PCC Launches Awareness Campaign to Inform Community of Its Services and Needs

PCC employees met for convocation Aug. 13 and discussed a number of topics, including a campaign to make sure the community is well-informed of the college’s numerous educational contributions.

According to Susan Nobles, vice president of PCC’s Institutional Advancement Division, the college serves more than 18,000 students annually through its curriculum and continuing education divisions. She added that one in every seven Pitt County adults enrolls in a PCC course each year.

But, Nobles said, many of the college’s efforts to produce a skilled local workforce go unnoticed.

“PCC is the best-kept secret in Pitt County,” she told faculty and staff at convocation. “Folks, we have to change that.”

Nobles, who also serves as executive director of the PCC Foundation, said the college is in the initial stage of an awareness campaign that will feature billboards, advertisements in a variety of media, and press releases about PCC services.

She said the college had also contracted with a local advertising, marketing and public relations business to create a 10-minute informational video about PCC services. That video was shown to Pitt faculty and staff for the first time during convocation.

In addition to the video and advertisements, Nobles said the awareness campaign would include “PCC in the Community Day.” She explained that teams from the college would be visiting local business and industry to gain a better perspective of how the college is meeting their educational needs.

“We need to share news of what we are doing and what our needs are,” Nobles said.

But in order to add new programs and keep up with the area’s training demands, PCC administrators say the college must build additional facilities. They point out that Pitt is currently the most crowded of the state’s 58 community colleges in terms of available space per student.

Though community colleges receive state money for programs, equipment and salaries, the state does not fund facilities, which is a county responsibility.
At Convocation, faculty and staff were presented PCC’s Strategic Plan 2007-2011, which will be a guide for development leading up to our 50th Anniversary. The plan’s goals and objectives were developed by a campus committee with external and internal input. Vice President-led strategy teams will begin implementing the plan this fall. Key elements include expanding access to programs and services, following through on the Master Plan for facilities and equipment, and strengthening employee professional development.

Although Fall 2007 enrollment is still being tallied, early indications show a 4 percent increase in student credit hours compared to a year ago. This is due to the hard work of student services staff and faculty advisors as well as the high quality of our instructional programs. Strong increases in high school students and Weekend College contributed to the totals.

Pitt County Commissioners have approved a sales tax referendum for the November 6 election, which would bring more funding for PCC classroom buildings, if approved. More information will be available soon on our website, but please register to vote now to participate in this important election.

PCC recorded a 20 percent increase in degree and diploma completions in the past year. Join the growing number improving their employment and university transfer status through PCC.

G. Dennis Massey

PCC unveiled a strategic plan in August they say will serve as a guide for the college’s planning and budgeting through 2011. The presentation took place during PCC’s annual convocation event in August, marking the conclusion of a nearly year-long process to develop the strategic plan.

According to Dr. Brian Miller, PCC’s Assistant to the President and Director of Institutional Effectiveness, an eight-member steering committee began putting the strategic plan together in September 2006 by reviewing data from various college sectors and gathering community input. PCC Trustees formally approved the plan during their May meeting, he said.

“I thank our trustees, employees, friends and citizens at-large for helping us develop our areas for emphasis for the next five years,” said President G. Dennis Massey. “Some of these directions are extensions of existing initiatives, while there are several new paths.”

Dr. Massey said the strategic plan reflects the college’s commitment to meeting Pitt County and the region’s educational needs, its dedication to helping employees grow professionally, and its devotion to student success.

One of the four main goals specified in the plan is for Pitt to improve access to educational services as Greenville and Pitt County grow and develop. PCC currently offers programming at more than 300 sites in Pitt County and is seeking new ways to further extend learning opportunities. Offering additional educational services in the community could help PCC relieve congestion it is experiencing on its main campus.

Dr. Massey said Pitt has a facilities master plan in place to address future growth on its main campus, but the college is still trying to identify funding for its implementation. One of the goals outlined in the strategic plan calls for PCC to pursue state, local and private funding to carry out the facilities master plan and other improvements at the college.

