



**“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”**

*Helen Keller*

Dear Colleague:

**W**hat have you been watching on TV this summer? In addition to enjoying hiking, kayaking, photography, and the great outdoors, summer also gives me a chance to get caught up on my favorite shows. I must confess, I am a fan of certain reality TV programs – not the dramas, traumas, and soap operas, but those that give people an opportunity to showcase their passions and pursue their dreams. They remind me of what we do right here at College of the Canyons.

Whether it’s “Dancing With the Stars,” “America’s Got Talent,” or “The Voice,” I am inspired by those contestants who – just like **you** – are willing to **take a chance**, lay it all out there, design new moves, compose original arrangements, and **give it everything** they have to make the most of the opportunity before them. These contestants epitomize the theme that marked last year’s theme – “Dream. Think. Do!” – and the passion of their performances demonstrate its veracity time and again.

One episode of “The Voice” really grabbed my attention when a contestant reflected on all she had experienced during the course of the season. She acknowledged that her achievements were not due solely to her innate talent. Although she was an amazing singer, she recognized that her accomplishments were due in large part to the contributions of others. In thanking those who contributed to her success, she said, **“Teamwork makes dreams work.”**

That statement stuck with me because it succinctly captures what we do each and every day at College of the Canyons. **Students come here with their dreams.** Dreams which are as unique as they are. One may have her sights set on transferring to an Ivy League campus. One may be a veteran looking to move from the battlefield to a career field. Another may be unemployed and hoping to obtain up-to-date skills that will lead to new opportunities. Still another might be a single mom who wants to create a new life for her children. Along with those dreams, all students come to us with the expectation that we will help them combine their abilities with their desire to learn **and inspire them to fulfill their dreams.**

And with teamwork, we do exactly that. **All of us** – a talented, committed group of professionals known as the COC Family – make COC the college of choice for many in Santa Clarita and beyond. What you bring to your individual position ensures that we can make our students’ dreams work.

Your:

- Passion
- Expertise
- Commitment
- Uniqueness
- Creativity
- Compassion, and
- Excellence

. . . have put COC and **you** in the spotlight.

### TEAMWORK MAKES OUR COLLEGE SHINE

**Y**ou are in the spotlight because you embody the qualities needed for successful teamwork:

**S**hared vision

**T**rust

**A**ttitude

**R**esponsiveness

You embrace our **Shared vision** of focusing on student success; you cultivate **Trust** among your colleagues as you communicate in an authentic way; you exhibit a positive **Attitude** and always see opportunity in every circumstance; and you consistently demonstrate **Responsiveness** to meeting the needs of our students and our community. As a result, what you have accomplished together with your colleagues shines brightly and sets our college apart from the rest.

Our achievements, the outcomes, our success, and our strength are made possible because, like those performers who make reality shows so compelling to watch, you rise to the occasion, embrace change, take chances, and demonstrate a commitment to make the most of every opportunity. It's easy to lose sight of that fact when you're caught up in the day-to-day details of your work. But stop for a moment, reflect on this past year, and remember when:

- You stepped outside of the box and **explored an idea** that showed potential.
- You **took a risk** and tried something you weren't sure would work.
- You stepped out of your silo and **partnered with another department** to create something beneficial and unique.
- You pushed yourself out of your comfort zone to take on a new challenge and **accomplished more** than you told yourself you could.

As a result, you developed a newfound confidence born of experience, as do the contestants on reality television shows. And, that confidence can help you conquer any stage fright or fears you might have about what's ahead. You see challenges and what is new and unfamiliar as opportunities and use your inner strength to propel yourself forward and achieve your goals as you show up, stand up, and deliver. That enables our college to achieve more than others imagine is possible. That is a distinguishing factor that sets us apart from the rest.

It would give me great joy to list all of the outcomes departments across our campuses have achieved. But there's not room enough to do so! Here are some shining examples of dreams that are being achieved at College of the Canyons because of teamwork.

