Dr. McKay:

Thank you, Professor Linker, and good afternoon everyone. On behalf of our students, our Board of Trustees, and the entire college community, I am pleased to welcome you to our 2013 convocation.

In 2010, I pledged to serve as the sixth President of this distinguished institution. It remains an honor for me to stand at the helm today, preparing to lead this exceptional college into its 54th year. During this time, our College has grown and evolved. Today we are a vibrant, continuously improving higher education resource.

I see our College advancing as a result of its willingness to embrace change. Through change comes evolution, which is a key component of transformation—a hallmark I have pressed forward as president and one that I will continue to

emphasize. Expectations are high, and this is precisely the moment when we need to recognize change as a catalyst toward achieving even greater success.

Two years ago we commenced a strategic planning process that has culminated in identifying the institutional priorities that will be pursued through the year 2020. Approved by our Board of Trustees this past May, the strategic plan serves as a guide for us as we work toward attaining increased student persistence, enhanced graduation rates, strengthened student support services, facilities expansion, continued promotion of effective communication, and the economic development of the communities we serve.

The plan will enable the College to maintain its forward momentum. What is noteworthy, is that the goals and objectives we have selected were

generated upwards -- through a process of engagement among hundreds of our faculty, staff, administrators, students, and external constituents, not delivered down to the college community. This plan charts our course and provides the framework for the effective pursuit of our mission. Progress toward these goals will be gauged using measurable institutional objectives, linked to the College's budget allocation process.

The College's Strategic Plan, when supported by the Comprehensive Assessment Plan for Institutional Effectiveness (CAPIE), will build upon the institution's existing assessment practices and philosophies, thus strengthening its ability for "closing the loop" and assisting in maintaining transparency in the institutional decision-making processes.

The continuous improvement of teaching and learning is vital, and the CAPIE provides for sound assessment practices that are fundamental to ensuring excellence. Through this comprehensive plan, we will assess institutional effectiveness and improve the quality of academic programs as well as administrative and educational support units.

Our work must remain centered on student success. This success comes from the dedication of our educators and our students. Our community college possesses the talent and the will to embrace change and transcend limiting thoughts about what we can achieve as an institution and what our students can achieve as individuals. As an institution, we must decide to implement necessary changes because our mission compels us to do so. At the same time, I encourage our students to be inspired to perform at a level that leads you to exceed expectations and to transform

your life through education. I would also like to recognize our associate deans, academic chairs and assistant academic chairs for their significant contributions to the College and the important role they will play in achieving academic success in the forthcoming year. I ask that they stand and be recognized at this time.

(PAUSE)

Thank you--we are all in this together.

My vision for this institution remains forward-focused. Along with support from our Board of Trustees, the College is fostering an environment that engenders new ideas. We are growing where we need to expand in areas like philanthropy and facilities, and our entire community remains dedicated to student success. It is clear that we have developed strategically throughout the institution's history, however, our vision leads to one end: Suffolk County Community College will be

recognized as a global force and a model of excellence in education.

For several years now, the condition of our state and local economies has been a source of challenge. Our County has generously supported our capital programs, but has asked us not to request any increase to our operational funding for three years. In response, the college community found ways to function with less. This included our faculty's willingness to re-invest into the stability of the College by re-opening their contract and working with us to deliver a contract modification that strengthened the institution through 2013—enabling us to maintain our operations without cutting programs or staff. I promise to continue working with my many colleagues to leverage our resources in order to sustain our success.

Now, more than ever, affordable, high quality education and training are essential to our region

and to preparing individuals for competitive careers that will pay the salaries necessary to live and raise a family on Long Island. As the County's community college, we are uniquely positioned to address the educational and training demands of our region, and under my leadership, we will continue to meet those demands, and the College will move forward being responsive, creative, decisive, and transformative.

TALKING POINTS:

- **Celebrate most recent College accomplishments (reference latest Accomplishments document—larger than the compilation from the year before. That says we are still transforming lives everyday—thanks to the expertise found in our faculty and staff and the drive found within our students. This is something we need to take the time to pause and celebrate. Each year, we will face both challenges and opportunities. That should**

not surprise any of us. What is important is to realize that we are not facing those conditions alone. As a collective, we are a formidable team).

- **Acknowledge those who make our continued success possible. (<u>Faculty, staff and administration of the college</u>, who work hard day in and day out, to support the success of our students--advising them, teaching them, assisting them with difficulties, reassuring them and providing hope. Through our emphasis on student achievement and success, graduates of Suffolk are prepared when they leave the College. I am looking forward to the opportunity to recognize several of our most accomplished faculty and administrators later in the program).**
- **(<u>State and County elected officials</u> who have continued to invest in our institution, even during these challenging economic times, so**

that our region will be prepared for the demands it will face tomorrow).

