February 1, 2013

College Update

Hope is that thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops...at all.

Emily Dickinson

Although we do not have final numbers as of yet, it is clear that our Spring 2013 enrollment is very strong, with total credit increases well over 5% and most sections full and all classrooms utilized. I thank everyone for their hard work at the beginning of the semester to advise, register, and welcome our 8555 credit students (at last count, the number will rise further with late-starting courses). The traffic flow changes which we enacted in conjunction with the Department of Transportation should provide a safer environment for our pedestrians in crossing Reedy Branch Road, which transforms from a through street to part of the campus at key points in the day. Please be patient as everyone gets accustomed to the changes.

Spring is also the first semester for 21 students pursuing the Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration through North Carolina Wesleyan College at Pitt Community College. This is a significant step forward for our students to have this option, but this is one of many initiatives we are taking to strengthen University Transfer pathways and support. Thanks to Dean Stephanie Rook, Pat Baldwin, James Ward and the many faculty and staff supporting students whose goals include study beyond what PCC provides. Improvements in the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement with the University of North Carolina System and specific partnerships with departments at East Carolina University will only strengthen our standing as one of the best community colleges in NC for the first steps toward a four-year degree.

In the past few years, the economic recession has impacted us all. North Carolina has major challenges in responding to its high rate of poverty, 18% or 1.7 million people, according to Gene Nichol, Director of the UNC Law School’s Center on Poverty, Work, and Opportunity. Ten Eastern NC counties, including Pitt, demonstrate “persistent poverty,” according to the federal government, with 20% of residents having lived in poverty for the past 30 years. We at Pitt Community College know something about this reality, with over 51% of our students receiving need-based Pell Grants (up from 33% in 2003). This is why our #1 Strategic Goal is Student and Community Access. We know that more education and training is one of the best steps to success in work and life.

We also know that targeted support and advising will result in higher student retention and completion of degrees and certificates. In the most recent analysis of Performance Measures in NC, Pitt Community College scored very high compared to our peers in University Transfer and in Curriculum Completion. We will continue to monitor and analyze our withdrawal rates, early alerts on student progress within a semester, and many other loss points in students’ momentum to realize their educational goals. One
of our major funding requests for 2013-14 to the General Assembly is to provide funding for performance improvements in this key area.

The financial status of our students underscores the important role of our Financial Aid Department and the extra assistance provided by our PCC Foundation. We will continue to seek resources for our students, and I ask all of you to spread the word on the great support which the Annual Excellence Fund and events like the upcoming Dancing with the PCC Stars on March 7 provide to bring a brighter future to students and their families.

**Recognitions and Accomplishments**

- PCC will receive the Andrew Heiskell Award through the Institute of International Education in March for our International Education Travel Scholarship program thanks to the initiative of Andre Gregory, Pamela Hilbert, Dan Mayo, Darlene Smith-Worthington, Stephanie Rook, and many others. See the press release from Rob Goldberg to learn the true distinction of this recognition.
- Andre Gregory was nominated by PCC for the Werner Kubsch Award for Outstanding Achievement in International Education. Although he did not win this award, Gregory will be announced as a finalist at the Community Colleges for International Development conference.
- The Medical Dosimetry program received accreditation from the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology. Thanks to Elaine Spence, Donna Neal and faculty who supported this process.
- Shakeena White, Sidette Boyce, Arwen Parris, and EMS John Mitchell participated in a Health Sciences fair for high school students sponsored by the Brody School of Medicine Student Ambassadors.
- Daniela Zemanek has been named the Newsletter Editor for the American Mathematical Association for Two-Year Colleges. Great for NC and PCC!
- Amber Ream, Nursing, received a curriculum globalization grant from World View for a module on Global Implications and Responses to Viral Hepatitis.
- The mother of the first baby in 2013 born at Carteret General Hospital is Haley Vincent, who is a full-time Pitt Community College student in Health Care Management.

On that note of beginnings and hope, I extend best wishes for a great spring semester.

G. Dennis Massey, President