Dr. Massey also noted that the strategic plan calls for PCC to make every effort to establish an active learning environment by emphasizing learning outcomes and the value of utilizing data to improve educational practices.

PCC’s strategic plan also makes it a priority to continue providing employees with professional development opportunities. With its annual Leadership Institute, the college is already a role model for community colleges nationwide in terms of providing leadership training to employees.
Pitt Community College administrators announced in June the school had been awarded a $42,116 grant by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust of Winston-Salem.

The funds have been used to enhance PCC’s radiography curriculum through the purchase of new, computerized radiography equipment, according to Dr. Pamela Hilbert, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Pitt.

The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust was created in 1947 by the will of Mrs. William N. Reynolds of Winston-Salem. Three-fourths of the Trust’s grants are designated for use for health-related programs and services across North Carolina and one-fourth for the poor and needy of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County.

New X-Ray Equipment

Pitt Community College administrators announced this summer the school added a new Court Reporting and Captioning (CRT) curriculum to its Business Division and will team with Wake Technical Community College to offer a Simulation and Game Design (SGD) curriculum.

According to Business Dean Donnie Lee, PCC will partner with Kinston’s Lenoir Community College to offer CRT. The program, he said, will provide students with training to record depositions, business and convention meetings, and court proceedings in a computer-integrated courtroom.

Lee said the CRT curriculum also features instruction on real-time captioning activities, which can lead to a variety of well-paying careers, including court and deposition reporters and broadcast captioners that provide captioning for live television programs.

“Federal broadcasting regulations require captioning of hundreds of hours of live television programming each week, so there are a number of job opportunities for people who have these skills,” he said.

Pitt CRT students can complete general education instruction at PCC, but they must take core coursework through Lenoir, which will serve as the degree-granting institution. Since LCC will offer the core CRT classes through the Internet, they can be completed from any computer with web access.

Having signed an instructional service agreement with Wake Tech earlier this year, PCC began teaching Simulation and Game Design in August, starting with a pair of basic courses – Introduction to SGD and SGD Design.

According to PCC Information Systems Instructor Melanie Sparks, the SGD curriculum “offers broad study of the wide-ranging skills necessary to create games and simulations.”

Sparks said PCC would emphasize practical applications in 3-D visual arts, audio/video technology, creative writing, game design, programming, software engineering, and project management.

“You’ll find people who have these proficiencies employed in, not only, the entertainment industry but health care, engineering, computing research, education, NASA, and other government agencies,” she said. “The military makes heavy use of these skills in creating training and weapons simulations.”

Most SGD instruction will take place in a traditional classroom setting. However, the classes are considered ‘web-assisted,’ meaning students who enroll in them are required to have Internet access as a supplemental part of their coursework.

While the SGD curriculum is a new educational offering at PCC, a number of students at the college have been working on game design for several years.

Since 2004, Pitt’s Business Division has featured a PCC Game Developers Association (PCCGDA) for students interested in the development of all aspects of computer games.

PCC is a leader in health care education among North Carolina’s 58 community colleges, and the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust funding will further enhance that reputation, Hilbert said.

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Instructor Frank Lee’s Online Golf Business Taking Flight

PCC Business Instructor Frank Lee recently appeared in The Daily Reflector’s WorkWeek in a story highlighting the success of his 9-year-old small business.

Lee and his wife, Charlene, started Fleegolf out of their home in 1998. The couple sell pre-owned golf clubs online, and business has taken flight like a Tiger Woods drive from the tee box.

Incorporated in 2005, Fleegolf has moved into a 3,500-square foot facility on Country Club Drive in Greenville. The business, which began as a hobby but now employs 10, recorded $1.2 million in sales last year.

Fleegolf receives used clubs through partnerships with retail stores and from individuals.

Upon receiving the items, Fleegolf employees photograph and rate each one on a 10-point scale. From there, the clubs are placed online for sale, many on Fleegolf’s eBay store.

An avid golfer, Lee coached Pitt’s golf team for six very successful seasons. He has taught business courses at the college since 1990, and his success with Fleegolf is chronicled in Amy Joyner’s book, “The Online Millionaire,” which was released earlier this year.

