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Key Visions

Greetings!

Fall is a contradictory time of year. According to one point of view, the fall season signals the end of the year and the “harvesting” of accomplishments; however, for those of us associated with the academic world, fall means a new year with new goals.

I am happy to report that for Phi Theta Kappa, fall means both – a successful conclusion to a year of great achievements, and the beginning of a period of even greater success.

Last year, Phi Theta Kappa launched the International Society of Baccalaureate Scholars, or ISBS, an honor society for students enrolled in baccalaureate programs at community colleges.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF
BACCALAUREATE SCHOLARS



Currently some 125 community colleges offer a limited number of baccalaureate degree programs, and their numbers are growing. Our first ISBS chapter was chartered in April at Broward Community College in Florida. Chapters have also been established at Santa Fe College in Florida and Bellevue College in Washington.

Recently I was honored to be named to the landmark 21st-Century Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, created by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) to examine the challenges and opportunities confronting our institutions. Our students must have a voice in this process and I will do

my best to provide that voice. I will also use this platform to urge a commitment to ensuring success as well as providing access.



COMMUNITY COLLEGE
COMPLETION CORPS

College completion continues to be in the forefront

of Phi Theta Kappa initiatives. I am so proud of the work our students are doing and have had many opportunities lately to recognize their contributions. In June, I presented to the AACC Summer Presidents Academy and this past month to the AACC Board of Directors on college completion and student success. These administrators were very impressed and highly complimentary of the leadership Phi Theta Kappa is providing to help all community college students complete credentials and degrees.

The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, or NISOD, asked me to serve as their keynote speaker at their annual conference, where I challenged our community colleges to expand their mission of access to focus on student success. Nearly 2,500 faculty and staff were in attendance. For information, see ptk.org/nisod.

In April, I joined representatives of Phi Theta Kappa’s partners in the Call to Action for college completion – AACC, NISOD, the Association of Community College Trustees, the League for Innovation in the Community College and the Center for Community College Student

Engagement – on a panel discussing college completion at NISOD’s Presidents Breakfast held during AACC’s Convention. All partners presented updates of their efforts; I was pleased to report on so many outstanding projects carried out by Phi Theta Kappa chapters.

We showcased our student successes at AACC even though our two Conventions overlapped this year and were in distant cities. At our Convention we produced a remarkable video featuring the success and diversity of our student scholars. AACC leaders and administrators couldn’t say enough positive things about the inspiring video greeting to the AACC opening session. Presidents are still requesting copies to show at their respective colleges. The video can be viewed at ptk.org/aaccvideo.

Our members also continue to excel as engaged scholars. Recently 51 members were chosen to receive some \$4.59 million in scholarships presented by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, the nation’s largest private scholarship provider. Jack Kent Cooke Scholars are selected on the basis of academic excellence and demonstrated engagement. We’re also pleased to include with this mailing coverage of our All-USA Community College Academic Team and our Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team, as featured in the April 11 edition of USA TODAY.

Phi Theta Kappa’s Honors in Action program, which incorporates the hallmarks of Scholarship, Leadership, Service and Fellowship, allows members to research problems and effect meaningful change in their communities – attributes which scholarship providers, transfer institutions and prospective employers consider highly valuable in their candidates. And, Phi Theta Kappa’s Five Star Competitive Edge plan develops vital communication and critical thinking skills, equally important in any type of competition. We predict with

confidence that Phi Theta Kappa membership will continue to be a major factor in student success.

You may know that we lost two dear friends this spring, Dr. Mary Hood, Texas Regional Coordinator and Board of Directors member, and Dr. Mary Anne Player, Illinois Regional Coordinator Emeritus and founder of the Steve Orłowski scholarships for International Officer candidates.

Mary attended our January board meeting and even though she was soon to be hospitalized, her focus was as always on efforts to benefit Phi Theta Kappa members and advisors. I had visited with Mary Anne last fall, shortly after her 90th birthday, and she was keenly interested in all the Phi Theta Kappa news. I spoke at both memorial services, and met so many people whose lives these incredible women had touched. We will celebrate their lives with a special commemoration during our 2012 Annual Convention in Nashville, and announce special scholarships.

I cannot sufficiently express what your support means to Phi Theta Kappa. Because of you, deserving students are able to complete college and become engaged citizens contributing to the success of their communities. Because of you, college faculty have opportunities to enhance their professional skills and reach even more students. Because of you, Phi Theta Kappa is making a difference by validating the academic achievements of students and empowering them for future success.

If you would like to give back to a specified Phi Theta Kappa program, or designate your support where it is most needed, indicate your choice and return the enclosed envelope with a donation that is comfortable for you. If you would like to make a donation online, please visit ptkfoundation.org.

Until next time,



Rod A. Risley, Ph.D
Executive Director



PHI THETA KAPPA
HONOR SOCIETY

