August 12, 2009

Dear General Advisory Board member:

Thank you for continuing to be an active and interested friend to Santa Monica College and to our students. More than ever lately, it has been important to let the world know we are still here, committed as ever to educating students, ups and downs of the economy notwithstanding.

As you learn more and more about SMC’s diverse programs you are able to share this information with your neighbors and colleagues, helping them to understand the value of the college to the community. You have also brought us concerns and observations from a fresh perspective, always an important contribution, and we thank you for that.

Alonzo Hill has been your gracious president this past year and looks forward to another year at the helm, guided by the input and suggestion of the executive committee. We continue to welcome your comments and invite you at any time be in touch with Alonzo or with me to share your ideas.

Here were some of our programs in 2008-2009:

In a favorite GAB tradition Associates Students President David Chun and Student Trustee Cameron Henton joined us to introduce themselves at the first meeting of the year in September, where Dr. Tsang also gave us a brief “state of the college” update. In his usual positive fashion, long-time football coach Robert Taylor assured us that the college football team was strong and ready to face the competition. We were appreciative of the breakfast sponsorship of First Private Bank and Mo Azimi.

There was an excellent reason to hold the November breakfast meeting on the Main Campus: to celebrate the newly installed Quad replete with plenty of green space, generous seating areas and fountains. Director of Facilities and Planning Greg Brown led an information-packed tour of the inviting space.

Before the tour Dr. Nancy Grass-Hemmert of the Communications Department shared the amazing story of the SMC theater arts students who were invited to perform at Shandong University in Jinan, China. They not only received an overwhelmingly positive reception, but were also asked to return in future. Maureen Boggs and First Regional Bank were our gracious breakfast sponsors.

Just who works at Santa Monica College? In January Vice-president of Human Resources Marcia Wade presented an informative program on the faculty and staff
profile of the college. As you would have guessed, many of your local neighbors are part of the internal team at SMC, supporting it both as participants in the local community and as professionals. Marina Parise, SMC’s reference librarian, treated us to an outstanding electronic demonstration of how students now go about finding any information they need, and how she has devised a traveling reference library system between SMC’s campuses. Brandy Bishop and Sunrise Assisted Living sponsored this information-packed breakfast.

In March the GAB was hosted at the Academy for Entertainment Technology (AET) and graciously welcomed by Dean Katharine Muller. Exciting plans were revealed by Greg Brown, Director of Facilities and Planning: After years in the Student Union basement, SMC’s popular NPR station KCRW (89.9 FM) will get new above-ground studios at AET with state of the art studios and ample parking. The existing AET facilities will also be expanded to serve as the new home to the Communications Department.

Zeny Baduel and Chris Fria as chair and vice-chair respectively of the Design Technology Department provided an interesting glimpse into new and contemporary career paths. They joined with design student Galina Ovchinnikova to demonstrate and personalize the offerings of the department, not always familiar to those outside. Susan Jimenez Barrett was the generous breakfast sponsor this time.

As always, the GAB’s year culminated with the annual Athletic Awards Breakfast in the Pavilion in a festive atmosphere, honoring student athletes who were also recognized by their teams and coaches for being role models and academically successful. Trader Joe’s returned as a sponsor for the flowers, power bars and drinks while Robert Kronovet of Kronovet Realty and Eddie Guerboian of Reader’s Fine Jewelers also generously supported the event.

Thank you again for your support during 2008-2009. The active presence of the General Advisory Board was a particular bright spot for SMC during this difficult year.

May 2009-2010 see the economy on a surer footing and all of our students on their way to achieving their goals.

See you on September 17th.

Warm regards,

Judy Neveau  
Director of Community Relations