4th Annual Leadership Institute Features Largest Number of Participants to Date

PCC’s commitment to helping employees grow personally and professionally continued in June with the Fourth Annual PCC Leadership Institute.

Held at the Sheraton Hotel in Downtown Raleigh, the three-day program featured seminars and activities designed to foster interaction among PCC employees while encouraging them to think about how they could contribute their leadership qualities to the college’s educational mission.

“The philosophy behind the Institute is that leadership is measured by contribution not position,” said Dr. Brian Miller, who helps coordinate the event as PCC’s Assistant to the President and Director of Institutional Effectiveness. “The program is also about forming professional relationships and friendships.”

This year’s featured presenter was Dr. Bill Shelton, Visiting Clinical Professor in Educational Leadership at East Carolina University. Shelton, who served as Interim Chancellor at ECU four years ago, provided insight on leadership throughout the conference and guided program participants through several team-oriented activities.

At the conclusion of the event’s first day, N.C. Community College System President H. Martin Lancaster delivered the Institute’s keynote address. Lancaster, who is set to retire later this year, commended PCC on its development of the Leadership Institute, which he referred to as a model for the state’s other community colleges.

Lancaster’s claim is supported by a national report on leadership development in community colleges, which was published last summer through the American Association of Community Colleges’ Leading Forward initiative. The 55-page report calls PCC’s Leadership Institute a program for other schools across the country to emulate.

PCC President G. Dennis Massey is quoted in the study as saying Pitt’s Leadership Institute was designed to help employees realize their potential.

“The PCC Leadership Institute is part of an overall professional development program geared to help us all better serve our students and the community,” Dr. Massey said.

In addition to Shelton and Lancaster, Kennon Briggs, the N.C. Community College System’s chief finance officer, spoke to the PCC contingent as did personal trainer Wayne Salter and Albert Delia, CEO of North Carolina’s Eastern Region Development Commission.

Leadership Institute participants apply and are chosen by a selection committee at the college. This year’s class was the largest since the Institute began in 2004.

Miller said preparations for the 2008 PCC Leadership Institute are under way, and he pointed out that next year’s program would be held in Greenville.
Distance Learning Helping College Meet Community’s Educational Needs

Earlier this year, the University of North Carolina System took aim at online institutions when it revealed plans to aggressively promote its distance education offerings. And while the state’s universities are hoping to recruit students currently enrolling in places like the University of Phoenix—the nation’s largest online school—PCC continues to make the most of modern technology in meeting its students’ needs. The college offers 19 curriculum programs entirely online and more than 200 distance education courses.

Health Information Technology (HIT) is one of PCC’s online curricula. In May 2006, PCC student Gemmel Bagley earned an associate degree in HIT without setting foot in Greenville until she picked up her degree during graduation. An Oxford, NC, native, Bagley completed her curriculum’s clinical requirements in Granville County and her remaining courses online while she was in Japan and Germany, where her husband was stationed with the Navy. According to Kay Gooding, HIT Department Chair, many of Pitt’s distance learning students, like Gemmel, have families and responsibilities at home. She says the average age of students in her program has risen from the mid-20s to the mid-40s, adding that they are typically female and working full-time.

The online classes offer scheduling convenience and are also playing a key role in helping Pitt address a need for additional teaching space.

In terms of available space per student, PCC is the most crowded of the state’s 58 community colleges. And even though the school has expansion plans in place, administrators are still looking for ways to fund the project. In the meantime, distance learning is proving an effective means of delivering education to not just curriculum students at PCC but to those seeking specific skills, rather than two-year degrees or one-year diplomas.

Pitt’s Education2Go (or Ed2Go) continuing ed courses have been extremely popular with students. In fact, Dr. David Lusk, PCC’s Dean of Continuing Education, says the college’s Ed2Go program is one of the nation’s fastest growing. Ed2Go instruction encompasses a wide variety of topics, including digital photography, health care, creative writing and the latest computer software programs. The courses are low-cost and typically run for six weeks.

