

President's Report

February, 2007

Could life be any busier?

January presented me and most of the college with a "To Do" list that would overwhelm even the best of spouses and I'll admit to feeling overwhelmed from time to time myself... but only from time to time. For the most part, I and the college seem to be faring well – and perhaps even thriving – in the intensity of our current efforts. Here's just some of what we've been up to...


- Weather related closures (and delays and non-closures)
At first it seemed as if we might have a weather-related closure on the first day of classes, but we managed to make it into later that week and then into the next week before needing to brush off our closure policy and do our best at balancing the risks and opportunities associated with staying open, having a delayed start, and closing altogether. Our experiences so far this winter season have prompted us to discuss, clarify, and make some revisions in our procedures and practice.
- Legislative session
The Legislature is now in "full swing" and by the time we have our February Board meeting I will have been in Salem three days to meet with (and in some cases address) various Legislators. It is early in the session but already there is emerging strong support for education, for community colleges, and for Clatsop Community College. There are many good people serving us as Senators and Representatives in this year's Legislature but we at Clatsop are especially fortunate to be represented by Betsy, Brad, and Debbie – Senator Johnson and Representatives Witt and Boone. Here is a very brief recap of the bills we are watching closely:
 - Senate Bill 5516 – Capital Construction
 - Clatsop Community College's project – a "new campus" – is included in this bill with \$17.5 million in funding.
 - Senate Bill 34 – "Shared Responsibility" Student Financial Aid
 - This is a very important bill that will provide an additional \$110 million for student financial assistance.
 - Senate Bill 80 – elimination of "Double Majority"
 - This bill, if passed and then approved by the voters, would eliminate the need for a minimum 50% voter turnout in order to pass bond levies. You may have noticed a recent editorial in The Daily Astorian calling attention to this issue and expressing support for its elimination – a position with which the community colleges strongly agree.
- Budget Development
Under the leadership of Lindi Overton, we are working to develop our FY08 Budget for your review later this spring. Even though this is an annual routine, we find ourselves modifying and improving the process almost every time we do it, and this year is no exception. New to the process this year:
 - Explicit connection of new funding requests to Strategic Planning Objectives and Initiatives
 - New "Resource Guideline Benchmarks," setting revenue and expenditure reference points and establishing a specific set of community colleges for comparison purposes.
 - Better data! With the addition of our new Institutional Research Director – Javier Ayala – and a growing recognition of the importance of good data campus-wide, we are developing and using more data, and more reliable data, in our budget planning.As part of my verbal report, I will be discussing with you some variables we need to take into account as we build next year's (and the next biennium's) budget. One important variable will be the level of State support we should anticipate and how differences in this support might affect our local college decisions such as tuition rates and new/strategic investments.

- Educational Outcomes Assessment
Under the leadership of Sheila Ruhland, and with the faculty doing most of the “real work” (that’s a joke, Sheila!), we continue to make progress toward courses and an integrated curriculum that is built around and measured against clearly established and articulated educational outcomes. We look forward to filing our October 2007 Progress Report with NWCCU in which we will be able to showcase the significant progress we have made.
- 2005-06 Strategic Planning Progress Report
This report is included in your packet and we will have time for an initial discussion at our meeting.
- New Grant Received
We have just received a \$40,000 “Rural Colleges Strategic Reserve Fund – Pathways Initiative” grant to help us develop entry-level occupation training with the maritime industry in the region. Unique to our area, the maritime industry remains an important part of our economy and we are going to use this grant to help us better understand how we can better prepare people from Clatsop County for these entry-level employment opportunities.
- New Facilities Planning
Ever since our January 10th Board Retreat I have been setting up and attending various community meetings throughout the county, seeking input that will help clarify and confirm (or refute) what we believe we understand to be the voters’ wishes regarding a possible May 2007 Bond Ballot Measure. So far these meetings have provided me with encouraging feedback, affirming the high value that I know our county’s citizens place on education and confirming the strong support for a Warrenton campus that we saw in the post-election voter survey we had conducted in December 2006.
 - We have also spent time meeting with a citizens’ group that has attended our past two Board meetings, providing them with numerous documents pertaining to the college’s facilities planning history and giving them a first-hand tour of the Jerome Ave. campus that currently houses the majority of our educational programs. I am optimistic that these citizens of ours will be able to help us understand what is necessary and what is possible, should we find ourselves needing to redevelop our current campus.
 - I anticipate presenting the Board with a recommendation regarding the placement of a bond measure on the May 2007 ballot at our February 27th Special Board Meeting.

Back to the matter with which I began this report – “busyness.” I just got an email asking me to write a letter of recommendation for someone (and I already have an unfinished letter for another student on my desk)... sometimes being busy keeps us doing what’s important. I need to stop and take the time to write these letters. I’m going to do that right now.

Thanks to our Board, our faculty and staff – AND OUR STUDENTS – for the “busyness” that we share in making our community’s future brighter and better for us all.

Sincerely,


 A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name, possibly "Sheila", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.