August 31, 2012

College Update

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”
 quoted of Socrates by Plato in The Apology

In my address at the Fall Convocation on August 13, I included the above quote from over 2400 years ago as a rationale and inspiration for the arduous process of the extensive review by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools which Pitt Community College is engaged in. The SACS process approaches another high point with the visit to our campus of a team of faculty and administrators from neighboring states who will examine materials which we have prepared and ask questions related to the important subject of institutional effectiveness and improvement.

We are often reminded of our excellence through the performance of our students and alumni, the recognition received by individual employees, and the thanks we receive from our business, industry, and university partners, including Vidant Health, East Carolina University, municipal and state departments across North Carolina, and the parents and friends of our graduates who benefit from their strong performance. But SACS requires that we document our processes for improving learning and the results of our students in a variety of forms, and this proof is another important contributor to PCC realizing our mission and goals. Several of our staff, including myself, serve as SACS evaluators, so this exchange of collegial perspectives strengthens us in our service to our community and region.

Now Socrates delivered the above quote because he wanted his students to challenge the accepted beliefs of the time and think for themselves. Like these students, we want to make PCC a better place. We need to share our self-examinations regarding our areas of work with one another so that we can all improve, and that is the essence of the reaccreditation experience.

I witnessed a great example of our success with students at the graduation ceremony for our sixth Fire Academy sponsored by the Division of Continuing Education and Community Development on August 24. Through the leadership of Dean David Lusk and Director Jeff Robinson and the collaboration with the Greenville Fire and Rescue led by Chief Bill Ale, these students underwent six months of hard physical and mental training as well as challenging academic assignments which will have vital real world applications. When you see an area professional in firefighting and rescue in action in a crisis situation, remember that Pitt Community College is an essential partner in their development and professional growth. Certainly what we do to prepare and update law enforcement and public service people in many professions is a significant proof that we are fulfilling our mission, and an important complement to what SACS will review.
At the Fall Convocation, I also briefed all in attendance on the outstanding job of recruitment and preparation for our Fall 2012 students. As of this week, we have experienced an **8.28%** increase in our credit students, with our credit program headcount establishing a new record of **9047** at this point. Imagine, over 9000 students at Pitt Community College! This is due to the hard work and creative processes of all faculty and staff, especially those in the Student Development Services Division and all faculty advisors. There are challenges we are confronting in terms of vehicular and pedestrian safety and student access to classes, but we are responding very positively and I especially applaud the great support which our Information Technology area personnel have provided. In all, this was a team performance for PCC, and I am proud of everyone.

**Accomplishments and Recognitions**

**Amanda Daw** and **Cassie Harrell**, Women’s Softball team players, received awards from the National Junior College Athletic Association. Amanda was recognized for Superior Academic Achievement, and Cassie received the Exemplary Academic Achievement award.

**Kim Barber** (Human Services Technology) was selected for the American Association of Community Colleges Plus 50 Encore Completion Program. There will be a press release on this soon, as Pitt was the only NC college to attain this honor.

**Lisa Reichstein** and **Financial Aid staff** for their outstanding support in processing aid applications and awards. Pell grant awards increased from 3653 to 5315 in one year!

Four retiring faculty/staff with over 120 years of combined service received Resolutions for outstanding performance from the PCC Board of Trustees on August 28: **Gregory Baldwin**, **Larry Dendy**, **Judith Kasperek**, and **Susan Everett**.

**Former President Charles Russell** will be honored at the dedication of the Russell Building on Friday, September 7, at 2 PM in the Craig Goess Student Center. Please attend if you can.

Welcome to all our new employees, and thanks again to everyone for getting us off to a tremendous start this fall.

G. Dennis Massey, President