Lusk says Pitt is also delivering online training specifically tailored for local law enforcement, which, he said, “saves the city thousands of dollars in overtime pay for training.”

Through the Bioprocessing Center, a part of the N.C. Community College System’s BioNetwork that is hosted by PCC, an online course is being developed to further North Carolina’s efforts to build a thriving biotechnology industry. According to Bill Cooper, Bioprocessing Center manager, the facility is working in conjunction with the BioEd Center hosted by Gaston College to develop a blended version of a basic biotechnology lab techniques course.

Distance education at PCC has also grown to include supplementary instruction for students needing help with their classroom studies. Through a partnership with SMARTTHINKING that began in the fall, Pitt offers 24/7 online tutoring and academic support.

Swanson, Herringdine First to Complete PCC Dosimetry

Started in August 2006, the Medical Dosimetry program produced its first graduates in Erik Swanson and Trey Herringdine.

A concentration within Radiation Therapy, Dosimetry teaches students how to plan treatments and perform dose calculations that treat cancerous tumors with radiation. Swanson and Herringdine completed the program’s 12 months of classroom and clinical training.

Swanson, who completed PCC’s Radiography and Radiation Therapy programs in addition to Dosimetry, will be working at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire, according to Elaine Spencer, Radiation Therapy director.

Spencer said Herringdine completed Radiation Therapy at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta before completing Dosimetry at PCC. He will be working at McLeod Medical Center in Florence, SC, she said.

According to Spencer, both Swanson and Herringdine must work for six months in order to apply for national medical dosimetrist certification testing by the Medical Dosimetrist Certification Board.
VISIONS Students Celebrate High School Graduation, Pay Tribute to Herman Simon

Students in Pitt Community College’s VISIONS program showed their appreciation this summer to a man who has worked diligently—and without fanfare—to help them succeed.

During a program to celebrate their upcoming high school graduations, the students paid tribute to Herman Simon, a key player in the creation of the VISIONS Career Development and Scholarship Program.

A financial consultant with Greenville’s Eddie and Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation, Simon pictured VISIONS as a way to help Pitt County teens make successful transitions from high school into PCC curricula.

Through his role with the Smith Family Foundation, the New York native has been a leader in allocating financial resources to PCC programs and students.

For his support of the college, PCC administrators honored Simon with a Distinguished Service Award during graduation, the same night Matt Brown became the first VISIONS student to complete an associate degree at Pitt.

One person who works closely with Simon is VISIONS coordinator Debby Gray, who said she was grateful that Simon and the Smith Family Foundation had the foresight to create the mentoring program at PCC three years ago.

“They may never know how many futures they have brightened and successes they have fostered,” Gray said.

Danny Jones, a VISIONS student from J.H. Rose, praised Simon during a high school graduation celebration. “We know that you’ve taken a personal interest in the (VISIONS) program and that you want to see us all succeed,” Jones said.

“Thank you so much for all your work behind the scenes, Mr. Simon.”

Jones also noted Gray’s support and encouragement of VISIONS students.

“She is incredibly supportive and considerate,” he said. “She would make small gestures, such as sending encouraging notes with small goody bags, not just to let us know that we were almost to the end (of our senior years) but just to place a smile on our faces.”

In addition to thanking Simon for his efforts, the VISIONS program also awarded Ayden-Grifton student Keoshia Streeter for having the highest grade point average among the 46 members of this year’s VISIONS class.

VISIONS representatives presented J.H. Rose’s Jody Jones with this year’s Longest Yard Award for achievement and recognized Hal Knox, a career development coordinator at North Pitt High School, for outstanding service to VISIONS students.

Developed in 2004, VISIONS is a collaborative effort between the Smith Family Foundation, PCC Foundation, Pitt County Schools and the Greater Greenville Community Foundation.

Eddie Smith, owner of Greenville’s Grady-White Boats and VISIONS’ benefactor, proposed the program as a way to reduce Pitt County’s drop-out rate while increasing the number of county students attending college.
Bulldogs to Face National Powerhouse in Salt Lake City Volleyball Tournament

For the past three years, the Pitt Community College volleyball program has utilized the PCC Bulldog Invitational as an icebreaker of sorts, a chance for incoming players to mesh with returnees in non-conference matchups at the start of a new season.

