent piece in lauding the Rotary Club for its “…noble efforts in alleviating countless cases of human suffering.”

Reflections from the AACC Conference
As I said recently, the Convention of the Association of American Community College Conference, was the best AACC conference I can remember. There was so much to hear and see and share and learn. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to reflect on Solano Community College and to look toward the future of this Institution strengthened by our skilled faculty and staff who help students achieve beyond their known potential.

As I reflected on the range of awards given to some community colleges, I said to myself that SCC ought to shoot for even higher levels of excellence. I thought of what we have accomplished in football (until we suspended the sport…yes, I remember…), basketball, softball, volleyball, and soccer. In fact, we have earned numerous achievements, such as Top 50 or 100 Certificates and Degree producers, April Nelson (SCC student) writing about SCC’s Dr. Cabrera National honor for writing, two of our students earning state honors for Mathematics, Community College Public Relations Organization (CCPRO) first place award for Solano Community College television ad, and more. But, we deserve additional recognition for the quality of work we are doing. In addition to our established achievements in sports, humanities, and mathematics, for example, we now can dare enter other competitions such as Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) honors, for example, and Skills-USA (formerly VICA) for our students in Biotechnology, Welding, Drafting, Aviation, Auto body, Automotive Technology, Computer science, etc. Such competitions can strengthen our confidence in ourselves as a community of scholars in liberal education and career technical education. Let us continue to work together to gain greater involvement in education achievement.

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

“It is better to light one small candle than to curse the darkness.” --Eleanor Roosevelt