I hope that all employees and students had a satisfying Christmas/New Year’s holiday season and that returning for a quick start-up for the Spring Semester is not too difficult. The past year was certainly a busy one for Pitt Community College! I hope that you were able to scan the array of activities and events which were summarized by our Institutional Advancement staff in the multi-part Review of 2012 which ran for several weeks in the Daily Reflector (and in PCC Notes). We have much to celebrate and be proud of thanks to your strong efforts and our overall institutional improvements. The year ahead will share some of the same challenges and a few new ones, but the spirit of beginnings and the clear sense of helping so many in our community better themselves and become positioned to realize their human potential and contribute to their families and communities makes us feel energized and optimistic for 2013. PCC is a strong institution of higher learning in many ways, and I am proud to celebrate my tenth year as president in the coming year!

I wanted to share the above quote from Noah Brown, CEO of the Association of Community College Trustees, as a reminder that as a nation community colleges still lag behind other education sectors in recognition and support from many. In December, PCC Trustees and I met with our state legislators to provide a brief summary of our accomplishments and to present our funding proposals for the 2013-14 budget. Among the group were continuing Senator Louis Pate and Representative Jeanne Farmer-Butterfield, returning Senator Don Davis, and new Representatives Brian Brown and Susan Martin. I reported to them about our funding disparities compared with the University of North Carolina institutions and K-12 schools. For 2011-12 state expenditures, UNC received three times more per student than community colleges, and public schools were funded at 30% more in state funds per student. Like everyone in North Carolina, PCC has absorbed a major reduction in state funding over the last several years. Long term, a great comparative balance in state support is needed, especially as community colleges are called upon to address crucially important workforce needs in our area.

Even more importantly, as our enrollment continues to grow, PCC facilities must expand. PCC remains the most crowded of all NC community colleges, even with the new classrooms and labs recently completed. I will continue to communicate this to our
County Commissioners and local officials, who have the responsibility to fund new buildings and classrooms.

Virtually all PCC’s representatives and other officials state that we are “good stewards of the public dollar” by getting the most out of local/state investment in education and training. If our society’s needs for this training grow as Noah Brown, Thomas Friedman and many others have stated they will, the cost effectiveness of community colleges will go only part way towards a solution to our workforce needs.

Pitt is already seeking and in many cases finding additional support. We heard just before the holidays that we will be sharing with Wayne Community College a $900K grant from the Golden Leaf Foundation to provide advanced manufacturing skills for our counties (special thanks to Dean Van Madray and Helen Parke). We are exploring facility help through the U.S. Department of Commerce for a new Science Building. Private funding continues to grow thanks to the PCC Foundation. But this will not begin to meet all the needs. In the year ahead, you will hear more about budget topics. In the February Update, I will touch upon our 2013-14 priorities with the General Assembly.

Accomplishments and Recognitions

Velislava Karaivanova and Tammy Atchison (Sciences) have had an article, “Active Learning and Student Success,” accepted for publication in Learning Abstracts by the League for Innovations.

Dean Stephanie Rook (Arts & Sciences) was selected to receive a Fulbright-Nehru International Education Administrators grant for research and cultural exchange in India in March. Her goal is to plan student/faculty exchanges for Pitt Community College.

Best wishes for a great beginning of Spring Semester and a productive 2013. We have made great progress in Pitt County and eastern North Carolina, and a week doesn’t go by in which a parent or student or alumnus shares with me a story about the great experiences they have had at PCC. Thanks to all of you for your roles in keeping student learning and support at a high level.

G. Dennis Massey
President