

**October 15, 2007**

**Message From the Chair Emeritus—Richard Johanson**

For almost fifteen years, this Bulletin has reported on the ability of individuals and associations to come together in a spirit of harmony to arrive at collaborative solutions designed to move this region forward. Therefore, it was with deep disappointment that we absorbed media reports of last week's Board meeting of the *Fresno Unified School District*. The well publicized debacle was a major setback for the image of the school district. Board members can function effectively only as far as the talents of the Chair allow. To permit last week's meeting to degenerate into chaos reflects pointedly upon the inadequacies of the Chair and a lack of maturity of adults. There were children present! It is unquestionably time to return dignity to all public forums. To allow such behavior to distract from the urgent work to improve the district and damage the morale of so many hard working people is unacceptable. The roadway is built upon the Community Values which the school district adopted unanimously a few years ago. Apparently, some have forgotten.

**County of Fresno Moving Forward on Strategic Planning**

Last week the **Fresno County Board of Supervisors** unanimously agreed to move forward on strategic planning. Old methods for conducting business are not working. This should be no surprise as the world is vastly different than when most systems were designed. **David Berlinger** was in town this week to speak at an education conference at *Fresno State*. While his focus was on creating an education system that prepares children for the future, he spent some time explaining what that future entails. The "VUCA" world he described is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Most people will have as many as 14 jobs in a lifetime. What does effective government and governance look like in such a world? Kudos to the board and the staff for their willingness to find out.

**Board Member Comments & Community Support**

Encouraging comments from board members included, "all of our issues our interdependent; it's time we realized we are all one; we must work together across departments and across institutions; and it's time to make our county whole." **Mary Savala** from the *League of Women Voters* and **Steve Geil** from the *Economic Development Corporation* spoke eloquently in support of strategic planning and working together.

**Some Key Thoughts From David Berlinger's Remarks**

In his provocative, insightful and sometimes disrespectful remarks David **Berlinger** discussed the effects of high stakes testing on the economy and children of poverty:

- **Campbell's Law**-- The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor. (*The point—one test to determine whether or not children are learning can lead to teaching to the test, focusing more on teacher, school and district success than student learning, and create high stress environments.*)
- Mimetic cultures (think replicate & memorize vs. create & innovate) cannot compete economically. (*Thank goodness for the Lyles Center, artists of all kinds and the Incubator!*)
- Poverty is the 600 pound gorilla—we know what to do and we are spending enough money. However, we allow political and economic cycles to stop what works and we are

fragmented. (*The Human Investment Initiative is about relentless perseverance, collaboration & embedded sustainability.*)

- Social & intellectual capital are developed by cultural norms. (*Behavior is contagious—“be the change you want to see”*)