

Subject: From the President's Desk

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

Good afternoon everyone. Sending this out has been sporadic lately, but better late than never!

Board Officers

At the board meeting last Tuesday evening, the board held its annual organizational meeting. Ted Simas was elected as Board President, Maria Elena Serna was chosen as Board Vice President, and Leo Burke will serve for the next year as Board Clerk. In addition, I was reconfirmed as Board Secretary and Dr. Condon was confirmed as Assistant Secretary to the Board. Trustee Janet Rivera served as Board President for the past year and she did an outstanding job in that capacity. I am looking forward to the capable leadership of Board President Simas and the other officers during the next year.

Accreditation Training

We have recently kicked off the accreditation self study process in preparation for our next accreditation visit in spring 2008. I know it seems like we have lots of time before the visit, but I can assure you that it takes a lot of time and a lot of effort to put together a comprehensive self study. So far, I am pleased at the participation among the various constituent groups. There are four accreditation standards now (as opposed to the ten standards that were in effect previously) and we have Tri-Chairs for each of the four standards. The Tri-Chairs are:

Standard One, Lee Belarmino, Nick Bykov, and Claudia Mackey;

Standard Two, Cynthia Gatlin, Carol Thomas, and John Williams;

Standard Three, Kim Myers, Claudia Quinn, and Jon Townsend; and

Standard Four, Joyce Giovanetti, Jennie Noriega, and Raul Rodriguez.

Dr. Condon is the Accreditation Liaison Officer for the college and the members of the Accreditation Steering Committee are: Della Condon, Kathy Hart, Lynn Welch, Amal Elayyan, Marc Bromme, Janice Takahashi, and Marco Villanueva. I want to thank Lynn Welch in particular for so ably training the teams for each standard.

Art Controversy

We have had our share of controversies lately and the one that got the most press is the piece of artwork entitled "Kalishnikov Jihad" that is on display in the Horton Gallery. Although I understand and sympathize with the

sentiments of the students and community members who felt that this piece should be removed because it desecrated the holy Quran and because it sent an anti-Muslim message, I don't believe that censorship is either healthy or appropriate except in extreme cases where a law is broken (e.g., legal definition of pornography or a hate crime). Even in those extreme cases, it is often quite difficult to determine if a piece of artwork meets or exceeds the legal definitions (as they are often somewhat ambiguous such as in the realm of the judge who was purported to have said that he would know pornography when he saw it). I do not believe that this particular piece of artwork fits the definition of a hate crime. It is making a political statement about religion being used to justify violence, not a statement about the inferiority of one group to another or of one religion to another.

We are an academic institution above all else and we should encourage controversy and debate because they are necessary ingredients to a democratic society. Controversy helps to break people out of their lethargy and it provokes a reaction. Debate and dialogue help people to think, to form opinions, and to modify those opinions if they hear a better argument or perspective. Education is about intellectual growth and development and I know that I have learned something from this controversy. I hope others have as well.

Sabbaticals

Nine faculty members were approved for sabbatical leaves for the next academic year. They are Candace Andrews (English), Jane Dominik (English), Rosalind Gottfried (Sociology), Helen Humphrey (Mathematics), Harry Mersmann (Sociology), Mario Moreno (Art), Lisa B. Perez (Computer Science), Bruce Scott (Nursing), and Mark Slakey (English & ESL). The quality of the proposals was admirable and I look forward to reading and hearing the sabbatical reports when they are done.

Kudos

On Wednesday of this week, a farewell party for Ena Hull was held in the board room as it was her last day of work. Ena will be sorely missed as she is a genuinely sweet and caring person who is exceptionally competent at her job (good financial aid directors are hard to find). Unfortunately for us, Citibank made her an offer that she couldn't refuse (and that we couldn't match). I am overjoyed for Ena and I know she will be a great success in her new position. I wish her and her family well in their new life.

Last week, Dr. Kathy Hart along with Jeff Thompson, Vice President for Learning Programs at the Foundation for CCC and Dr. Dennis Brown, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, did a presentation at the California School Board Association Annual Education Conference and Trade Show in San Diego. The workshop was entitled, "A Middle/Early College High School Success Story," and it featured details of our Middle College High School partnership with Lodi Unified School District. Kathy deserves beaucoup kudos for doing such an incredible job in working with the Middle College High School!

As most people know by now, Dr. Charles Jennings was selected as the new Dean of General Education and Transfer. I want to extend congratulations to Dr. Jennings for his new position. Also, congratulations to Dr. William Fellner who was selected as the new Division Dean for Science and Mathematics.
