College Update

“America’s exceptional dream consists of opportunity, community, and intergenerational upward mobility. In pursuit of that dream, community colleges have been a national asset, creating opportunity for and nourishing students and communities....Now community colleges are asked to take part in a great rebirth of America. The nation’s future is at risk, in part because of inadequate investment in our human capital. The development of human potential is what community colleges are all about.”

Reclaiming the American Dream, American Association of Community Colleges, 2013

This quote from a report issued this past May resonates with what Pitt Community College is immersed in every day, the striving to support and challenge our citizens to prepare themselves for a world which is changing but which can and must be responded to in a positive and constructive way for us to realize our goals. The principle of constant improvement has been our watchword at PCC as we “educate and empower people for success” in many ways, from degrees and certifications to development of basic skills and techniques which are in line with standards specified by employers, professionals, and higher education resources. This commitment to improvement is an essential attribute of all our employees, and communicating this expectation to our students and the community is perhaps our most important duty.

This Labor Day it is appropriate that the North Carolina Secretary of Commerce, Sharon Decker, stated in a Daily Reflector interview that Pitt Community College plays an important role in the development of manufacturing skills and human potential in our region. We know that there is considerable demand for the services we offer. Our credit enrollment this fall is at an all-time high with over 9149 students enrolled as of August 26, and the number continues to rise. These students have choices in pursuing higher education and their future. We know that the quality of our programs, our support of their pursuit of their goals, and our responsiveness to their challenges are vital concerns for us all.

This also extends to the significant expansion in PCC’s noncredit programming which we have experienced in outreach to business and industry, to small businesses, public safety and professional training, and to individuals seeking self-enhancement. The breadth of our services provides opportunities for coordination of resources, which we are responding to in impressive ways with expansion of our basic skills to credit, and our developmental to credit continuum, the essence of the Transitional Studies Division under the leadership of Dean Hilda Barrow. We see it in many other ways: tangible proof of the hard work and successes of our students in bettering themselves and their families.

To provide a framework for our broad and unified efforts, we will be working in 2013-14 to demonstrate the results of our Strategic Plan in the areas of Student and Community Access, Student Success, and Program Excellence. We will at the same time be starting to plan later this fall for the 2014-17 Strategic Plan, listening to internal and external audiences and developing the goals and objectives which our Board of Trustees will review next spring. We will also be reviewing our Mission Statement to provide increased coherence and coordination for our expanding institution.
The Board of Trustees approved at their August 27 meeting their own goals for the coming year: leading the strategic planning effort; expanding facilities to respond to changing student and program needs; monitoring and supporting institutional improvement, including CAP and other initiatives.

In relation to the major challenge of expanding facilities, we are moving ahead vigorously with our campaign for the passage of the $19.9 million Bond Referendum on November 5. At the Fall Convocation, I underscored the important role which you play in informing your friends and neighbors how important the projects supported are to our students and programs. Turnout in this municipal election will be crucially important. Our SGA has stepped up in a major leadership role, working in tandem with Trustees and Foundation Board members and community supporters. We want and need the participation of everyone in this election, the first of this type for PCC in 24 years.

There are many ways that PCC is striving to “Reclaim the American Dream” for our students and our community. I appreciate the good work which you are all doing.

**Accomplishments and Recognitions**

- Mary M. Daughtry retired from teaching in the Business Division after thirty-seven years of dedicated and excellent service. The Board issued a resolution honoring her.
- New Board of Trustee members Patti Sanders-Smith and Michael Overton joined the Board of Trustees at the August meeting. A resolution honoring departing board members Raymond Reddrick and Randy Collier was adopted unanimously.
- Science Department Chair Jeff Rorer was part of the eight person team which won the World Championships of F-Class Rifleshotting in New Mexico in August. This continues Jeff’s outstanding performance as a world-class athlete. This is a repeat of the 2009 championships for the U.S. team.
- A PCC Professional Development Series will begin on Wednesday, September 18, at 12 noon in the Goess Student Center Williams Dining Room. ECU Vice Chancellor and Board of Trustees member Virginia Hardy will speak. The series addresses professional growth and leadership.
- PCC’s Leadership Institute IX is still accepting applications. Please consider participating in this ongoing program on October 2-4 in Raleigh. See Dr. Brian Miller for details.

I certainly hope that your fall semester is off to a good start. This is a crucially important time for our students, and I appreciate the support for them which you provide.

G. Dennis Massey, President