

October 16, 2009

We Have Vision, Mission and Values

All buildings have cornerstones; institutions of higher education have a Vision, Mission and Values statement that is the heart and soul of the institution. Every two years or so, San Diego Mesa College reviews, revises, and updates this document. Sometimes, this process is a cursory one and minor edits are made. The process is shepherded by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate and it is ultimately brought to our Participatory Governance body, the President's Cabinet, for final approval.

I am proud to say that the statement we adopted on October 13, 2009 represents one of the most substantive revisions in recent history. It is significantly streamlined, targeted, and better suited to represent the creative energy of an institution of higher learning in the 21st Century. A copy of the full document will be widely distributed and we will begin a communications campaign to ensure that every student, faculty, and staff member is familiar with the statement so that it can be used as a guide in our decision-making processes. In the meantime, you may view the entire document entitled "Vision, Mission and Values: October 13, 2009" in the President's Update section of the website.

Grand Openings and Grand Dreams

On Wednesday, October 14, Mesa College held the Grand Opening Ceremony for the Allied Health Building. The event was extremely well attended, and all agreed that it was one of the best examples of partnership and collaboration - faculty, architects, students, Mesa's Facilities staff, Mesa's Culinary Arts, IT Staff, Parking and Police, Reprographics and District staff. In attendance were a number of dignitaries from the Health Industry, some of whom had partnered in sharing some of the costs for the Grand Opening. Board members Peter Zschiesche, Rich Grosch, and Chancellor Constance Carroll were also present and offered inspiring remarks. If I were to identify the persons who seemed to beam most throughout the program in addition to faculty, I would have to select Dean Margie Fritch, Chris Kinney, Department Chair, and the Allied Health Program Directors, Margaret Fickess, Danielle Lauria, Teddy Scribner, and Lori Covington. If you are interested in the remarks I prepared for the Grand Opening, you may view this document entitled "Allied Health Grand Opening" in the President's Update section of the website.

Congratulations, from dream to drawings to actuality. The Allied Health Building is a not only a jewel in Mesa's Crown, it is also an invaluable teaching facility and community resource!

The Entrepreneurial Community College

The heading for this section is taken from the title of a book published in 2005 by the American Association of Community Colleges and authored by John Rouche and Barbara Jones (someone we now know as Barbara Kavalier). Even four years ago when this book was written, the trends regarding the changing nature of fiscal support for community colleges were already clearly evident and the authors predicted as they wrote the following;

"the environmental factors currently affecting today's community colleges either will cause irreparable damage to their fiscal health and organizational structure or contribute to their rebirth--transforming systems and processes to meet current and future challenges successfully. ...In today's environment of declining public resources and demands to do more with less, it is more important than ever that community colleges become even more entrepreneurial." (Rouche and Jones, 2005)

California Community Colleges are living the predicted downturn in fiscal support, and, here at Mesa, we feel the effects daily.

When we began our ongoing battle to manage cuts over the last 18 months, and as we look at another year or two of the same, we have seen signs of dismay, creativity, generosity and deep concern for students. We also agreed that we would not use the term "doing more with less," but rather we would agree to do all that we can with what we have. One of the challenges we established for ourselves was to look for alternative resources to sustain the quality of our programs. In prior updates, I have provided you with reports about our success in garnering Federal Stimulus (ARRA) dollars in two sizeable grants totaling \$800, 00 and today I am please to announce that the trend continues.

Architectural Design and Sustainability: A Multidisciplinary Approach

Our Department of Architecture and Environmental Design has been awarded a \$50,000 grant by the SDCCD Sustainability Initiative and Workforce Innovation Partnership. The grant will fund the development of a new course in architectural design focusing on issues of sustainability. The course, to be implemented in the Fall of 2010, will be team-taught from a multidisciplinary perspective, will utilize Building Information Modeling Technology software, and will bring industry experts into the Mesa classroom to work directly with students and faculty. Ian Kay, Department Chair and Project Director is to be congratulated for his good work and planning. Charlie Zappia, Interim Dean, also deserves kudos for supporting and encouraging this effort.

Online Multimedia ESL Classroom

Earlier this past summer, an opportunity arose for Mesa College to partner with Excelsior College in Albany, New York in its effort to create an ESL Workshop Program, including a number of programs and interventions designed to serve the needs of Non-native Speakers of English. Excelsior needed to partner with an established ESL program in order to develop and pilot an online multimedia ESL Room. Key to this partnership is the involvement of Christie Allred, Chair of Mesa's ESL Department. Her expertise will be used to help design a highly interactive, graphically rich online ESL Room to supplement our program. This resource will enable us to provide 24/7 support to the 30 ESL students participating in the pilot. After the pilot period is over, the ESL Room will become available to all of our ESL students at Mesa.

We have just received the good news from Excelsior College that FIPSE has funded the grant awarding approximately \$581,000 to create the ESL Workshop. Christie will be very instrumental in determining what portion of those resources will come to Mesa to begin the pilot.

As always, this is the fruit of collaboration internally as well including Dean Larry Weiss and Jennifer Cost, Department Chair.

Board of Trustees Workshop on Participatory Governance

At the meeting of the Board of Trustees on Thursday, October 15, teaching and learning were hard at work. A panel composed of each of the presidents of the Academic Senates from the three colleges and Continuing Education, were joined by a Beth Smith, member of the Executive Committee of the Statewide Academic Senate in the presentation of a Board Workshop on Participatory Governance that was introduced and moderated by Vice Chancellor Kim Myers. The presentation was comprehensive, thoughtful and based on Board comments, extremely useful and informative. Our own Cynthia Rico-Bravo provided a list of examples where Participatory Governance was crucial to the work of Mesa College and she urged the Board to continue to recognize the fact that in some instances the implementation of districtwide should always accommodate the important differences that make each of our colleges unique.

Note: All updates are posted on the San Diego Mesa College Website at:
<http://sdmesa.edu/president/updates.cfm>