

Dear 100th Anniversary Leadership Group:

First off, I want to apologize for this long email, but I wanted to be sure that I addressed my concerns and the concerns of my department fully and clearly.

Last year, The Social Sciences Department applied for a grant to support events celebrating the centennial of SRJC. Our plan was to have an event in the Fall of 2017, and then one in both the Spring and Fall of 2018. Last semester, fellow historians Sal Diaz, Laura Larque and I put on an event at PDA Day focusing on the founding of SRJC. We had a packed house, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Learning about the early years of the College at SRHS, the efforts of Floyd Bailey and the Chamber of Commerce in establishing an independent college and in securing the property for our beautiful campus, and especially the work of early students, faculty, and alumni to resist those who wanted to close down the College made me even more excited to learn more about our College's history and to organize subsequent events.

While doing my research for the PDA event, it was clear that Floyd Bailey was committed to making SRJC an institution of great teaching. As I am sure you all know, when SRJC was founded, its students had to meet UC acceptance standards. Mr. Bailey made sure that these students were ready to transfer to Berkeley, by making sure that they had a high-quality faculty from day one. Great teachers, supported by great administrators and a great classified staff, are what makes SRJC a great college. I have been working at SRJC since 1995, and this commitment to excellence has been evident to me from the start. I have been able to work with and learn from some great Emeritus Social Scientists like Brook Tauzer, Ron Schuelke, Dean Frazier, and Jack Wegman. These four, in addition to countless others, have taught me that great teaching is central to SRJC and what our students expect and deserve.

Over my 23 years, the College has faced a number of fiscal difficulties. But SRJC has endured and thrived because, like Floyd Bailey, more recent administrators, faculty, and staff have understood that central to our mission is great teaching. If we are going to have great teaching, we need to support great teachers. At uncertain times, the faculty has accepted that the district could not uphold the promise of Rank 10, but it was also understood that the goal was to get back to Rank 10 when things improved. Unfortunately, this commitment to excellence seems to be wavering at SRJC. If the district's hope to dismantle Rank 10 occurs, I believe that this will do irreparable damage to what this College has spent 100 years to build. Rank 10, Shared Governance, Sabbaticals, and the Tauzer Lecture have all been hallmarks of this College that state loud and clear that SRJC values great teaching. I fear that things are changing at SRJC.

This past week, I met with my full-time department colleagues, and we discussed the grant and the 100th Anniversary events. We had a thoughtful discussion and decided that we did not want to participate in these events because of the current impasse between the district and our union, the AFA. This was not an easy decision for the Social Sciences Department; my colleagues and I love our jobs, our school, and our students, but it just feels wrong to spend many hours on events focusing on the great things that SRJC faculty and staff have done in the past, while our current administration seems to be less committed to supporting faculty and in turn our students in the present. Thank you for awarding us a grant, but we respectfully decline

the offer. If the district changes its position and decides to continue to honor Rank 10, we will happily hold our event in the Spring, honoring the great history of SRJC.

Finally, I want to share with you one more thing on a more personal note. I am a proud graduate of Colgate University and I will be attending my 30th reunion this coming June. Colgate is committed to great teaching, small class sizes, and producing curious students. When I started working at SRJC, I loved that these values were important here as well. I had some great teachers at Colgate, but one that had a huge impact on my life was my Hist 101 professor, Jill Harsin. Dr. Harsin and I remained in contact over the years, meeting at conferences and at reunions. She loved hearing about SRJC and our commitment to great teaching and was impressed by our rate of transferring successful students to UC, the Tauzer Lecture, and the Doyle Scholarship. She has often told me that I have a great job!

A few years ago Dr. Harsin became Colgate's interim president. Last year, she emailed me asking if I would do a presentation focusing on Colgate's history at this coming reunion, because Colgate will be celebrating its 200th birthday in 2019. I eagerly agreed and loved the parallels that I was working on projects celebrating my two favorite schools' histories: SRJC and Colgate. In November, the Colgate Alumni Office asked if I would add a section to my presentation and talk a bit about Santa Rosa after the fires. I agreed but added that I wanted to also focus on SRJC, its role in fire recovery and its 100 years of excellence in education. I look forward to telling my Colgate family about Floyd Bailey, Frank Doyle, Brook Tauzer and others and all the remarkable things that SRJC has accomplished. I hope that SRJC can learn from its own history and continue its commitment to excellence in education.

Respectfully,

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Chair of the Social Sciences Department