**Together this past year, we:**

- Opened the 51,000-square-foot expansion of the **Library and The Learning Center**.
- Received state approval of our architectural plans for the **Institute for Culinary Education (iCue)**.
- **Generated \$2.4 million** in revenue used to provide training and instruction for thousands of employees at hundreds of local companies.
- Broke ground on the **Student Services/Administration Center**.
- Grew our year-over-year **Foundation revenue** for the fourth consecutive year.
- Launched the **Upward Bound** program for first-generation college students.
- Augmented our state revenue by applying for and receiving more than **\$5 million** in grant funds.
- Rolled out a new web-based version of **Datatel**.
- Received a **presidential award** for our Center for International Trade Development (**CITD**).
- Cheered the success of the **1,317 graduates** in the Class of 2013, our largest group ever, which included **39 veterans**.
- Expanded **Math 075**, a pre-statistics math program that leads to a five-fold increase in student completion of statistics coursework (from 13 percent to 78 percent), for students with initial elementary algebra placement.
- Grew **English 096**, which advances students through two freshman composition pre-requisites in one course, reducing the time students spend in developmental English by one semester.
- Opened the **Athletic Hall of Fame** in the lobby of the Main Gym.
- Launched Incident Command training and **enhanced our ability to respond** to campus emergencies.
- Completed a full cycle of **Student Learning Outcomes**, achieving compliance with a critical accreditation standard.
- **Collaborated with the Hart District** to jointly develop standards for college and career readiness through the continued implementation of the Math and English Learning Consortiums, and the new Career Coaches program.
- Published our latest **Educational and Facilities Master Plan**, which will guide the growth and development of the district in coming years.
- **Developed transfer degree programs** in Geography, Mathematics, Psychology, Physics, Sociology, and Theatre Arts.
- **Added 25 new courses** to our academic programs, along with new certificates in Customer Service, Plumbing, and Robotic Welding.
- Sent our **Model UN Team** to compete at Harvard University.
- Celebrated with our **Forensics Team** as its members set new records for the medals they won in competition.

And, your talent continued to shine, moving us forward throughout the summer as we:

- **Removed the Classroom Village** and adjacent parking lot to make way for the Institute for Culinary Education (iCue).
- Welcomed **Dr. Jerry Buckley** as our Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Instruction, and congratulated **Denee Pescarmona** and **Eric Harnish** on their promotions to Dean of

Instructional Support, and Vice President of Public Information, Advocacy, and External Relations, respectively.

- **Hosted a training exercise** for the local Sheriff's Station in which they practiced responding to a campus shooter scenario.
- Joined together at a special celebration to thank **Joe Gerda** for his tireless dedication and joyful spirit while serving as the Acting Vice President of Instruction.
- Made visible progress on the construction of the **Student Services/Administration Building**, erecting the steel framework of this new building.
- Welcomed the community to special screenings of the critically acclaimed documentary ***Girl Rising***.
- Sent a team of students from **Phi Theta Kappa** and **Associated Student Government** to Nicaragua, where they helped to build a water treatment facility.
- Debuted the "**Summer Rush**" event to promote an added summer session and provide students with a "one stop" application and registration experience.
- Created a multi-purpose room at the **Canyon Country Campus** that can accommodate 80 people and be used for large campus and community meetings.
- Hosted a 21-hour California Acceleration Project Workshop for 70 faculty from 18 California community colleges to help them **develop curriculum for accelerated Math and English classes**.
- Helped more than **200 Hart District seniors** to achieve their goals of attending College of the Canyons through the First Year Experience.
- Learned that our three incumbent board members – Mr. Zimmer, Mr. Berger and Mrs. MacGregor – will be unopposed in this November's election
- Initiated **CareerCampSCV**, a free, daylong event designed to help students and community members build, enhance or start new careers.
- Welcomed hundreds of seventh-, eighth-, ninth- and 10<sup>th</sup>-graders to campus for the **Summer Institute**, which provides hands-on career exploration in subjects such as robotics, motion picture special effects, video game design, sports medicine, digital photography, architecture, welding, and alternative-energy fabrication.
- Sold out our annual Foundation "**Swing for Scholarships**" golf tournament, raising **\$54,000** that will help students achieve their educational dreams.

We are off to a terrific start. Now, it's time to take the stage for a new academic year, and prepare to deliver a performance like none other!

### **MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SHINE**

**C**ircumstances at the state are changing, and for the first time in five years, **moving in the right direction!** I am convinced that our future will be one of growth and opportunities, and it will be bright. Our credo is one of an entrepreneurial, can-do community college, marked by a zeal for innovation, an overwhelmingly positive attitude, a commitment to serving our community in the best ways possible, and a belief that we can overcome any obstacles that stand in our way. We have never been content to do just the minimum. **We are trailblazers and stargazers**, and we find ways to push boldly forward, take center stage, direct our own performance, and expand the scope of what others think is possible.

As we do so, **we are not prisoners of our own structures.** We are adaptable, flexible, and innovative. We change form to follow function. We do what needs to be done – because it is the right thing to do, not because it's the way we've always done things. It takes courage to choreograph our own show, but that has fueled our journey so far, inspired our team, and created a resilience that is rare in most places. It will be what guides us well into the future.

