College Update

So days went on: a week had passed
Since the great world was heard from last.
The Almanac we studied o’er,
Read and reread our little store
Of books and pamphlets…


It may have seemed like a week to some, but I am sure that our three-day respite from normal schedules last week underscored how nature can still be quite a force to reckon with, even in eastern North Carolina. It’s now our challenge at PCC to re-start or resume the momentum of the semester and connect with students in ways which motivate them to complete their assignments and maintain progress in their courses and program of study.

The ribbon-cutting for the new Tutoring and Academic Success Center last week underscores the strong support which PCC offers at no additional cost to students, including programs like TRIO, Way to Success, and VISIONS for targeted populations and ACA classes and faculty and counselor advising for all students. Pitt’s participation in the current cohort of North Carolina colleges in the Gates Foundation-funded program “Completion by Design” is timely and reinforces our commitment to these kinds of support and many more. Even more importantly, it shows our dedication to analyzing and monitoring the “loss points” or obstacles which our students exhibit in order to focus our efforts more precisely. We are hoping to implement training for use of the SAS Data Initiative system this year which will provide even more information for our faculty and staff about student progress.

The CAP program through which many AAS instructors have received training demonstrates the importance of the advisor-advisee relationship, not just for course selection and major designation, but in the vital area of job and career planning. Certainly the AAS programs with their clinical and hands-on experiences reinforce this connection. Now with the coming refinements in the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement, it will be more important than ever for students to clarify early in their course of study in University Transfer programs the specific academic goals and their desired university campus to ensure continuity and completion.

In Raleigh from January 29-31, I learned about the vital role of NC Community Colleges in the strategies for economic growth imbedded in Governor McCrory’s North Carolina Jobs Plan. The emphasis, as with Completion by Design, is to measure success through cooperation across education and business/industry sectors and to monitor benchmarks within NC and compare with other states. I have met with local CEOs and government leaders regarding a more integrated approach to economic development locally which will result in growth in jobs for our graduates. But you note
that the emphasis is on completers. We need to do as much as possible to continue to increase the percentage of our graduates, already up 32% since 2009.

At the rescheduled Board of Trustees meeting on February 4, bids for work on the Goess Center Addition were approved, so I expect to see visible activity on this important project soon. An expanded Student Bookstore will be the largest addition, but it will also include a Career Center and other elements which will support and retain students toward meeting their educational goals.

Recognitions and Accomplishments

- Susan Howard (Mathematics) has been selected as one of 20 NC community college math instructors as an NC Ready for Success Alignment Fellow
- Lori Preast and Helen Parke (Academic Affairs) have created a new professional development program called “C4wards” to stimulate exchange and collaboration among faculty from different disciplines. See Lori for more info.
- Mike Shreves (Human Resources) has been selected as instructor in Duke University’s Nonprofit Management program.

Finally, I am proud to inform you that our SGA President La’Quon Rogers has been selected as Pitt Community College’s nominee for the Governor Robert Scott Leadership Award. We wish him well and congratulate the entire SGA staff and membership for their ongoing achievements in support of their fellow students and Pitt Community College.

G. Dennis Massey, President