But 2007 will be a different story for Pitt after the last-minute cancellation of this year’s tournament, the result of two teams backing out just weeks before the event was to be held Aug. 24-26.

That leaves Coach William Way’s club playing together for the very first time in the highly competitive Salt Lake City Community College Tournament Aug. 31 – Sept. 1.

“Obviously, it would have been nice to use our annual tournament to gain a little confidence at home with a young team,” Way said. “But, eventually, you are going to be judged by how you play in a hostile environment, and I can’t think of a tougher field to be playing against than the competition we’ll face in Salt Lake City. This could be a national post-season tournament preview for half the teams in the field.”

This year’s PCC squad features 11 new recruits joining three players from last year’s Region X Conference regular-season championship team. The 2006 Bulldogs finished 33-9 overall, 20-0 in Region X play and ranked 20th in the country.

“We proved in 2006 we can play with anyone in our region,” Way said. “The Salt Lake City tourney will be a big step to see how we stack up against the competition nationally.”

It is Way’s hope that playing against national powerhouses in Utah, like last year’s NJCAA runner-up Western Nebraska, will further enhance the appeal of PCC’s volleyball program to potential recruits.

“If you want to compete and be the best, you have to get out and play the best,” he said. “This tournament tells recruits … that we are serious about building a strong and successful program at PCC.”

Way said the 2007 Bulldogs will feature a strong offense that emphasizes ball control. Defensively, he said the team should be better at blocking than it was a year ago due to an influx in height. Way’s club has three players at least 6 feet tall or taller and a 5-9 setter.

“We should definitely be imposing at the net this season,” the coach said.

The Bulldogs leave for Utah on Aug. 30 and will play four games on Aug. 31 against the host team, Hutchinson Community College (KS), College of Eastern Utah and Illinois Central College. The top six teams from pool play will square off in the championship on Sept. 1 while the remaining six face each other in the consolation bracket the same day.


dominates the competition.

Bailey noted that the Leo Jenkins Cancer Center was one of three local organizations—the N.C. Jaycee Burn Center and the Family Violence Group, Inc., were the other two—to benefit from proceeds generated by the 5K run.

“The team ran in this event in honor of Kally,” Bailey said. “I think that says a lot about the character of our players and incoming recruits to ask them if they would take part.”

In addition to receiving an award for being the largest team to enter the competition, Bailey said rising sophomores Nicole Jordan and Amber Taylor finished first and second, respectively, in their age group with times just over 20 minutes.

For the past three years, the Pitt Community College softball program has utilized the PCC Bulldog Invitational as an icebreaker of sorts, a chance for incoming players to mesh with returnees in non-conference matchups at the start of a new season.

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Sales Tax Referendum Will Be on November Ballot

Pitt County voters will get their say this fall on a proposed quarter-cent sales tax that would generate funding for PCC and public schools.

Beth Ward, chair of the Pitt County Board of Commissioners, discussed the sales tax referendum during PCC’s convocation in August.

In her remarks, Ward said commissioners had been seeking the General Assembly’s permission for a local sales tax referendum for three years. She said the request started at one cent and was ultimately cut to a quarter-cent before state legislators gave the go-ahead.

Despite the reduction, Ward said Commissioners “were so grateful for something” in the way of a referendum.

PCC currently ranks seventh out of North Carolina’s 58 community colleges in terms of curriculum enrollment and is near the top when it comes to new enrollees. However, Pitt is last in terms of available space per student, meaning it is the state’s most crowded community college.

For the past few years, PCC administrators have been exploring ways to fund an $89 million expansion project that would prevent the school from becoming hamstrung in its ability to add new programs and serve additional students.

Ward, who said she was “very proud” of what PCC has meant to Pitt County and Eastern North Carolina, said passage of a quarter-cent sales tax would not meet all of college’s facility needs but would make “a tremendous difference.”