

President's Report June 2013

Transition Progress

Leadership team continues to meet on Thursday morning to discuss current issues and plans for the upcoming week. This month's meetings have focused primarily on the 2013-2014 Operating Budget and Summer/Fall 2013 registration.

Our last senior leadership team member officially began on June 3. We still have some midlevel vacancies that are in process and expect to fill most of those by October.

Legislative

The 83rd Legislature has come to a close with final budget numbers favorable to community colleges. The impact of our collective effort is evidenced in our 2013-2014 Draft Operating Budget.

The governor has called a special session to deal with re-districting, and we are watching to see what else is added to the call.

Construction

The Del Rio Administration building is progressing nicely. The building has a roof deck and the block walls are going up. As of June 6, 2013, about 40% of the academic building foundation has been poured with the remaining 60% being prepped for a pour around our June board meeting. Our staff has met with the furniture suppliers to begin the process of identifying all the pieces need to fully furnish the new building. It is our expectation to take occupancy sometime during the spring of 2014, in time for Summer I 2014 classes.

Budgets

Budgets have been submitted, been reviewed by the appropriate vice presidents, and reviewed by the Cabinet. We will conduct a budget workshop beginning at 5:30 on June 20, 2013, before our regular meeting and will follow up with additional workshop as deemed necessary by the Board. We do have an action item to consider the 2013-2014 Operating Budget for June if the Board is prepared to do so. It is a balanced budget with approximately \$400,000 set aside for contingencies with in the budget.

Partnerships

We continue to work with Rio Grande College to enhance cooperation between both institutions. We are happy to report that on Friday June 14, 2013 will sign a formal articulation agreement for our Wildlife Program, enabling our students to continue toward a bachelor's of science degree with Sul Ross State University – Alpine.

RGC has developed a BAS degree in Organizational Leadership. This degree will enable our Associate in Applied Science graduates to transfer the course work towards a bachelor's in Applied Science Degree. We see this an opportunity to enhance the educational opportunities of our Technical students.

RGC-SWTJC has collaborated to develop a BSN degree. The THECB has approved the program at RGC and we will continue to assist them in developing the curriculum for a proposed Fall 2014 opening. This degree is designed to be an integral part of our allied health pipeline. Their BSN degree is a transition degree; the student must have an A.D.N. and have passed the NCLEX to be eligible for the program.

Also, RGC has offered to extend its employee discount to our employees if SWTJC would return the same for their employees. This is a great opportunity for us. Many of our employees enhance their education at RGC. We have included an action item in this regard for Board consideration.

I have also began working with Dr. Brian May, President of Angelo State University, to see if we can enhance our transfer agreement with them.

Expansion

We have internally begun discussion about the feasibility of our expansion of services in Hondo, Castroville and Eagle Pass.

Hondo – The city of Hondo is adamant about wanting a technical presence in their facility. We have been slow to respond, due to the difficulty in identifying a technical program that we believe will be sustainable in the future. Our discussions thus far have been between air conditioning and welding. Air conditioning would represent a lower cost entry program for us. We are in discussion with the City officials to see if we can reach an understanding on it. We will keep you posted on our discussion with Hondo.

Castroville – The superintendent of Medina Valley approached me this past fall about the possibility of expanding our academic course offerings to their community. They are willing to build a facility to help seed the program that would eventually transition into a college facility. Our Associate Vice President of Outreach will visit with Medina Valley to further explore this opportunity. We will keep you posted of any developments.

Eagle Pass – We have begun discussions at the cabinet level to ascertain the best use of the 18 acres purchased in Eagle Pass. Thus far we believe that consolidating our existing

technical programs, workforce training and adding new technical programs would help increase our presence in the community. Eagle Pass ISD currently has two 5A high schools and an additional one planned within the next 5-8 years. We have an agenda item for the June Board meeting seeking authorization to engage our architects to assist us this next year to develop a site plan and feasibility study for the site. Included in that request is the authorization to use of our existing financial advisors to determine our borrowing capacity, bond market analysis and cash flow projections for the future expansion of that site.

Conferences

The Community College Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT) held its annual conference in Austin on Saturday, June 1st. In the morning sessions, trustees and college administrators heard from Noah Brown, President & CEO of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) and Fred Heldenfels, Chair of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. At lunch, attendees were provided a briefing on the 83rd Legislature and a discussion of the Student Success Movement in Texas. The afternoon session was devoted to breakout discussions by attendees regarding the needs of trustees and ways in which CCATT can provide support and professional development for these community college leaders. The day concluded with the CCATT business meeting. Mr. Moreno and I attended the CCATT conference in Austin, and Mr. Moreno will provide a full report to the Board at the June meeting.

Other

This past spring semester I authorized a Focus Group study of student perceptions. It included students from Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass. The study revealed and confirmed some areas of weakness as well as success. The report was presented to the Cabinet and we have begun to address the concerns identified. We have a Board report prepared for the June meeting, but here are some highlights from the Focus Group data.

Faculty – Appreciation of the abilities and commitment of faculty members appeared universal across all focus group participants.

Student Success Centers – All indicated that the services provided were valuable.

Community Perception of SWTJC – Del Rio/Eagle Pass campuses indicated that there was widespread lack of awareness of the college's existence.

Distance Learning – Students reported problems on the remote end of interactive video instruction, they felt excluded from the class.

Academic Advising – Attitudes were generally negative across all groups. In some cases students had been given incorrect or at best misleading information by academic advisors.

Gym – Uvalde students expressed a desire for greater access to the gym facilities, while the Del Rio and Eagle Pass students wanted a gym or at least an exercise facility.

Food Service – Uvalde students wanted more hours of availability and choices, the other campuses wanted a cafeteria or at least a snack bar.