As I end my first month as your president, I have taken the time to reflect on the fact that I continue to be glad that I decided to come to Los Angeles Southwest College. Southwest is an exciting place to be at because of all the good work being done by faculty and staff. I know that our work is valued by students and the community.

As I mentioned in my Flex Day remarks, you will receive a series of monthly updates to strengthen the lines of communication on issues of importance to the campus. This update is the first in a series of monthly updates that you will receive this year.

**ENROLLMENT BY THE NUMBERS**

As of September 19, 2013, we have 8,054 students—a 16% increase over last year. Our credit full-time equivalent student (FTES) estimate is 2,285. This is 115 FTES over our target of 2,170 for the fall. We are also on track to hit our non-credit goal of 255 FTES.

Thanks go out to everyone on campus. It was great to hear about our fall semester on the radio, wonderful to see the success of the “Beat the Rush” Day, and fantastic to know that so many people assisted students with finding their classes during the first week of the semester.

Thanks also go out to the Office of Academic Affairs and our department chairs and deans since our efficiency rate is also on the rise. Whereas, Southwest had the lowest average class size going into the fall semester we have now surpassed four other colleges in the District. Because students are still signing up for late start classes, I will keep you posted as the semester progresses on where we end up with our average class size. The bottom line is that all of these indicators are positive so far and heading in the right direction.

**ACCREDITATION**

There is a sense of urgency that I need to convey to all of you about the fact that we must resolve the four remaining recommendations given to the college due to the two-year rule. The “two-year rule” is a federally imposed mandate that requires accrediting agencies to place a two-year deadline on correction of all recommendations that relate to deficiencies. What that means is that no later than March of 2014, we must show the Commission that we have resolved every deficiency that led to the recommendations.

Our Accreditation Response Teams have been working diligently and I am hopeful that we will successfully resolve the remaining four recommendations. I want to sincerely thank every faculty, staff, and student who has been assigned to an Accreditation Response Team because your work matters. Special thanks go out to VP Patrick Jefferson (Accreditation Liaison Officer) and Dr. Alison Moore (Faculty Co-Chair) for their work in organizing the teams and the overall college accreditation efforts.

**BUDGET**

The budget remains a challenge. Our expenses exceed our revenues, and we must correct the imbalance. In reviewing actual expenses for fiscal year 2012-2013, I noted that the college spent $24,542,798. However, this year the total budget for the college is only $23,070,845. The District Budget Committee voted on a policy at its last meeting on September 18 to give colleges with an interim and/or new president a reprieve from paying back its debt, but expects the college to submit a detailed recovery plan for achieving fiscal stability on October 8.

It is important for the college to begin to address debt repayment because the District Budget Committee also passed a second policy at the same meeting that will be painful when applied. The policy reads in part: “The Chancellor shall evaluate the college’s recovery plan and may recommend to the Board of Trustees that a special emergency response team be appointed to monitor and regulate the enrollment management and fiscal affairs of the college.”

The good news in the budget picture is the fact that the state may give community colleges more funding in November. However, there is a wise saying that you should not count your chickens before they hatch. I will keep you posted if any new state funding materializes. Otherwise, the direction from the Board is clear—we must live within our budget.

**BOND PROGRAM**

As some of you may have heard, we are losing Edwin Van Ginkel, our College Project Manager. Edwin is taking a new position at the District Office with our District’s Executive Director of Facilities, Mr. Jim O’Reilly. His replacement will be Gustavo Ripalda who has been part of our bond program for seven years so we will not lose any institutional memory.
TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Communication is sometimes difficult in large organizations and doesn’t always reach every employee. In an effort to effectively communicate to the entire campus community, we will hold a morning and evening town hall meeting on **Tuesday, October 29**. The purpose of the meeting is two-fold. First, to give all employees the latest update on all of our construction projects, and second, to update the campus on a new Senate Bill (1456) that affects every student. Vice Presidents Trimble and Walton will present these two very important topics at the town halls. An invitation to attend will be sent to all employees via email and posted on the college website in the coming weeks.

COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAM

Because Community Services posted a deficit at the end of fiscal year 2012-2013, the program has been temporarily closed until we can pay back the deficit. The California Education Code does not allow the college to pay any deficits for Community Services out of Program 100 (or our general operating) funds. Joni Collins is working to increase the dedicated revenue that the college brings in this year in order to clear the deficit. We hope to have it cleared by the start of summer 2014.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

To help new arrivals get better acquainted with Southwest, an information session will be conducted for all new employees starting in mid-October. If you are a new employee (classified, administrator, regular faculty or adjunct faculty) please respond to the invitation once you receive it since all new employees are expected to attend. Lunch will be provided.