- **(Board of Trustees, all of whom believe in our mission and share our vision. They value what we have accomplished both locally and across the State and feel a direct connection to our goals. Through their insightful leadership they help ensure that this College will continue to benefit our students and our communities).**
- **This past May, we learned that Suffolk County Community College was home to yet another Jack Kent Cooke Scholar—our eighth. Anthony Mangual from our Michael J. Grant Campus received a scholarship worth up to $30,000 a year for up to three years, which he is using to complete his baccalaureate degree at Hofstra University. This scholarship is in addition to Anthony's numerous other national and statewide awards, including Academic All USA First Team member, New York State's 2013**

New Century Scholar and SUNY Chancellor Award recipient.

- **The Get There From Here Scholarship Program sponsored through our Foundation, just announced its newest recipients. For the 2013-14 funding cycle, 33 new scholarships were awarded to students enrolled for the fall semester (includes our incoming student trustee Felipe Espitia Cetina). These scholars join the twenty-three continuing scholars selected in previous years.**
- **The College's Monitoring Report has been submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Throughout the course of the summer months, we took the input provided by our monitoring report task force and our writing teams and documented evidence that supported compliance with our accrediting body's standards. The next step in this process is for a Middle States team to visit the College. The members of our team have**

been selected by the Commission and will conduct their visit on October 9th and 10th.

- **Our Foundation's Vision 2015 campaign is helping to transform lives. This $7 million major gifts effort is raising funds to support scholarships and other college priorities. To date, we have secured campaign commitments totaling over $2.4 million, including over $725,000 for student scholarships. Faculty and staff giving has reached a total of $345,000. I encourage you to join me and many of your colleagues in supporting this very important initiative. At this time I would like to ask that the Foundation staff stand and be recognized.**

- **Suffolk County Community College and Farmingdale State University have agreed to formalize a new Stay on Long Island Scholarship partnership that will provide up to three full-tuition scholarships annually to full-time students who graduate from Suffolk and transfer to Farmingdale. The Stay on Long**

Island program is one I have been working on closely with Presidents from Long Island's four-year institutions to ensure select graduating scholars from Suffolk receive scholarships to attend local colleges and universities. Through these scholarships, students now have every chance for continued academic success and an increased likelihood that they will continue to live and work on Long Island. Ten months ago, we added Stony Brook University to this initiative. Farmingdale University now becomes our thirteenth SOLI I partner, joining Adelphi University, Briarcliff College, Dowling College, Five Towns College, Hofstra University, LIU-Post, LIU- Riverhead, LIU-Brentwood, New York Institute of Technology, St. Joseph's College, St. John's University, and Stony Brook University.

In preparing for today's program, I have been thinking about two recurring themes. First, the

financial issues that we will face over the next several years that will challenge our pledge to excellence and the pursuit of our mission. While we need to be realistic, we must resist the urge to hunker down in an effort to avoid challenge. As President, I must set a course and communicate a vision that delineates our path and gives us all the confidence we need to strike out boldly. This means working with my administration to analyze the economic future we see and communicating our plans and our actions in a manner that is transparent and inspirational to everyone. Working in conjunction with business, industry and government -- and all of you -- we can move forward successfully and effectively.

Second, I need the college community to remain committed in its pursuit of significant effort and work of consequence. We must each be viewed as making a contribution to this quest for value. For our students, that means a priority to work in the

classroom and in the life of each campus. For our staff and administrators, it requires recommitment to our daily work and a renewed dedication toward creativity and innovation. For faculty, it means being routinely excellent teachers dedicated to inspiring our students, while at the same time, doing the hard work related to planning, assessment and accreditation.

All of us must resist staying in comfortable grooves. Instead, think about those areas that can be improved and in so doing, help our institution to function better, and then work to initiate the actions that will bring us forward. We may need to force ourselves to be innovative and creative in how we do our work. We have already shown we can do this — and it will produce an exceptional future for Suffolk County Community College.

This commitment will ensure the College's lasting value within our community. At the same time, it

will be enormously rewarding and fulfilling for all of us. I am not suggesting that this formula is easy, but we owe this level of commitment to each other and to the College. No matter what, I will continue to work with all of you in a cooperative and transparent manner, both when we soar and when we grapple with each day's dilemmas.

I now declare the College to be in session. May it be a year of success and inspiration for us all, and may we each commit to our most important tradition: teaching and learning together.

Thank you.