March 1, 2013

**College Update**

“'Can’t' was not an option and sacrifice was the rule.”

from the obituary for Charles R. Coburn

February has certainly been the month of comings and goings at Pitt Community College, and I am not referring to the snow which graced our grounds temporarily. The retirement of Alan Edwards as Police Chief after 23 years of dedicated service is a major milestone for the College. We often do not think about the support which this important department provides for all of us, and we will work with new Chief Jay Shingleton to continue to improve that level of service for our students, employees and guests in the future. Our campus is situated in a growing area of Pitt County and, as you well know, we are the most densely populated college campus in North Carolina, so our Police Department has special challenges.

You are aware from my earlier e-mail that Vice President of Academic Affairs Pamela Hilbert has assumed the presidency at Robeson Community College as of March 1. We definitely owe her respect and thanks for her seven years as vice president of our largest division, consisting of all credit and non-credit programs and personnel, and I know she will be an excellent president and colleague. Dean of Health Sciences Donna Neal has agreed to serve as Interim Vice President while we begin the important work of searching for a Vice President, and Director of Human Resources Mike Shreves will be serving as search committee chair. Please do your best to assist Dean Neal during this transition period.

Many of you may not have known Mr. Charles Coburn personally, but he added much to Pitt Tech and Pitt Community College during his years as Athletic Director and Head Basketball Coach. He served in Vietnam from 1967-69 where he lost his right arm in a mortar explosion. After recovery time at the Philadelphia Naval Hospital, Mr. Coburn earned a PCC Associate’s degree in Business in 1973 and played basketball for the “Paladins” (this was before the Bulldogs name arrived). From 1973-75 he coached basketball, and then again from 1982-1994. He never saw his physical condition as an obstacle to pursuing his dreams and motivating many young people to excel and become major contributors to our community and region. With his gravelly voice and forthright style, Mr. Coburn honored PCC and had the gymnasium in the Ed and Joan Warren Building named after him in 2000. He also helped coach Little League baseball and established the Babe Ruth Umpire Association in 1990. He was an active supporter of Veterans on campus and in the community. Coach Coburn passed away on February 21, but he was literally a force of nature whose example will live on for years to come in our athletic programs and the people he touched. At the final home basketball game against Lenoir CC, 14 seconds of silence in honor of Coburn was observed in recognition of his 14 years of coaching at PCC.
Although sports is only one facet of a comprehensive community college like Pitt, it communicates to the county and region our pride and excellence in ways that reinforce our high quality standards in academics and service. This spring’s sports teams are excelling, with Men’s Baseball undefeated at 8-0 and Women’s Softball very strong with a record of 7-3, with many weather cancellations for both squads in February. Men’s Basketball finished their home schedule with strong victories against Wake Tech and Lenoir and will play in the Regional Tournament at Catawba Valley Community College starting March 7. Even better than the teams’ records is the steady improvement in academic records for individuals on these teams. I know that Coach Coburn would be proud.

Recognitions and Accomplishments

- **Jordyn Roark**, an Adult High School student, won first place in a regional Rotary Club competition for a speech delivered on Rotary Against Drugs. She will compete on a state level in March. Good luck, Jordyn!
- **Roy Lanier** was quoted in *Welding Journal* published by the American Welding Society describing the mobile lab and associated technology.
- **LaTonya Nixon** spoke at the Emerging Leaders Institute at the Southern Association of Education Opportunity Program Personnel meeting.
- **Nancy Bunch** helped PCC’s Nurse Aide I program in Human Services achieve a two-year re-approval in accreditation.
- **Bertha Mooring and the Business Division** hosted Congressman G. K. Butterfield in addressing the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation as part of Black History Month activities.
- **Mike Shreves**, Director Human Resources, announced the development of new orientation videos for new employees beginning August 2013.

Finally, this past month I was part of a panel including Dr. David Herman, CEO of Vidant Health, Don Blake of Spirit AeroSystems, Inc., Dr. Rick Niswander, Vice Chancellor at ECU, Mr. Carson Sublett, Plant Manager at DSM, and others which was conducted by *Business North Carolina* magazine on the topic of Economic Development in Eastern NC. The panel will be featured in the April issue out later this month. Community colleges are definitely a major part of the teamwork which will be needed. I was proud to note that Pitt and other colleges are partners with all the organizations represented.

Best wishes for a great month of March.

G. Dennis Massey, President