

January 1, 2018

College Update

"A writer should have the precision of a poet and the imagination of a scientist."

Vladimir Nabokov

Situated between the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas with the quick march into final examinations for Fall Semester, December is a perfect example of "hurry up and wait" feelings. It is tough to savor the true joy and celebration in the rush for the end of the year and welcoming in the hope of 2018. It was tempting to lay aside this Update. I have often heard that this interlude between fall and spring terms is not worth the effort, especially when students sometimes forget so much of what has been learned during the long semester.

Back in the academic quarter days (some of you may remember that calendar configuration) I was on a campus where the fall term did conclude before Thanksgiving, with one long stretch before January free of classes. But the continuity of learning was no better after such an absence and no perceived burst of energy and creativity arose in January upon returning, among those who did return, that is. Perhaps the best news at Pitt Community College regarding the calendar is that classes do not begin until Monday, January 8, allowing for a somewhat easier resumption of work for students!

Two community outreach events in December which I attended were especially inspiring and really illustrate the community engagement which became a Core Value of PCC in 2017-18. On December 13 the 6th Annual AMEXCAN (Association of Mexicans in North Carolina) Community Leadership Awards was held in the Davenport Room of the Craig F. Goess Student Center at PCC. Outstanding individuals and organizations were recognized by AMEXCAN, which has many community partners throughout eastern North Carolina, including Pitt Community College. Our collaborations with AMEXCAN help further two important outreach efforts for students and employees: global study and interaction, and community service and leadership with residents of our region. I was proud to see several PCC people and groups receive awards, including Scott Temple (English/Humanities), Joy Moses-Hall (Phi Theta Kappa), Dean Stephanie Rook (Global Studies), and a variety of others. I am especially pleased with the Spanish language training in HVAC, Electrical, and Welding skills which Mary Caldwell and credit/non-credit programs have provided with AMEXCAN partnership. This is indeed educating and empowering people for success in our area.

The other outreach event, "Males Addressing Issues & Needs" (M.A.I.N.), was chaired by Assistant Vice President Jasmin Spain and VISIONS College Coordinator Steffen McGhee with important support from NEXT LEVEL students and other employees and brought to campus on December 18 an impressive group of professionals from the

region to work with seniors from Pitt County high schools in tune with the theme “Accountability breeds response-ability.” Keynote speaker McGhee and an impressive group of concurrent seminar leaders communicated how students can prepare for their futures. The day was dedicated to former student Edward Turner’s memory and legacy, who was a co-founder of the NEXT LEVEL Minority Mentor program. Hats off to Spain, McGhee and those who volunteered their time for this inaugural event.

Finally, I want to call attention to an article in Business North Carolina, November 2017 edition on the partnership between ECU and PCC in training in pharmaceutical and laboratory services for Mayne Pharma, Thermo Fisher Scientific, and other biotech employers. This collaboration with the Golden LEAF Foundation was led by Mark Phillips of the NC Biotechnology Center, PCC VP Thomas Gould and Mike Wrenn along with ECU faculty and illustrates the close interaction between education and biopharma companies in Pitt County. Classes in Biotechnology in the Walter and Marie Williams Building as well as the STEM focus of the Early College High School are ways PCC is developing the “pre-service” as well as “in-service” needs of this expanding employment sector.

Recognitions and Accomplishments

- Congratulations to the graduates of the Pitt Community College Occupational Therapy program, whose pinning ceremony was held on December 14.

A huge thank you to all the faculty, staff, and students who worked intensively in December to attract and enroll students for the January start of Spring 2018 semester. And to VP Rick Owens, Facilities Director Tim Strickland, and Assistant VP Ernest Simons and all your staff members, we again owe more than we realize to your efforts over the maintenance shutdown and retooling period for setting the table for January. PCC really never closes!

Don’t forget the PCC Foundation “Accelerating the Future” Capital Campaign as well as the United Way annual campaign in the weeks ahead, which serve our future facility needs and help less fortunate members of our community.

G. Dennis Massey, President