March 1, 2012

College Update

Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?
“Ode to the West Wind,” Percy B. Shelley

There are many activities proceeding along as we near the Spring Break of the credit program and gear up for a strong finish to the current semester in May. A number of employees have also been immersed in the preparations for the SACS accreditation review, and students are nearing the important mid-term period in their studies. And I know that many faculty and staff have already begun course planning for our first-ever combined registration period for both summer and fall terms, an effort to bolster our retention of students and their attainment of degree/certificate goals. This continuity and emphasis on completion is a major objective of our Student Success college goal as well as a Performance Measure for the NC Community Colleges. The planning for 2012 Fall Semester depends upon construction completion of the Charles Russell Classroom Building, and I am pleased to say that we are on schedule with that major project.

SACS Accreditation Progress – Under the leadership of Dr. Brian Miller and a capable group of section chairs and editors, we are completing the Compliance Certification for submission in early March. This combination of narrative and documentation will be reviewed by an Off-Site Committee in Atlanta in May. SACS Vice President Barry Goldstein joined us a month ago and provided critical insight on our progress. We will find out how we fared in this portion of the review in early June.

I met with the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) team led by Dean Stephanie Rook this week, and they are making solid progress toward our summer goal of submitting the QEP for our On-Site Committee to review in advance of their visit in September. The emphasis on advising and career counseling will link faculty and Student Development Services staff more closely and significantly improve student learning as well as completion of educational goals.

I hope that you have noticed the SACS banners and other communications about the SACS review process. We are now planning division/department presentations and discussions which will underscore why every employee needs to be aware of the process but, more importantly, how we will continue to evolve as individual program areas and as a College because of the accreditation review. Please let me know if you have suggestions for enhancing our efforts in communication and improvement.

VISIONS Program – You are aware of the changes with the Career and College Promise program for high school students taking PCC credit courses either on campus or at their high schools. Alton Wadford, Maria Pharr and many others have led our efforts to transition to a more structured and coordinated course of study. One program with no college credit directly involved but which links us closely with Pitt County Schools is the VISIONS program, which is now in its eighth year. This year it was
expanded to include high school juniors as well as seniors, and I attended an meeting for parents and students in early February which displayed the careful planning and “tough love” approach of Marianne Cox, Jasmin Spain, and others under the direction of Vice President Susan Nobles to get these students off to a strong start in preparing for future enrollment at PCC. VISIONS candidates are nominated by their schools because they have specific challenges (academic, economic, first-generation college, etc.) which may prevent them from completing high school, let alone an Associate’s degree. For the first time this year, thanks to the urging and support of Mr. Herman Simon and others, we are engaging junior level high school students in an effort, among other reasons, to improve placement into college-level coursework and reduce remediation. Grady-White Boats received the first Distinguished Partners in Excellence award by the NC Community Colleges in 2006, and we continue to build upon its success in providing student access (one of our three Pitt Community College goals) and ongoing support to a broad range of students in our community. So far, over 478 students have been served at PCC through this program, a great example of a public-private partnership coordinated by the PCC Foundation.

Achievements and Recognitions

- Dean David Lusk received $50,000 from the NC Rural Economic Development Center for developing training for logging equipment operators.
- Dan Thomas and the Weatherization, Energy, and Solar Training Project were featured in a recent BTC Reports of the NC Budget & Tax Center as one of two career pathways to productive skills in NC’s economy.
- Angela Boyd and PCCANS nursing students collected 20 bags of trash for our Adopt-A-Highway project. See Greg Baldwin if you would like to volunteer your club or organization for this service opportunity.
- Norm Lilley and other CIT faculty hosted on Feb. 3 high school competitions at the Goess Center in several Construction and Industrial Technology areas.
- Sandra Mathis has been selected to be a Site Visitor for the Committee on Accreditation for Polysomnographic Technologist Education.
- Faith Fagan received the President’s Award from the NC Cooperative Education Association.
- Susan Counterman shot a hole-in-one at Hickory Meadow Golf Course at Whitaker’s Ladies Invitational Tournament!

Finally, two reminders for upcoming events: first, please communicate to and encourage students to attend the two days of PCC Spring Career Fairs on Wednesday, April 11 (All Majors) and Thursday, April 12 (Health Sciences) from 10 AM-2 PM. Students must register in advance. This is a great support for our QEP topic. Second, please put the Employee Appreciation event on your calendar for Friday, April 20, and make your reservations in the Office of Human Resources.

G. Dennis Massey, President