



President's Update



Warm winds are blowing thru Mesa College.....

It's that time again in fall when the Santa Ana winds wind their way down from the Sierras and Rockies to remind us that summer is gone, winter is coming, and there's much to do if we are to successfully navigate the semester.

The National Weather Service defines Santa Ana winds as:

“Strong down slope winds that blow through the mountain passes in southern California. These winds, which can easily exceed 40 mph, are warm and dry and can severely exacerbate brush or forest fires, especially under drought conditions.”

Sometimes working at Mesa College can feel like blowing on a warm wind – my travels to meetings and events on our campus in the past few months have given me a great feel for the incredible resources that Mesa has to offer. My experiences are also sprinkled with challenges that felt more like the strong downward slope described as Santa Ana. The college is in a great position to flourish over this semester and year despite challenges to our budget, and the continuing resource pressure for students. Akin to the winds in Southern California, the Sacramento winds continue to blow our way, with the outcomes of the Student Success Task Force, budget triggers, accountability demands and more.

So where do we focus our efforts? What will help Mesa withstand the uncertainties and challenges from our uninvited winds? Consistent, steady, well-communicated progress must be made towards our planning goals, serving our students, addressing our accreditation recommendations, and serving the community. There are many opportunities for interested individuals to be involved in governance and many other processes – if you feel left out, jump in. If you choose to spend time doing other academic endeavors, try to get information from colleagues. Give them feedback for their committees and get the facts, it saves all of us time.

To assist everyone in keeping up with the Mesa efforts, I have highlighted a few areas of interest below:

New President's Cabinet Schedule: Members of the President's Cabinet agree that we can do our work over two meetings each month. Beginning in November, PCab will meet every two weeks. The new schedule of meetings will be available after it is reviewed at our October meetings. Deadline to submit action items is noon on the preceding Friday of the meeting.

Efforts towards Mesa College becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI): Open campus meetings are being held to shape the vision for our efforts towards HSI status. The first step in the process is to make application to the Federal Government for status, which we plan to do this fall. If we are given status, we can begin efforts to apply for competitive Title V grants. A small team of faculty led by Dean Zappia is attending the Hispanic Association of Colleges (HACU) later this month to learn about successful practices for HSI efforts. Look for DL messages announcing additional open meetings coming soon.

Accreditation: We march on towards meeting the objectives we established and reported to ACCJC last March 2011. Work with integrated planning, including program review and SLO assessments, are at the center of our work. As you may recall, the commission asked for a follow-up report that was submitted on March 10, 2011 and accepted by the commission June 2011. It is critical that we continue to make progress towards the recommendations made. The PIE Committee is steering the effort, and reporting to President's Cabinet.

SLO's: Its 2011 – do you know where your SLO's are, and have you assessed them? Many of our faculty have done a terrific job with their SLO's and assessments, bravo! For those of you still craving some SLO help, our SLO gurus are Ed Helscher or Saloua Saidane (and yes, we really do have to be at the proficiency level by fall 2012.) To find information regarding the ACCJC recommendation, follow the link from our homepage to Accreditation.

Program Review: Thanks to those of you who attended the Lead Writer Training last week, and a special thanks to the committee for creating a great training and materials. More training is planned to assist writers in the process. My personal thanks to Dean Jill Baker who is leading this effort in addition to her role as Instructional Dean. Taking the time to write a good program review pays dividends over time, and makes the best case for the faculty regarding student needs for success.

Allocation of Resources for Integrated Planning: Despite rumors blowing in the winds, the college has just begun the process of establishing the new resource allocation process connected to integrated planning. The PIE Committee is leading the charge by establishing a sub-committee to begin anew. All of the college will have a chance to participate in a shared governance meeting near you. We are trying to avoid a repetition of the unsuccessful conclusion to the RAC process. None of us wants to spend time in unproductive endeavors – let's avoid a sequel of the RAC process, avoiding son of RAC, grandson of RAC, etc and together define an equitable and inclusive process.

Events on Campus: I have had the great pleasure of attending several events on our campus in my first few months. From Mesa Olympian Athletic Events, Music Recitals, Honors Workshops, Radiologic Technology Pinning Ceremony, Groundbreaking of the Science and Math Building, Quad Meetings, User group meetings for Social and Behavioral Science Building, Flamenco, Art

Gallery openings, Puente family events, and much more, I have found an atmosphere of collaboration and innovation. Our faculty and staff work hard to provide opportunities for our students and our community and I so appreciate all of your efforts. Please feel free to send invitations our way, I am happy to celebrate with you.

President's Listening Tour: In November I will begin holding informal chat sessions with campus constituents in many locations across campus. I have had the pleasure of meeting so many of you, however I don't always get a chance to interact with you informally. The purpose of these one hour sessions is to give me feedback on how things are going for you at Mesa, continuing the dialog that began at the August convocations. Guiding the sessions will follow the theme set at convocation, "Celebrating our History, Defining our Future"; I will pose the same questions + 1.

What does Mesa do well, what must we preserve as we plan ahead?

Where could we improve, where have we stumble?

Where should we be headed in the future?

What role do you want to play in getting there?

Look for a schedule from my office soon; I look forward to getting to know you and your vision for the college.

That's it for now: So when you feel that warm breeze on your face in the next little while, take time to enjoy the feeling. A fresh wind can bring a fresh perspective, but also remind us that we need to be watchful to avoid the fires that can come when we least expect it. A careful and caring approach to most things leads to successful outcomes for all of us. Enjoy.

Pam

Pamela T. Luster, Ed.D.

President

San Diego Mesa College