SUMMARY

For the past six weeks, I have learned a lot about Southwest from students, faculty, staff, community members, and legislators during what I would characterize as listening sessions. Walking into any job as the head of an organization, I firmly believe that the best thing that you can do is actively listen to issues and concerns being raised by employees and students. In one of those sessions, I was humbled to learn about former foster children attending Southwest who are homeless, yet find a way to attend their classes on a daily basis. As a result, I reached out to the Stuart Foundation who has asked the college to submit a grant proposal for wrap around services for these students.

I’ve learned about other campus issues, including campus lighting concerns, construction, and more -- all of which are being addressed.

Knowing how much it takes for us to make payroll, pay our fringe benefits, utilities, etc. I am working more closely with the Foundation to accomplish its goal of increasing revenue to support the college. If you know anyone who would make an excellent Foundation Board member, please contact our Executive Director of the Foundation, Avis Boyd. There is a monetary contribution of $1,000 per year expected of all Foundation members and an expectation that they will raise funds beyond their own personal contribution.

Please continue to look for these monthly updates. As always, I encourage you to continue providing your ideas and feedback.
THOUGHTS FOR THE SEASON

As we head further into the holiday season, more than ever, we are reminded that the work we do is meaningful. I want to take a moment to say thank you for everything that you do for our students and the community.

The California State University transfer numbers are in and we have much to be proud of. Southwest is ranked number #2 in the state after El Camino College in the number of African Americans who transferred to California State Universities in 2012-2013. Our goal this year should be to go after the number one spot!

This kind of success would not be possible without a team effort. In this season of celebration, I hope that you will put on your party shoes and join us for the annual holiday party on Friday, December 13 from 6 p.m. – midnight at the Courtyard by Marriott. The Planning Committee is working hard on an evening of food, fun, and music. Let’s celebrate a job well done this year!

BUDGET UPDATE

We received 104 responses to the budget recommendations online survey. All ten of the recommendations are now being forwarded to me for approval by the Budget Committee and College Council. Recommendation #7 (salary savings from not filling vacancies) will be re-visited in January 2014 if the Governor’s proposal restores any Proposition 98 funding to community colleges this fiscal year.

Next, the College will need to submit a detailed three-year FY 13-14, 14-15, and 15-16 recovery plan for achieving fiscal stability. I will keep your informed about the progress on our three-year recovery plan because the recovery plan will be contingent upon the actions that we take this year.

SAVE THE DATE

THOMAS G. LAKIN CENTER RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY
FEBRUARY 2014

The College is planning to host a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Thomas G. Lakin Fitness and Wellness Center in early February 2014. I spoke to Mrs. Lakin about attending the ceremony and she was thrilled to accept our invitation. I am excited that Dr. Lakin’s daughters and some of his siblings will also attend the ceremony. As part of the event, we plan to host a welcome reception for the Lakin family. If you worked with Dr. Lakin and have any personal stories about him or have any pictures of him, please let me know if you would be willing to share them with his family.

ENROLLMENT UPDATE

It’s official! I am pleased to report that Southwest exceeded its enrollment targets for the fall—2,589 full-time equivalent students (FTES). This is really good news because we are banking on a strong spring semester to be able to receive additional growth dollars from the District that will help balance this year’s budget.

For winter 2014, we will need to remain vigilant as some students have now dropped their winter classes. We need to remind students not to wait until the first day of the spring semester to register for classes.
These declines are not a major issue at this point, but we will be keeping an eye on them over the next few weeks.

**ACCREDITATION UPDATE**

On **November 4**, the College was notified by the Commission that it has final-ized comprehensive visits to all nine col-leges in the District in accordance with their policies.

Southwest will be required to submit a midterm report in spring 2015 (as sched-uled) and our next comprehensive visit will be in spring 2016, using the new standards. I would like to thank **Rose Calderon** who steps into the role of Faculty Co-Chair beginning in **January 2014**. She will replace Dr. Allison Moore who has represented the College well in the accreditation process and at Board of Trustees meetings.

Please don’t forget that Southwest will host a **Follow-Up Evaluation Team in March 2014**. Among the primary re-sponsibilities of the Follow-Up Evaluation Team are:

- Assess the 2014 Follow-Up Evaluation Report and clarify any questions
- Confirm that institutional practices are aligned with the Accreditation Standards
- Identify potential areas for improved compliance
- Assure the Commission that the institution continues to meet eligibility requirements; and

been responsive to the 2012 recommenda-tions of previous visiting teams; and

that the College has a commitment to its continuing pursuit of excellence.

On **November 25**, all employees were sent the first draft of the report. We welcome and need feedback from the entire cam-pus community. I hope that you will take a minute to look at the draft, our action let-ters from the Commission, comprehensive institutional self-evaluation, the evaluation from the 2012 External Evaluation, and 2013 Follow-Up Team visit report.

Also, please send your suggestions and feedback to Ivey Baquir no later than **December 13**. Anyone who provides feedback will be entered into a raffle to win a **$100 Shell Oil gas gift card**. The winner will be announced at the Holiday Party.

