In my January Update, I talked about how gifts and grants from private and public sources play such a major role in enabling Pitt Community College to “educate and empower” our students to help them meet their goals and the needs of our local and regional economy. On Friday, March 6, the PCC Foundation will be hosting our spring scholarship fundraiser for the first time on our own campus in the Construction and Industrial Technology Building. This will be an excellent opportunity to welcome a large and diverse group of people to see our campus. “Accelerating the Future!” will definitely benefit our students. I hope you will attend and support this event.

Of course, the largest part of our revenue comes from the state of North Carolina, and the “Long Session” of the General Assembly began in January. Its #1 business is passing the 2015-17 Biennial Budget. Our portion of this funding supports salaries for all of our faculty and most of the staff (Public Safety and Maintenance are County budget obligations), equipment, supplies, and most everything we do to serve our credit and noncredit students and the community with instruction and services.

PCC is one of 58 colleges in the NC Community College System, and over the past 6-8 months funding priorities have been crafted for consideration by the Governor and General Assembly. The individual college presidents agree that a unified voice with as simple a message as possible is our best approach in this complex business.

The budget priorities we have identified address immediate though reasonable needs which will position us to continue programs and services which best serve students, employers, and the particular needs in our communities:

#1 Closing the Salary Gap – Retain $59M in recurring funds ($2.2M for PCC) now returned to the state as part of management flexibility cuts for faculty and staff salary increases, raising average salaries close to the midpoint of southeastern US states.

#2 Closing the Interest Gap – Appropriate $7M in recurring funds over two years ($266K for PCC) for career coaches in high schools connecting students to jobs. This link to a Florida college video addresses our challenge. We know well how completion of our programs requires preparation and commitment https://vimeo.com/67277269.

#3 Closing the Technology Gap – Appropriate $10M in one-time funds ($380K for PCC) for equipment to support technology-based jobs AND $5M to System in recurring funds to improve the IT system. We cannot prepare students with outdated technology.

Another important proposal is the authorization to receive state funding for summer courses under the Universal General Education Transfer Courses (UGETC) agreement with the University of NC System, which would greatly assist our transfer mission.

In addition, we support in-state tuition for certain veterans and dependents mandated by federal action, which will require ongoing tuition funding to offset the lost revenue.
The Board of Trustees and staff have been communicating with our local delegation, which has shown interest in our proposals. Rep. Brian Brown has been appointed vice chair of the House Appropriations Committee and the Commerce and Job Development Committee as well as Chair of the Education-Universities committee. Rep. Susan Martin is Chair of the House Finance Committee and Co-Chair of the Commerce and Job Development Committee. She has also co-sponsored HB 15 for UGETC funding. Senators Don Davis and Louis Pate are both on the Education/Higher Education Committee, with Davis also on Workforce and Economic Development. We will be talking with them and others about our needs and priorities throughout the session. Chair Charles Long and the Board of Trustees have endorsed a resolution for their attention.

There will be opportunities for you to speak up for PCC in the months ahead. The budget will most likely not be finalized until July. It will have a lasting impact beyond the two years of the biennium.

**Recognitions and Accomplishments**

- **Black History Month** has featured a variety of programs which have highlighted our own students in bringing awareness and thoughtful consideration. Special recognition to Regina Garcia, Jasmin Spain, Michael Stephenson, the Multicultural Affairs Committee, students Jeremiah David, La’Quon Rogers, Tracie Payton, Natasha Bealon and many others for their leadership and creativity.

- **Jessica Blake, Amy Cole, and all Developmental and Mathematics faculty** will be hosting on campus the state math association (NCMATYC) for the first time since 1991 on March 12-13. It is a great professional development event for PCC and faculty across the system. Thanks to everyone who is preparing for this meeting.

- Former Board Chair Gary Evans reports that an article “Farmville Partners with PCC to Provide Training for Employees” was featured in the Alliance One International (AOI) newsletter. Thanks to Kristin Braswell, Mary Paramore, and staff for this Customized Training initiative.

- Manuel Salazar (Physics) has co-written an article in the journal Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and Applications on magnetism. Thanks to Dean Stephanie Rook and Joy Moses-Hall for reporting this.

- Dr. Joy Moses-Hall (Physics) has applied for the Phi Theta Kappa Mosal award. Her “Motherland Project” will utilize geology to connect with students and her personal experiences, making physics real for all, “rock, stock, and fossil.”

In conclusion, apologies to our Director of Facilities Services/Construction Timothy Strickland for my misnaming him “Tim Davenport” in a thank-you for his extensive work in making our campus safe for us all after the ice storm. We appreciate the efforts of so many people behind the scenes in facilitating our positive work for students.

G. Dennis Massey, President