December 2, 2010

College Update

I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. ~Charles Dickens

With the end of the fall semester fast approaching, and planning and registering students for spring semester well underway (don’t forget about adding extra sections in key areas to accommodate the growing demand), I realize that all of you are immersed in helping realize our mission to “educate and empower people for success,” and that is not a simple job. Pitt Community College has a strong tradition of providing broad access for a variety of learners, and our continuing increases in enrollment in both credit and non-credit programs display our productivity and creativity in this area. Reports from campus groups underscore some of the reasons for our success in enrollment:

- Coordination with partners such as Pitt County Schools, the Employment Security Commission and Job Link Center, area employers in health, business, manufacturing and other sectors
- Active programs to communicate options, research effectiveness, and provide orientation, advising, and follow-up with prospective students who have questions or do not respond immediately
- A broad array of programs and courses with excellent instructors who connect learning with industry/job expectations and university transfer standards.

The list of reasons for success in student access includes many other areas, including online courses, offerings at varying times and locations, and, of course, faculty and student services support.

Once on campus, students’ success in achieving their goals is obviously a collective task, and the obstacles are considerable – skill levels, motivation, gearing learning to individual styles, economic factors, not to mention the challenges of life in these trying times. Yet this student success is at the heart of our mission, and we must do everything possible to make their goals our goals. Sometimes this requires communicating a vision for a future which students only dimly see. It also must sometimes include a dose of what used to be called “reality therapy” in linking their own dreams with the skills and interests they bring to learning. Being flexible to accommodate a change in majors is often required (who amongst us has not gone through this shift in plans?), but the focus must remain on degrees, certificates, or intermediate accomplishments which will bring students closer to their life/work goals.

A week ago I met with a group of students including SGA officers Jason Donica and Ian Peters who raised important questions about our campus planning, academic programs, and how students are supported in their learning paths. We have a variety of learners in credit and continuing education
programs, and our challenge is to provide individual help to this expanding population. I thank all of you for what you have done to serve them and to consider how we can improve our programs and services in the future. For this I am thankful, and I am optimistic about our future.

A number of campus initiatives are in progress which I want to call to your attention:

- The **Campus Art Committee** has been formed to provide recommendations for enhancing the aesthetic environment in our buildings and grounds which is considering an outdoor sculpture at the Goess Center as well as rotating art exhibits which highlight campus and community talent, among other projects.

- The **Task Force on Off-Campus Facilities and Programs**, chaired by Trustee Charles Long, had their first meeting to review credit and non-credit learning spaces in various communities and to identify unmet needs as well as consolidation of offerings. We will be conducting focus groups and surveys in a number of Pitt County locales.

- The annual **Veterans Salute** was a huge success, with students taking a more active role in the program, only natural when our armed forces veterans and dependents have increased by 41% in two years to over 473 this semester. Thanks to Angela Cline and Marguerite Stephens, in particular, for your leadership at this event.

- The **Pitt 50th Anniversary Celebration** continues with presentations at the President’s Reception, Student Ambassador reunion planning, a PCC Calendar which will be distributed soon, and establishment of a Speakers Bureau to get the word out to our community and region.

### Recognitions/Accomplishments

- Radiography students **Holly Davenport** and **Caroline Carrothers** received academic scholarships for their distinguished records.

- **Laquan Black** (HIT) was featured in an article for prevailing over great odds to earn her degree from Pitt and return to help as an instructor in our U.S. Department of Health/Human Services project in electronic medical records.

- **Morgan Kern** was a finalist in the Governor Robert Scott Leadership Awards and has been named Pitt’s nominee for the 2011 All-USA team through the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

- **Valerie Opphile** (Radiography) became Pitt’s first B.S. graduate of Franklin University’s Community College Alliance program.

Have a peaceful and enriching holiday season,

G. Dennis Massey, President