

Friday, December 5, 2008

The Budget Saga Part III

Yes, this is the third in the installments of the evolving (or should I say devolving) budget picture. You know by now that the outgoing legislature failed to act despite the emergency session convened by Governor Schwarzenegger. They argued, caucused, but failed once again to come to resolution given the required 2/3 vote to pass any budget action.

According the Community College League's Budget Update #24, the incoming legislature includes [twenty-five new legislators](#) (15 Democrat, 10 Republican) who were sworn in on December 1, 2008. It is expected that the governor will call a special session once again, but it is unlikely that the newly constituted legislature will deal with the budget problem during the month of December. It appears that the new "line in the sand" has now moved to February, the date when the state is expected to run out of money. I am tempted to add a few remarks here but I'll leave it up to you to fill in the blanks.

Budget Work Locally

Unlike the state legislature our District Office, each of the colleges and Continuing Education have been working diligently to calculate the implication of mid-year reductions and the expected 2009-10 cuts that are sure to follow. We have started with the identification of the amount of dollars we need to reduce in order to accommodate expected mid-year cuts. This figure is **\$5 million**. One of the most important parts of the budget discussions underway is the inclusion of core values established as a "litmus test" for every budget reduction strategy considered. These core values include the following:

1. Protect our Mission of Instruction and Services to Students;
2. Avoid any layoffs of current contract employees;
3. Avoid any roll-backs of salaries or benefits;
4. Maintain the basic schedule of core classes and minimize class reductions; and
5. Effect budget reductions that will ensure the District's solvency and long-term fiscal health.

It is important to note that Chancellor's Cabinet has already identified \$1.4 million in district wide budget reduction thereby reducing the target to \$3.6 million. Mesa's proportionate share of reductions based on this new target is \$833,862. Mesa's Executive Staff, Budget Committee and President's Cabinet met throughout this week to identify ways to reach our specified target. The rallying cry for each of us is, "**keep the cuts as far away from the classroom as possible.**" It is very important to me that we have a proposed plan before faculty and staff leave for the winter break. It is for this reason that a proposed plan will be provided to all before December 19, 2008.

Foreclosed Gingerbread Houses... A Sign of the Times?

One of Mesa's culinary student traditions is their annual gingerbread home competition and display at our MFusion restaurant. This year as a sign of the times one of our students, Louis

Cohen in Tom Adam's baking class hit on the perfect solution and the perfect lesson. He was given an assignment that required advanced pastry decorating skills with which he was still struggling. Undaunted Louis decided to turn all negatives to positives by: designing a deteriorating gingerbread house about to be foreclosed (using this as camouflage for his less than perfect decorating skills) while at the same time, making full use of "context based" education by applying the growing reality of mounting home foreclosures to the assigned task. Our Public Information Officer, Lina Heil "pitched" the idea to the press and the rest is history. The idea was such a hit, that Mesa enjoyed more news coverage in two days than we have received in the last two months. Channels 8 and 5 covered the story. For your enjoyment, I have attached a couple of the links you may wish to visit.

- www.nbcsandiego.com
- www.sdmesa.edu/culinary

A second story that was a hit with the media, centered on our **Women's Soccer Team** as they made history advancing to the State Championship finals. Since the inception of Women's Soccer in 1988, no community college team from San Diego County has ever made it this far. But Mesa has! Both, Channel 10 and the Union Tribune covered this story.

Mesa Honors Retirees

This week was unusual in the number of retirement celebrations scheduled. **Linda Moore**, Lead Production Assistant, Faculty member **Bob Michaels**, Instructional Systems Specialist and **Frances Martinez**, Executive Assistant to the President all decided to retire and Mesa had the opportunity to honor a distinguished group of individuals. Occasions such as these remind us how dear our colleagues really are. As the saying goes, "you never know what you have until you lose it."

Sad News

Sam Coe, Assistant Football Coach at Mesa College passed away on November 28. This season would have been his second year as assistant coach. The services will be held at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, December 7th at Glen Abbey Mortuary, 3838 Bonita Road, Bonita, CA. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Sam Coe Football Scholarship Fund, c/o Mr. Rusty Moore, Castle Park High School. Dave Evans informed us that the Mesa College Athletic Department will make a \$300 donation to the scholarship fund.

President's Cabinet Update

At its meeting Tuesday, December 2, the President's Cabinet,

- Approved the following major event: Gallery Exhibition (3/13/09) - Administrator Responsible: Interim Vice President Craft
- Received copies of the Research Planning Agenda for review and preparation to act on the item at the meeting of December 9.

- Reviewed the reduced food services schedule and made suggestions. The information will be placed on the Web for students' information.
- Viewed a presentation by staff from Student Services Admissions and Registration in which their services to students, faculty and staff were detailed. Several members of President's Cabinet commended the presenters on the outstanding work they do with students .
- Advised Executive Staff and the Budget Committee to discuss the changes that need to be made by the campus in order to arrive at the recommended budget reduction and bring back options to the meeting on December 9.

The Beat Goes On

Mesa's active campus life continued unabated. Once again, each of these events reminded us of the value of student engagement using the entire "campus as textbook." Some of the varied events last week included:

Human Rights Awareness Films and Lectures: On December 10, Human Rights Day will be celebrated around the globe. Mesa is preparing to join in as part of the world community beginning with a series of excellent films including:

- **"White Light Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki"** Oscar award-winning filmmaker Steven Okazaki revisited the bombings and shared the stories of the only people to have survived a nuclear attack.
- **"Madeline Albright: Genocide in Kosovo"** Human Rights Day is celebrated annual around the world on December 10
- **"Armenian Genocide"** This 2006 documentary explored the circumstances surrounding the mass-killing of more than one million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire during World War I.

Mesa College Humanities Institute presents: "Now That She's Gone" Author, activist and actor, Ellen Snortland performed her own passionate, funny and profoundly moving play about her amusing, irreverent and sometimes painful relationship with her Norwegian-American mother.

Student Holiday Ceramics Sale. Students Ceramics Club sells original art provided us all with extraordinary shopping opportunities for a "one of a kind" gift to be found nowhere else.

Fashion Club Holiday Fair. Original fashions, pet pictures with Santa, refreshments and music were offered during this festive fundraiser led by the student Fashion Club including an opportunity to donate to Toys-for-Tots.

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. These recitals enrich our lives tremendously as our students regale us with their talents.

Mesa College Eco Awareness Series Green Film: "Global Warming: What's Up with the Weather" Screening of the PBS/NOVA program that looks at changes to the global climate and questions if the changes are the result of global warming.

Off Campus Activities – Mesa Enriches the Community Outside our Campus

- **Mesa College Vocal Ensemble Choral Performance. "Gloria" by Vivaldi** with string quartet and oboe. Directed by Betsy Frater with Woan-Rong Winterling on piano. Sat., Dec. 6, 7 p.m. at Good Samaritan Episcopal Church, 4321 Eastgate Mall, Golden Triangle. Free.
- **12/7 (OFF CAMPUS)– Hermes Castro Fundraiser.** Mesa College students have launched a fund-raising campaign to help send fellow student Hermes Castro, who is paralyzed from the waist down, on an Antarctic expedition next March with world renown explorer Sir Robert Swan. The campaign kicks off with an all-day fundraiser at Mountain Mike's Pizza in Clairemont on December 7. The community is invited to participate. See www.hermescastro.com , and www.mtnmikes.com. Sun., Dec. 7, 11 a.m. – 9 p.m., Mountain Mike's Pizza, 3089 Clairemont Drive.