

Subject: From the President's Desk

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To: "Campus Wide Business" <campusbusiness@sjdccd.cc.ca.us>

Good afternoon everyone! This is the p.m. edition as I have been a little bogged down this morning with meetings and such and have not had the time to put the finishing touches on this message until now.

We have all heard that supposedly ancient Chinese curse, "May you live in interesting times." Well, given recent events locally and nationally, we are definitely cursed with a bevy of interesting and challenging events.

Hurricane Katrina

It has taken some time to get going, just like the federal response effort, but the California Community Colleges are responding to the disaster in Louisiana. There is an icon that you can click on at the Chancellor's Office web site to find out what the various community colleges across the state and the system office have done or are planning to do (WWW.CCCCO.EDU). The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has a similar bulletin board on their web site as well.

I am proud to say that our local relief efforts are starting to take shape as well. Earlier this week the ASBG voted to allocate \$5,000 to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. That gets the college half way to the system goal of raising \$10,000 from every community college in the state. I know that the Delta College community is generous, especially in a time of need, so I have asked Diana Slawson to set up a special account in the Delta College Foundation so that people can make contributions to that account that will then be turned over to the Red Cross or to local victim assistance.

The Chancellor's Office has also asked us to hold back some of the money that we raise to help the victims of Katrina who come to California to attend our community colleges. Those students will need money for food, clothing, housing, and other basic needs. I did offer last week, through the AACC, to take in any students who were left stranded and unable to continue their college education in the states affected by the storm. Catherine Mooney informed me this morning that we had our first student enroll from Jefferson Parish in Louisiana. I suspect that this person is the first of potentially many more. We are still struggling with the issue of waiving out of state fees, but I understand that the Chancellor is working with the Governor's Office and the Legislature to pass an emergency measure. Let's hope they do it soon.

Two members of the Delta community are participating directly in the relief effort. Paul Kuehn informed me that Mary-Huyen Tran, Delta student and International Club president, works for the American Red Cross and, as such, is being sent to Louisiana to assist with the hurricane relief. Paul said that he is very proud of her and knows that this will be a meaningful human experience for her. Paul is one of the advisors of the International Club. Similarly, Nursing Instructor Isabel Romena has been recruited by Dr. Kamali at St. Joseph's Medical

Center, who is organizing the Stockton medical relief effort. Isabel will be heading down to Louisiana at some point during the next two weeks. I want to wish both Mary and Isabel well in their efforts and thank them for helping others who were negatively affected by this tragedy.

There is also an effort underway to hold a concert or other fundraising activity to aid the victims of the hurricane and the relief effort. I don't really have any details as of yet, but I will let you know when I find out or else you will hear it directly from the publicity for the event or events.

There have been a lot of warnings in the media about relief effort scams. We should all be wary about what agencies we choose as recipients. If you would like to make a monetary contribution locally, instead of donating to some outside agency, to the disaster relief fund as part of the statewide community college effort, you can make donations through my office or directly to the Foundation. It would be great if we could raise another \$5,000 to match what the students have allocated for the disaster relief. Checks should be made to the Delta College Foundation, but you need to clearly indicate that the donation is for the hurricane relief.

To Mountain House or Not

Several articles have come out this week in the Tracy Press and in the Record about talks between Delta College and the City of Tracy over a potential new site for our South County educational center. We are engaged in preliminary discussions with Tracy officials over a site on the northeast side of Tracy. The impetus for pursuing an alternative site has to do with two factors that have complicated our plans for the Mountain House site. First, we have had a philosophical and practical difference of opinion over some of the regulations that were written for the Mountain House development by the master developer, Trimark Properties. They have never acknowledged that we are not a private developer and they have sought to treat us like one even though we are a public entity. These issues have finally come to a head and they are partially responsible for the second reason that we are looking at an alternative site, i.e., the escalating costs of constructing a campus at Mountain House.

When I first came to Delta College the estimate was approximately \$50 million for the construction of the Tracy Center. That cost included both construction and infrastructure. Having been through the development of a center before, I thought that was a little high, but it was still within a reasonable range. Since then, the estimates for the cost of construction and infrastructure have steadily risen to where the most recent estimate hit the \$95 million mark. When I saw how drastically the estimate had increased, I knew we had to work diligently to reduce those costs, which we are doing, or to have a backup plan in case we could not reduce those costs.

I happened to run into the new City Manager of Tracy at an event at the beginning of the summer. We had a brief conversation and that chance meeting began a longer conversation that could provide us with a possible second option in case Mountain House becomes politically or financially untenable. We are actively working on possible terms for the purchase of the above mentioned property in Tracy. There is no guarantee that we will be able to work out the terms we desire as Tracy has its own political challenges and issues to work out. Nonetheless, I believe we have a duty to seek the best possible option for the college in terms of cost because that is what the taxpayers expect.

I don't want to give the impression that we are abandoning the Mountain House site as that is not the case. We are still pursuing every avenue available to reduce the estimated costs for that site and make it a more viable option. If we can't reduce those costs sufficiently or if the political issues become insurmountable, then we need to have a backup plan. I can't in good conscience recommend to the Board or to anyone else that we proceed with construction at the Mountain House site when it has a \$95 million price tag or anything even approximating that amount. Such an inflated cost severely limits our ability to complete our total bond program, which includes many projects for the Stockton campus, as the Tracy Center would be taking a disproportionate amount of the bond dollars. Besides, we don't want to be known as the college that built the most expensive center in the history of the community colleges! We already have the most expensive science/technology building per square foot (the CMAS building). Such expensive costs are not good business practice and they are not good public policy. We will be discussing this item in closed session at the board meeting next Tuesday evening.

Social Security Number Conversion Project

The Information Services Department has been hard at work on doing all of the preparation for the conversion of all student and staff social security numbers to identification numbers. This change was mandated by the federal government and is meant to protect individuals from identity theft and other types of fraud.

The conversion will occur from November 10th through the 13th. This conversion will include one normal work day before Veterans Day weekend. It is my understanding that the online classes will continue but other online services will be affected as Social Security Numbers are used in most of our electronic systems. There is no way to do such a massive conversion without impacting other systems. The effect on the instructional and student services programs will be minimized to the greatest extent possible, but there is no way to avoid some impact.

As we get closer to the conversion date, Lee Belarmino and others will provide more specific information so that you can prepare and schedule accordingly.

Kudos

- It is always wonderful to hear what changes are taking place in the lives of former Delta students. Karen Andersen forwarded the following announcement concerning a special appointment made by Governor Schwarzenegger. The excerpt quoted below, taken from the Governor's press release on appointments, is about a former Delta College student who has been working locally as an advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities. "Nicole Patterson, 29, of Stockton, has been appointed coordinator of consumer services for the Department of Developmental Services. She has served as a coordinator for the Self-Advocacy Council VI since 2000 and was previously an assistant with Serve Work Services and the Independent Living Center." Congratulations to Nicole on her new appointment!

- Congratulations to the Dr. Condon, the Division Deans, and the entire faculty who taught this past summer. Our summer school enrollments came in at 6.91% higher than the previous summer. Two of the biggest contributors to this growth in FTES are the Summer Theater program put on by the Fine Arts Division and the CYA academy that was run by the Applied Sciences and Technology Division. Great job to everyone involved!

Enjoy your weekend!