May is always such an uplifting month, with the graduations of the credit program and the high school equivalency/Adult High School programs, the various pinning ceremonies, and the conclusion of the spring semester. This year once again we experienced new highs in students earning degrees, certificates, and diplomas. This underscores our commitment to our Strategic Goal of “success” measured by not just entry and participation but completion of programs. Pitt Community College is experiencing some decline in overall enrollments compared to last year, which makes retention of students and completion of student educational goals more important than ever for our campus and the local and regional economy.

One of the most positive celebrations I witnessed involved students in the VISIONS program who were completing high school and looking forward to a future of challenge and opportunity at Pitt Community College thanks to coaching and support by PCC staff. Marianne Cox, Rebecca Warren and others partnered with Pitt County Schools to serve 56 students over the past two years who might not have completed high school and pursued their very specific dreams for employment and a bright future without this support. This program is marking its tenth anniversary thanks to the funding of the Eddie and Jo Smith Family Foundation and specifically the leadership of Mr. Herman Simon. Teaming with Pitt County Schools, the Greater Greenville Community Foundation, and a host of campus and community resources, many students have completed degrees and begun careers after receiving PCC degrees. The partnerships spawned by the planning of Mr. Simon, Vice President Susan Nobles, and many others have had a tremendous impact on Pitt County.

As a member of the Region Q Workforce Development Board, I receive monthly updates on jobs and hiring, and in the region of Pitt, Martin, Beaufort, Hertford and Bertie Counties there is economic progress, with 1815 more people in Pitt County working than one year ago and the unemployment rate dropping from 7.9% to 6.0%, at exactly the state average. The jobs taken have largely required the training PCC provides. What VISIONS students and others take away from their PCC experience are degrees, a combination of new skills, confidence in themselves, and investment in the future. That is truly something for all of us to celebrate.

The State 2014-2015 Budget is being finalized by the NC General Assembly with the best news so far being the “Closing the Skills Gap” funding of $16.8 M for support of
high-cost curriculum and continuing education programs. In the remainder of the Short Session, we are hoping to accomplish even more for our students and staff.

The weeks ahead will also bring the first Division New Student Orientation sessions so important to good first steps for our students beginning in Fall 2014. We have extended the registration period for returning students to plan their future coursework. Thanks very much to the extra service provided by faculty and student services staff to make this possible.

Finally, it is my pleasure that after a very competitive search the Board of Trustees has approved elevating Mr. Rick Owens on July 1 to Vice President of Administrative Services in charge of Human Resources, Information Technology, Capital Projects, Facilities, Public Safety, and Program Audit. Mr. Owens will begin the search immediately for his successor as Assistant VP for IT while working with Interim VP Randy Collier during the transition.

Recognitions and Accomplishments

Greg Robison, Department Chair, Information Systems Technology, completed his Ed.D. degree from East Carolina University.

Ashleigh Walker, Department Chair, Health Information Technology, graduated from East Carolina University with a Master’s in Adult Education.

Rob Conway, Manager of Mail/Courier Services, won the state championship in a bass fishing tournament sponsored by BASS Federation, with Pitt County taking the team title.

William “Junior” Bailey, Athletics Director, reported that the Women’s Softball team came up just short in the Region X Conference Tournament, missing its third straight trip to the national championship in Utah. They had a great season with many outstanding performers.

Teresa Griffith, Nuclear Medicine/PET Instructor, gave birth to a baby boy, Callan Michael, on the same day as his older sister Caroline. Big birthdays ahead!

Best wishes for a rejuvenating summer.

G. Dennis Massey, President