

## **President's Report – December 2009**

As this report is being drafted, our faculty and students are midway through exam week. Much work will be accomplished over this and next week to bring the fall semester to a close. A very important aspect of the academic calendar is this frenetic end of semester push to demonstrate learning has taken place and quality has been assured and documented. Exams signal the end of an intense learning experience and a time for rest and reflection as to how things might have gone better and setting new goals for the next semester.

Beyond the run up to final examinations, our students and faculty were engaged in other activities. Over 500 students participated in the College's Sabor Latino and Kwanzaa events. Over 100 students received free chair massages from our massage students in our "Stress Free Zone" and another 200 students enjoyed an end of the semester beach bash event.

One of our Fashion Design students, Sabina Adjinovic, took first place and "Best of Show" at the recent regional Fashion Group Competition at the Merchandise Mart. In fact, 19 of our students were finalists in the contest. Congratulations to Sabina, her classmates and our faculty colleagues for this remarkable success.

Another student success story is that of Alexandra Mason who earned a 3.25 GPA while also being named a first team All-American for her ability on the volleyball court.

Over the fall semester we noted an uptick in some of our student services on campus. Access and Disability Services reported an increase of 39%, Harper's Women's Program was up 36%, The Center for New Students was up 26% and Academic Advising and Counseling was up 12%.

Our information technology staff was also busy. They launched a quarterly meeting with our Student Senate to gain feedback on the use of technology on the campus. The information technology staff also completed three major projects this last month:

1. The rollout of "instant" messaging on the campus (Harper IM.) An application for on campus instant messaging was installed on desktops of all Harper faculty and staff. With Harper IM you have the ability to instant message real time to other Harper employees individually or as a group.
2. Two legacy Novell storage boxes have been shut down in the data center. This is part of IT's green imitative to save power consumed in the data centers by consolidating functions and migrating to newer more energy efficient hardware.

3. The IT Department provided tremendous support to our student success agenda by supporting the analysis and programming that led to our ability to extract 2008-09 student data for the Achieving the Dream Data Team. This data will be used to support decisions for the College's interventions to improve student success.

We had many faculty and staff successes as well. Among them:

- Dr. Sue Bajt of the Computer Information Systems Department has been appointed as peer reviewer for the Higher Learning Commission;
- Dr. Richard Johnson, Dr. Pearl Ratunil, Keith Jensen and July Daplow presented a panel presentation "I Don't Look Like My Subject: Instructor Identity in Multicultural Teaching" at the Community College Humanities Association's national conference in Chicago;
- Joan Kindle is a contributing author in a new Jossey Bass monograph due out in January 2010;
- Tom Thompson had a cover page, lead article published in the December 2009 Disability Compliance in Higher Education newsletter; and,
- Sheryl Otto has been awarded the 2009 NASPA IV-East Distinguished Service to the Profession Award.

This is also a time for reflection in the President's Office. Much was planned for the fall semester and much has been accomplished. The goals of the Board and the President have moved forward and the spring semester will begin a push for completion and setting the stage for the work that lies ahead. Below is a summary of the progress on our goals:

- *Build work processes, working relationships and business processes that are transparent and inspire confidence and trust between the administrative staff and Board of Trustees.*  
The work of the Administration that requires Board authorization is now being transmitted through three Board committees, (Student Success, Finance and Facilities, and Executive Committees). These committees have been up and running for two months. All Board members are members of the committees and each committee has two Board members identified by the Chairperson to provide liaison back to the Board meetings. The engagement of staff and Board members in the committee meetings is intended to build rapport and inspire trust and confidence between the administration and the Trustees. We will evaluate the overall effectiveness of the committees as well as the relationship building in the late spring semester.
- *Launch "Building Community through Student Success"*  
The "Week of Engagement" coupled with the launch of the academic year has solidified the College's awareness and interest in committing to the student success theme. Our internal discussions, the work of our Achieving The Dream "core" and "data" teams, the College-wide symposiums, the engagement between the President and the K-12 leadership as well as local officials and business and civic leaders have all contributed to a community discussion of student success.

A recent editorial in the *Daily Herald* reinforced this community dialog. With the publication of “white paper” summarizing this work, the stage will be set for strategic planning in the spring.

- *Assess, Design and Staff an Executive Leadership Team that is aligned with the goal of student success.*  
Following the Thanksgiving break, the President shared with the Board, senior staff and faculty leadership a new organizational design for the executive staff that reduced the number of direct reports to the president from nine to six. Major academic, student, and enrollment services functions are being consolidated under the leadership of a Provost. Likewise, business, finance, human resources, information technology and facilities are being supported through an Executive Vice President position. Search committees for both of these positions have been identified as well as external support to assist with recruitment and vetting of the candidates. These positions will be filled by the end of March. The four remaining positions reporting to the president will be filled by current College employees.
- *Complete a Master Physical Plan for the College.*  
Progression on this goal is moving along. Qualifications of interested planners have been vetted, a planner has been identified and a contract is being proposed to the Board at the December meeting. The campus has been mobilized through a steering committee that will work with the master planning firm. Included in the master plan deliverables will be an update on the Student Life/Enrollment Services building. The process of master planning is scheduled to begin in January and a site plan will be delivered to the College by June. The completed master plan will be rolled out end of summer 2010.
- *Design and Develop a Strategic Planning Process for the College.*  
The Strategic Planning process was formally kicked off with the College’s “Week of Engagement.” The results of that week and implications for the College are outlined in the “white paper” the College commissioned. The white paper will be received by the President’s office prior to the holiday break and set the stage for College and community discussions in January and February. These discussions will culminate in a strategic planning conference scheduled for March 2-4. The strategic planning conference is being funded through a gift from Power Construction. The conference will solicit the involvement of 100 individuals representing college, community and state-wide policy interests. The Conference will identify thematically the strategic directions the College should pursue. The strategic directives will be developed in the spring and moved to the Board table for adoption over the summer.
- *Board Policy Manual.*  
The policy manual has undergone review by the senior staff throughout the fall semester. Beginning with the January committee meetings we will be reviewing the manual with the committees of the Board. The policy review is scheduled to

be completed by the June Board meeting.

Overall the College is making good progress. While we have some challenges ahead with respect to the loss of state revenues, preparing a balanced budget for 2011 and identifying a set of strategic directions that align and find support internally as well as externally. We also enjoy a sense of excitement and community that is energizing and engaging. We have much to look forward to in the year ahead.

As this calendar year closes, so will the College. We begin our holiday break on December 24 and re-open Monday January 4, 2010. I have requested that our senior staff break away from their computers, email, phones, files and the like and renew themselves for the work ahead. This is the holiday season for family and friends to come together and renew the magic of this special time of year. Cathy and I will be joining over 60 family, extended family and good friends for our annual holiday gathering on Siesta Key Florida. We wish for you the best of the holiday season and the happiest of new years!