July 7, 2011

College Update

“All politics is local…” (attributed to former Speaker Tip O’Neill, US House of Representatives)

As the NC state budget for 2011-13 came to a swifter than usual conclusion, it might be time to review the above adage, especially during a period when national politics (and personages) are becoming more prominent. Instead, however, I’d like to extend this quote to even broader contexts – all education is local, all life is local.

I have just returned from a college monitoring visit to Wuxi Institute of Technology in southern China, so you might expect general statements from me on the rapid growth there, especially since this was only my second visit to China (the first in 1995), and I had read so much about the country of late. With its vast history of centralized controls by the government, one might expect uniformity across the country and even with the people. But the major changes in China are occurring on a local level, and PCC is an active partner in the evolution of Wuxi Institute of Technology, with our instructors Joe Brittain, David Manning, Calvin Mayo, and others working closely with Wuxi colleagues to learn from each other. The challenges of different languages are significant, but there is no denying the strong desire of students and staff there to absorb as much as possible from our partnership. Two English instructors from Wuxi are at PCC for several weeks, and I feel the work they are doing with Department Chair Sue Jefferson (one of our China veterans) and new English instructor Tabitha Miller as strengthening the foundations of learning for Wuxi students in the Machining program and other programs being considered for the future. The educational environments here and there are different, to be sure, but collaboration is resulting in gains for both Wuxi and Pitt.

On my way to Japan, I stopped off in Shanghai for two days, and the diversity and energy of this city of over 17 million is amazing, though the sweltering heat (similar to what we have been experiencing, though without as much A/C to cope with it) slowed things down a bit. Other staff members went on to Beijing. It is clear that Pitt Community College has a significant presence in China, and in this regard we are definitely “educating and empowering people for success…in a global economy.” I look forward to seeing our relationship with Wuxi continue to evolve, and through the leadership of Andre Gregory, Dan Mayo, and others we are hosting Fulbright lecturers from Belize and Uruguay in the coming year. There will be many more opportunities for
internationalizing our students and employees in the future, and I thank the many employees who have led our development in this key area over the last several years.

Many thanks to the staff and faculty who helped make our expanded New Student Orientation sessions so successful in June. Clarence Scott, Don Joyner, Dr. Donald Spell, Leslie Rogers, and so many others worked hard with academic divisions to prepare students for fall term. As you may have read in this morning’s Daily Reflector, it appears that our double-digit enrollment growth last year has shielded us from the 10.7% reductions in state funds for the coming year. Programs like New Student Orientation, Advising, and Career Counseling will help students stay on track until they complete their educational goals. Hopefully, this will also aid us in offsetting state budget reductions in 2012-13.

Recognitions/Accomplishments:

- **Cindi Jernigan**, Business Office, has been chosen to serve as Co-Director of the NC Community College Leadership Program for the coming year. Cindi successfully completed the program this spring.
- **Athletic Director Junior Bailey** was named the 2011 Region X Conference Coach of the Year in Women’s Softball.
- Directed by **Stephen Brand** with accompaniment by **Sue Jefferson** and **Shirley Kuhn**, the Spring Choral Concert was presented on May 2.
- Following up on the visit by Governor Perdue and the announcement of a major grant in May, **Mary Paramore** and **Derek Hunter** have worked with officials from the Roberts Company on their expansion and additional training. The Roberts Company has had a strong relationship with Pitt’s welding program thanks to the leadership of Department Chair **Roy Lanier** and other instructors.
- **Andrew Walker**, Research & Planning, received a scholarship and completed the Data and Decisions Academy of the Association for Institutional Research.
- **Ernis Lee**, Continuing Education, has been named to serve on the Executive Board for Communities in Schools for Pitt County.

I begin my duties as President of the NC Association of Community College Presidents later this month. This will include monthly presentations to the State Board and other groups as well as chairing the regular presidents’ meetings. It is an honor to serve in this capacity for such a strong group of colleges.

I hope that your summer is going well, and I will report to you once more before Fall Convocation takes place on August 15.

G. Dennis Massey, President