October 1, 2011

College Update

“We’ll survive by a morality of mindfulness. We’ll survive where reason moderates the clash of values and intuition schools our decision-making.” Rushworth M. Kidder, How Good People Make Tough Choices, p.221)

It has been just one month since we experienced Hurricane Irene, six months since Japan’s earthquake/tidal wave and nuclear disaster, and ten years after the World Trade Center tragedy. So it gave me pause to think about what these occurrences have in common and what our responses can tell us for the future.

First, they all galvanized our attention. The images presented by the media played over and over for us all the overpowering impact of the events and what came afterwards. Secondly, in all incidents we learned lessons of preparation and immediate reaction which may minimize the effects of similar though hopefully less extreme situations. And they brought nations, communities, and individuals together who are too often divided and certainly too busy with different priorities. In the instance of Japan, I saw firsthand this past summer how reducing energy use and attending to the victims and their families prompted sacrifices by all citizens. The rapid response of organizations from outside eastern NC to Irene has aided many to begin to return to normal.

Preparation can only go so far, though, and it is vitally important to reflect upon the multiple ways that such tragedies affect us. In the past weeks, we have seen many dialogues on 9/11 memorials as well as the impacts on our attitudes and values of this horrific series of events and their aftermath.

This week PCC conducted our eighth Leadership Institute for employees. 31 faculty and staff from many departments and with diverse backgrounds came together to engage in learning about Pitt Community College programs but more importantly about themselves as a group and as individuals. This year a new dimension was added to the leadership studies shared, the important and challenging way that ethics and values play an important role in our decision-making and our professional work and development as productive citizens. I was impressed with how our Leadership Institute participants demonstrated the “mindfulness” which Rushworth Kidder argues is so vital these days in our fast-paced lives, and I know that our participants’ professional development will benefit our students and the community we serve thanks to the time and energy they devoted to this training, which will continue periodically throughout this year. My thanks to those who planned and carried out this Institute: Bill Sypawka, Lynn McCormick, Kimberly Williamson, Bobby Perkins, and Brian Miller.
Equally impressive is what Pitt students are doing in their clubs and activities so far this year. PCC hosted the eastern region SGA clubs on September 24, and it was great to experience the positive energies of students from many colleges on our campus. What an asset the Goess Student Center to us all, and students are really taking advantage of it with the support of faculty/staff advisors, including SGA advisors Marguerite Parker and Marguerite Stephens. The students’ will to learn more, to be mindful in many ways, is obvious and impressive and bodes well for the future of all of us.

**Accomplishments and Recognitions**

**Kimberly Mills (Radiation Therapy)** has completed her Master's in Health Education and Promotion at East Carolina University.

**Daniela Zemanek (Mathematics)** will be the North Carolina delegate to the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges on a travel assistance award. Daniela serves as the NC Newsletter editor.

**Cara Herrington and Human Services Technology students and Gamma Beta Phi Club** members participated actively in the Pitt County Coalition on Substance Abuse Walk for Recovery event. A proclamation was read by our Pitt County Commissioner Beth Ward in support of this effort.

**PCC Alumna Angela Thomas (Radiography)** was named Faculty Member of the Year at Vance-Granville Community College, where she has been an instructor since 2000 and head of the Radiography program.

**Fine Arts** Head Charity Valentine praises **Judy Harris, Lisa Reichstein, and Joanne Ceres** for helping her students utilize their financial aid to secure instructional materials from Uptown Art and not fall behind during fall term.

**The Community College Health Information Technology Consortium** headed by **Kay Gooding and her staff** is leading 20 colleges from the Southeast Region to impressive results with over 3600 actively enrolled or completed students, a great investment of federal stimulus dollars in workforce development. PCC is one of the leading colleges in enrollment and completers!

The **PCC Women’s Volleyball** has had 10 straight wins in September, with an impressive series of victories last weekend and a significant 3-0 win over Lenoir Community College on September 29. Next home match is October 4 at 7 PM.

Finally, I want to thank all employees who have contributed to the PCC Foundation annual campaign. VP Nobles reports that we are close to exceeding last year’s totals in contributions and percentage of employees who contribute. Consider making a pledge if you have not done so already.

G. Dennis Massey, President