**What do we have to look forward to this year?** Here are some highlights of **what we can expect** in the year to come:

- **Increasing student access** as we add new class sections during the Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer semesters, thanks to new revenue made possible by the passage of Prop. 30.
- Providing leadership to **regional economic development** initiatives in advanced manufacturing, allied health, and information communication technology/digital media.
- Breaking ground on the **Institute for Culinary Education (iCue)**.
- Upgrading **wireless access** at the Valencia and Canyon Country Campuses.
- **Rolling out transfer degree programs** in Chemistry, Communication Studies, Computer Science, English, Geology, and Political Science.
- Writing our **Accreditation Self-Study** and preparing to welcome a visiting team to our campuses in the Fall of 2014.
- Cheering our athletic teams as they compete in **a refurbished stadium** that features new synthetic turf and an upgraded running track.
- Giving our students a rare opportunity to **study photography and geology in Cuba**.
- Making **new degree offerings** available in the **University Center**, including a nursing practice doctorate from Brandman University, a master's in professional clinical counseling from Brandman, and bachelor's degrees in public administration and sociology from California State University, Bakersfield.
- Rolling out **a re-designed home page** on our website, along with a content management system, and **Intelliresponse**, an interactive and intuitive online search function that will more quickly answer website visitors' questions about our college.
- Receiving **an award from the State Bar Association** for opening an Office of Civil Rights in partnership with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing.
- Launching the **all-new Alumni Network**, another example of LEAP projects moving from concept to reality.
- And so much more!

The energy that will enable us to see the opportunities ahead and turn them into reality will be driven by you and your colleagues who work here – by **your commitment** and your hope about the future.

Richard Bach said, "You are never given a wish without also being given the power to make it true." Each day, we have a choice of what to do and what to bring to the table. You bring something special—personal qualities as well as incredible potential for what you do.

- You care more than some think is wise about what you are doing and invest your heart and soul in it.
- You believe more than others think is practical.
- You risk more than others think is safe.
- And, you strive to do what others say is impossible.

## OPENING DAY 2013-14

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The COC team is extraordinarily strong, because as a member of that team, you bring an amazing array of talents to the things we accomplish at the College. The combined effects of those talents have made substantial, creative, innovative, and life-changing contributions to the community and enabled us to achieve an impressive state of student-readiness as a college. You have given of yourself, shared your confidence and energy, and served as a role model, confidant, and advisor to students and colleagues alike.

**And why does that matter?** In so doing, you have elevated the quality of life for our neighborhoods, our businesses, and the students who chose us to help them achieve their goals. Working together, as a part of our college community, you have contributed to the amazing daily impact the college has on those around us. Because of that, our local community sees this college as a place where they are welcome, **a college that says “yes”** instead of “no,” and a place where they can come to achieve their dreams.

Your performance is nothing short of amazing. I applaud and stand in awe of the enthusiasm, responsiveness, and positive attitude that enables you and your colleagues to achieve your goals. Again and again you show **the real power that teamwork has to make dreams work.**

### **SO NOW I INVITE YOU – THE REAL STARS – TO STEP INTO THE SPOTLIGHT!**

**A**s we always do, we will initiate the new academic year with a celebration on Friday, August 23, marked by energy and enthusiasm for what’s ahead. To start things off, we’ll have a pre-lunch **Fun and Information Fair at 10:45 a.m. in the Cougar Café.** Join us and take a spin at the exciting **“Wheel of Athletics”** and win some athletic gear while meeting our Coaching Staff; try your luck at a game for your chance to **win PAC tickets**; learn about **Interest Groups** and discover your niche with the Alumni Network, Gardens of the Canyons, Sustainability, SNAC and more; stop by **Culinary Court** for the delicious debut of “Cougar Crunch” from our teaching Chefs; and get your keepsake photo with the **Cougar Mascot** in the ASG booth. Even more surprises and fun continue to be added, don’t miss out on your chance to mingle, munch and have some fun!

And when **our luncheon begins at 11:45 a.m. in the Main Gym**, you will be treated to entertainment, reunions with retired faculty and staff, a chance to meet new staff, eat, reflect on the past, enjoy the debut of the latest Opening Day video and eat some more! The planners have done a great job of creating our first official party of the 2013-14 academic year (rest assured, it won’t be the last!)

I look forward to what lies ahead, as this year gives us the chance to take center stage and give our best performances ever!

Go Cougars!

Sincerely,

Dr. Dianne Van Hook  
Chancellor