

Friday, December 12, 2008

The Budget Saga Part IV

The State

Governor Schwarzenegger has officially declared a fiscal emergency for the State of California, an act that allows him to call a Proposition 58 legislative emergency session to address the state's economy. Once again the Governor requested that the newly elected legislature meet to identify a combination of cuts and new revenues needed to solve the state's fiscal crisis. His message also requested that the legislature consider plans to "stimulate job creation, address the mortgage crisis, and fix the state's Unemployment Insurance Fund."

Last night at our District's "Hail and Farewell Reception" designed to welcome newly elected SDCCD Trustee Mary Graham, welcome back Trustee Bill Schwandt and bid farewell to Marty Block now Assembly-member Block, we listened intently as Marty addressed the Governor's request for a special session of the Legislature. Assembly member Block fully expects to have a closed session in which members of the legislature are literally "locked in" to focus on the budget problem until resolution is reached. Marty expects that this may go on through the upcoming holiday and beyond.

On another note, the Community College League of California (CCLC) is preparing to bring a strong and definitive case directly to the halls of the State Capitol as part of our upcoming legislative conference scheduled for January 25 through 26. The San Diego and Imperial Counties Community College Association (SDICCCA) has been working diligently preparing "talking points," budget reduction proposals and alternatives for consideration that would be less harmful to students statewide. Our own District will have a solid contingency in attendance including members of our Board of Trustees, Chancellor Carroll and members of her Cabinet as well as faculty and student leadership. I for one will be looking forward to taking our case to Sacramento and bringing the impact of the reductions directly to various legislative offices for consideration.

The District and College

At Mesa we continued with a sense of resolve and continuity directly on the path to meet the budget reduction goal assigned to us. As of 12/09/08 the revised budget reduction figure for our budget stands at \$839,687. I would like to commend the inspired, collegial and student-centered work of our shared governance leaders. We have had several meetings designed to inform, clarify and refine the areas of reduction in our budget. These meetings could have been tense and contentious; instead they have been constructive, creative, thoughtful and fully informed by fiscal, programmatic and educational data enabling us all to move forward with a shared vision. We have a long way to go but we have reached consensus on how to achieve the \$839,687 in reductions. We are clear that our work is not over because we fully expect additional reductions in 2009/2010. What we can say about our process is that we are well positioned to move forward in a careful and responsible manner that always focuses on maximizing opportunities for our students while minimizing negative impacts wherever possible.

Special thanks to Ron Perez, Vice President of Administration and the Campus Budget Committee whose recommendations were reviewed and endorsed by all of President's Cabinet. We have many things going for us, including a clear sense of purpose, professional trust and the knowledge that we have what it takes to make it work.

Mesa College Annual Holiday Reception

Once again this honored Mesa Tradition was a great success. I want to thank the Academic Senate, Classified Senate and ASG for co-hosting this event celebrating the contributions of the Mesa College family. The turnout was fantastic and we were honored by the attendance of very distinguished guests including the newly elected President of our Board of Trustees, Rich Grosch, Executive Vice President of the Board, Peter Zschiesche, Trustee Maria Nieto-Senour and Trustee Bill Schwandt. Chancellor Carroll also graced us with her presence and offered some words of reassurance and hope for the Holiday Season. I appreciated very much the presence of my dear colleague and President of City College, Terry Burgess. Other members from the District Office who made it a point to come to help us celebrate included Vice Chancellor David Umstot, Vice Chancellor Otto Lee, Robin Lewinson, Richard Burkhart, Gail Conrad, Andrea Henne, Sharon Rhodes, John Nunes and Ryan Murphy.

The stars of the show were the Culinary Arts/Culinary Managements Students who prepared a veritable feast and served a sumptuous meal under the direction of faculty-member Michael Fitzgerald. Everyone was particularly dazzled by the dessert tray and many a well meaning calorie reduction resolution failed miserably in the face of such great temptation.

Sad News

Many of you know that Coach Matt Kofler has been gravely ill. Dean Dave Evans has been visiting him very regularly taking with him Mesa's love and hope for his recovery. Many of his colleagues have been sending notes via Dave that I know that these are very well received. Matt needs our prayers.

President's Cabinet Update

At its meeting Tuesday, December 9, the President's Cabinet acted on the following items:

1. **Major Events Approved for Publication**
 - a) Drag Show, 12/9/08 - Administrator Responsible: Dean Hands
 - b) College Connection for Foster Youth, 2/27/09 - Administrator Responsible: Int. EOPS Officer Reuss
2. **Research Planning Document** (Bergland/Mun)
Document was accepted following review.
3. **Mid-Year Budget Cuts** (Cepeda/Perez)
Ron Perez presented detailed information regarding the 2008-2009 proposed budget reduction plan at both district and college levels. Two options were discussed. President Cepeda will present Option 2 at next Chancellor's Cabinet meeting (Dec. 16).

The Beat Goes On

Human Rights Awareness Films and Lectures: On December 10, Mesa celebrated Human Rights Day joining with celebrations in other countries around the globe. We began to prepare by scheduling a series of films some of which began last week and continued this week with the following:

"The Question of Kurdish Human Rights" Minhaj Abdullah and Ravi Barwari lecture. Wed., Dec. 10, 11:15 a.m., LRC 435. Human Rights Day is celebrated annually around the world on December 10.

"Relief Measures in Africa" Vicki Butcher lectures.

Mesa College Vocal Ensemble Choral Performance. "Gloria" by Vivaldi with string quartet and oboe. Directed by Betsy Frater with Woan-Rong Winterling on piano.

Music Recital Hour featuring students in the Mesa College Applied Music Program (AMP). AMP is a demanding curriculum that includes private instruction with an established master, participation in a music ensemble such as choir or jazz band, and study in core music theory courses.

Mesa College Literary Magazine Contest Winners -Thursday, first, second and third place awards were presented to talented student writers in the fields of poetry, creative writing fiction and creative writing non-fiction. If you haven't seen a copy of this year's Mesa Visions: Art and Literary Magazine 2008 you must run and find one. The publication itself is a work of art. It is beautifully presented including not only amazing creative works of literature, but also illustrations of student art—all of it breathtaking. Congratulations to the winners, Tammy Hensley, Erika Anderson, Dallan Ghan, Tyler Gilbert, Kenneth Blackington, Christopher Boyd, Neri Aguilar and Jeanette Wagner. Behind this great array of student talent are gifted faculty members Jennifer Cost and Wendi Smith, keeper of the flame Chris Sullivan and Pat Vine and Alessandra Moctezuma who collaborated by contributing the student art work.