**CONTINUE TO MAKE SOUTHWEST SHINE!**

In closing, I want to wish each of you a **wonderful holiday** season surrounded by family and friends. I am thankful for all of your hard work that I see across campus from all areas of the College on a daily basis. I look forward to another great semester because I know that everyone will embrace the goal of doing their part to make Southwest shine!
ENROLLMENT
When everyone pulls together, amazing things can happen! On February 27, the District Office reviewed Southwest’s FTES projections, and the College is expected to exceed its base FTES targets this year. If the District’s projections hold, the College will earn an additional $330,000 in funding for fiscal year 2013-2014.

There are many people to thank for this good news, but most of all I would like to thank our faculty. Recent data shows that we are projected to have the second highest average class size in the District for spring 2014. Congratulations everyone on a job well done!

AWARD-WINNING FACULTY & STUDENTS
Every year, a number of College faculty and students receive honors for excellence from various state and national organizations. Recently, Reggie Morris was inducted into the California Community College Men’s Basketball Hall of Fame. Mr. Morris will be honored during a Hall of Fame ceremony on March 15. We still have a few seats left for those who want to attend – free of charge. Contact Ivey Baquir-Streator to RSVP.

I am also pleased to share that two of our TRIO students—Channing Gallardo and Erica Quinteros—were selected by The California Community College Chancellor’s Office to receive a Phi Theta Kappa Academic Team award. To be eligible a student must have a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA, be enrolled in academically rigorous coursework and provide leadership and service to their college and community.

Nationally, Professor Stephanie White will be selecting five eligible students to present their research at the National Technology Conference of the National Social Science Educators Association in Las Vegas, Nevada, April 13 - 15. The students will be presenting research on the topic of Community Empowerment: The Social Impact Gentrification in the Southern Los Angeles Community. The students’ research will also be published in the NASSE Perspectives Journal. Please join me in congratulating our faculty and students on these outstanding achievements!

COMMENCEMENT
We are looking forward to another exciting graduation this year! Mark your calendars for commencement 2014. The ceremony will take place on Thursday, June 5, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. Graduation is one of the greatest celebrations of completion and achievement that many of our students will ever experience.

Not only do they take pride in their accomplishment, but they also take pride in knowing that our faculty, staff, and administration will be there to watch them receive their degrees as they move on to the next phase of their lives.

If you do not have academic regalia, please contact the Bookstore for rental information once we get closer to graduation season. The Bookstore will notify the campus when orders can be placed.

I am also encouraging faculty and staff to volunteer to rent a gown for students who are unable to afford one. Acting Vice President Cobian will be sending out more details on how you can contribute later this semester.

ACCREDITATION
On February 10, the District’s Board of Trustees Ad Hoc Committee on Accreditation met with our campus Accreditation Steering Committee. They were very complimentary of the work the College has completed to resolve the four remaining college recommendations.

Additionally, on February 26, Vice President Lawrence Bradford, Academic Senate President Allison Moore, new Faculty Accreditation Chair Rose Calderon, Dean Stephanie Brasley, and Acting Vice President Oscar Cobian presented the College’s Follow-Up Report to the Board’s Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

The committee voted unanimously to recommend approval to the full board. They also pledged to provide accreditation support for the College. Our list of needs will be presented to the Chancellor in the coming weeks.
On Monday, April 14, the visiting team will arrive on campus, and will spend a full day with us. Please take the time to read the final draft of our second follow-up report that will be posted online no later than March 13.

UPDATE: PRESIDENT’S BREAKFAST

As you know from my previous newsletter, the President’s Breakfast was initially scheduled to take place on February 22.

The breakfast has been rescheduled for Saturday, May 3 at USC’s Town & Gown Ballroom, 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. The theme of the event is Invest to Impact: Impact Education. Impact the Economy. Impact Lives. The cost to attend is $35. To raise funds, we are requesting participants make a pledge or commit to providing $25 per month for 12 months ($300) to the Foundation. The Foundation is hosting the President’s Breakfast to provide a public stage to share stories of how students’ lives are being impacted everyday through education and to encourage our community partners to invest where the needs are increasingly greater than ever before.

All proceeds will go for above-base funding for instructional and student support services at Southwest. All employees, students and alum are invited. Tickets can be purchased from Ivey Baquir-Streeter in the President’s Office starting in mid-March. At the breakfast, we will be honoring the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Los Angeles Chapter of the NAACP. See Save the Date.

BUDGET UPDATE

As of December 31, our 2013-2014 Second Quarter Financial Status Report shows that the available budget is $23,435,526.

To meet our projected expenses and balance our budget, we must bring in an additional $2,290,201 revenue this year.

We are still in the process of implementing our budget plan that includes salary savings, bringing in additional facilities rental, renting space in the SSB building, etc. I am cautiously optimistic that we can balance if we don’t incur unexpected charges by the time we close the fiscal year on June 30, 2014. When programs end the year in a deficit, Program 100 must cover it. This is the reason why our weekly budget monitoring is so critical.