

Subject: From the President's Desk**Date:** Thu, 31 Mar 2005 09:47:40 -0800**From:** "Raul Rodriguez" <rrodriguez@deltacollege.edu>**To:** "Campus Wide Business" <campusbusiness@sjdccd.cc.ca.us>

Lots of things have happened since I last wrote one of these messages. I won't be able to fit it all in today, but I will get in what I can. As you can see, I am writing this on Thursday as I will be taking a vacation day tomorrow on Friday. I will be spending the weekend with my wife and children in Yosemite. I haven't heard a weather but let's hope the weather cooperates!

More Bats

The bat issue just won't go away and we are having a difficult time dealing with the bat infestation. The County has put us under an abatement order and, as Kim Myers relayed to the campus in his recent memo, they also want us to remove the cats from campus (which our resident rat population will be pleased about). We are still working with the County to see if the abatement order has any wiggle room on the cat issue.

Workers were on campus all last week during break trying to plug up all of the gaps in Holt that are potential entrances into the building for the bats. They have continued to work on this project this week as well. I imagine that we will have to take the same type of protective measures for all of our buildings as they are all potential habitats for the local bat population. Just as I wrote this a crew arrived outside of my office to caulk openings in the building so apparently this work is already happening.

I'm sure you have all seen the sign around campus that we had to put up on orders from the County. Needless to say, if you see a bat, do not go near it!

Kuali Project

We sent out a press release last week (which didn't get much local press coverage) about an item that was published in the April 1 edition of the Chronicle of Higher Education (I received my copy earlier in the week as the Chronicle is printed well before the actual date on the masthead). The press release and the article discuss two main issues. The first is that Delta College was announced as one of four new partners joining the existing partners in the Kuali Project. The other new partners are Cornell University, Michigan State University, and the University of Arizona. The founding partners are Indiana University, the University of Hawaii, the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO), and the R-Smart Group. The second announcement in the press release and Chronicle article is that the project was awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation. This will be added to the \$5 million that is being invested by the partners (Delta's total contribution is \$500,000, but some of that is in-kind contributions).

For those of you who are not aware of the Kuali Project, it is a joint venture between the partners mentioned above to develop a financial software system. There are several aspects that are unique about this project. First

and foremost, it is an open source software development project. That means that when the product is developed and put into operation, it will be available to any other college or university who would like to use it. Open source means just that, no one entity owns the source code (as opposed to proprietary source code that is owned by a private company or corporation). Open source is open to all comers. Another aspect about open source that is unique is that you have a community of developers who are working together to create the software. Ralph Olstad and Christopher Kirschenman are leading Delta's part of the development work and are doing a great job by all reports. They are working in conjunction with developers from all of the other partner institutions in the project.

Delta's current financial software system leaves much to be desired in terms of its performance, functionality, and scope. So, when we had an opportunity to join this project, it made perfect sense for us to work with university partners rather than going the traditional route by purchasing a product off the shelf that would cost us millions of dollars and which we still wouldn't be happy with because we had no hand in its development. By participating in the development, we will be able to make sure the new financial system meets all of our general and specific needs. Another attractive component is that we are not starting from scratch; the Kualu Project is based on the financial software system that was developed and has been in use at Indiana University for a number of years. That system works better than any we have seen and we are going to make it even better. The best part, of course, is the amount of money it will save us in the long run to go open source rather than the traditional proprietary route. We believe this is the best business model out there as proprietary software costs too much and institutions can't develop a project of this magnitude on their own in today's world. We hope that Kualu is the first of several more open source projects for Delta.

Identity Theft

Bob Sullivan (who is an alum of Fairfield University, one of my alma maters) wrote a book in 2004 entitled *Your Evil Twin: Behind the Identity Theft Epidemic*. In this book, he interviews both the victims of identity theft and a number of perpetrators as well. He points out in the book that approximately 10 million Americans have suffered identity theft in the last year alone. He also indicates that two-thirds of identity thefts are inside jobs. That is, the social security number, bank account number, address, etc. of identity theft victims, are most often stolen by other employees within an organization. He believes that identity theft has become an epidemic because of corporate America's preference for speedy transactions and lax credit processing rather than on customer safety and confidentiality.

Our recent incident of identity theft on campus is an example of how easily and how devastating identity theft can be. I am not going to comment on the specifics of that incident because it is still under investigation and until I see a report, I can't be sure that the information I have is totally correct. There is a real danger in providing hearsay or partial information. There is also a danger in putting rumors out on the e-mail system, especially when names are mentioned or particular individuals are implicated as these early reports most often contain misinformation.

Bob Sullivan says that there are steps we can all take to prevent identity theft. He says we need to scrutinize our credit card and bank statement closely on a monthly basis to make sure that we notice any fraudulent transactions right away. He recommends keeping the phone numbers of your credit card companies in a safe place in case your wallet is stolen so that you can call right away and put a fraud alert on your accounts. He

also suggests that everyone look up your credit reports once a year. A new law was passed that makes this service free. Along the same lines, he says people should check their criminal history and insurance claims to make sure that no unusual items show up. A handy web site he recommends is www.ChoiceTrust.com.

Sullivan also says that when you are a victim of identity theft, no agency is going to clean up the mess for you. You have to take the responsibility to do it yourself. A first step is to put a fraud alert on your accounts through the three major credit agencies. They are:

Equifax: (800) 525-6285

Experian: (888) 397-3742

TransUnion: (800) 680-7289

This action will put a halt to anyone trying to get credit in your name. He says you also need to close your accounts (e.g., bank accounts, cell phone accounts, etc.) and open new ones. Even if nothing has transpired on your accounts, if you know that someone has your vital information it is better to act than to wait for something to happen. Finally, Sullivan says that it is critical to file a report with the police and with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC will put your information into a nationwide database that is shared by law enforcement agencies.

I know that this information is little consolation to the people whose lives have been disrupted by what recently happened on our campus. It is also of slight comfort to them to know that we are well underway in our transition from social security numbers as identifiers of students and staff to identification numbers. The steps we are taking will help in the future, but I realize that they don't help the people whose lives have been violated in this awful manner. I regret what happened to them and apologize for this ever happening. I also believe our police are doing everything they can to both conduct a thorough investigation of this matter and as a college we are intent on eradicating or at least greatly diminishing the chances of this ever happening again.

Kudos

Since I focused a lot on the Kualu Project in this message, I am going to confine my kudos to that project. I already mentioned the great job being done by Ralph Olstad and Christopher Kirschenman in software development for this project. One of the rewards for their outstanding efforts is frequent trips to beautiful and exotic Indiana. We should all be envious (not!) of their frequent flying.

Another person who has taken on a major leadership role in the Kualu Project is Claire Tyson. Claire has already made a number of important contributions to this project and she is leading the reengineering effort in the Business Services area. A project of this scope and magnitude requires major review and reconceptualization of how we can improve our financial processes with this new system. Claire is leading that effort with incredible energy and vision.

Of course, we wouldn't even have been accepted as the only community college in the Kualu Project if it wasn't for the experience, savvy, and connections of Lee Belarmino. He is doing a superlative job as well.

I greatly appreciate the efforts of the individuals mentioned and all of the other Delta employees who may not be as visible but who are helping to move the Kualii Project forward through their efforts.