

Friday, November 7, 2008

"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase" -- Martin Luther King Jr.

I have a question for you, how many of you saved the November 5, 2008, edition of your local newspaper?

Last Tuesday, as I sat alone watching the election returns with my family scattered to the four winds, I was thankful for technology that allowed me to text message, phone and use my webcam to bring together the bunch that makes up my immediate family. I realized that the number of immigrants in the group is growing smaller, followed by our children, first generation Americans, and then second generation Americans, of which there are now three grandchildren among us all, ranging from six months to three years of age. As is true with all families in this great country, there are both Democrats and Republicans, and we were all deeply engaged and deeply invested in the election results. As the countdown started and the electoral votes were being added to determine the next president of the United States, I was no longer cognizant that I was alone in my little apartment because the noise, excitement, furious text messaging, and webcam were going wild. I realized that I had a full house of hope, civic engagement and full-blown participation in the American privilege associated with voting for our elected officials.

I will forever save in my electronic files the record of who among us awoke the earliest to vote, who among us was the oldest to vote (my father in law who turned 90 last August, followed by my mother who is 81; the youngest was my daughter Mariel, who is 24). In our family lore there is also my story about who called the election first; this honor belongs to Isabella, my two year old granddaughter, who started a victory chant for Senator Obama at about 7:55 p.m. PST. There was also the late call at 10:00 p.m. from my sister Silvia, a registered Republican, who called to concede the election and say that even though her candidate did not win, this is a great country, and Senator McCain was a most gracious hero. I concurred.

The road ahead for us all, given the very complex set of economic, social, and global issues, is indeed steep, but as the quote listed above indicates, *"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."* (Martin Luther King Jr.)

Mesa's Many Steps - All in the Right Direction

Celebrating Participatory Governance: Twenty Years After AB 1725 – Mesa's faculty leadership was eager to participate in the Fall 2008 session of the Statewide Academic Senate, particularly because this year's conference was scheduled at the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles. Mark Wade Lieu, President of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, stated that, "we cannot but help celebrating the fact that terms like 'participatory governance,' 'academic and professional matters,' and 'collegial consultation' are part of our everyday vocabulary."

Indeed, President Lieu is correct, and I would add that the precepts of AB 1725 and participatory governance are now very much a part of the curriculum in schools of education at all colleges

and universities in California that are engaged in preparing the next cohort of educational leaders in the State.

Students Breaking Records - On Thursday, October 30, Mesa College Women's and Men's Cross Country Teams competed in the Pacific Coast Conference Championships at Southwestern College. Mesa College's Women's team finished 2nd in the conference. Mesa College's Men's Cross Country team placed 1st in the Pacific Coast Conference and is ranked #1 in the State for Men's Cross Country teams. Both teams are competing today, at the Southern California Championships in Bakersfield, and I am waiting eagerly to hear the outcomes, because I understand that the State Championships will be held November 22 in Fresno.

Congratulations to Coaches Rene Ross and Thom Hunt; our students are not just taking steps in the right direction they are running to meet their goals as athletes and as scholars. Mesa is proud of our student athletes and their achievements.

Biology Lecture Series – One of the most intriguing activities within the academy has to be the Biology Lecture Series coordinated by our own Dr. Kevin A. Krown, Assistant Professor of Biology. This week students, faculty and staff had the opportunity to attend a lecture by Dr. Mark Nijland, University of Texas Health Science Center, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Center for Pregnancy and Newborn Research. Dr. Nijland presented a seminar entitled "The Fetal Origins Hypothesis: Where Health Begins." If you did not attend the lecture, then you missed on being conversant on "how epigenetic factors play major roles in development of phenotype and predisposition to disease in later life." (Kevin Krown, Ph.D.) The good news is that you can catch the next one.

Walkouts - Staying with our theme of taking steps, on Wednesday, activist and educator Sal Castro discussed his central role in the 1968 East Los Angeles Walkouts. This event triggered a series of protests in East Los Angeles and in other high schools throughout California. More than 20,000 students boycotted school for a week in opposition to unequal conditions in Los Angeles area schools. Now retired, Castro continues to lecture about his experience and the importance of education, equity and diversity for all students. In 2006, HBO released the film "Walkout," which tells the story of Castro and the events surrounding the student protests. Where were you in 1968? (The question does not apply if you were not yet born).

Mesa Recycles - an event sponsored by the Honors Club and ASG urged everyone to "bring electronics, computers, printers, TVs, DVD and CD players, cell phones, cameras" and the like to the Free Speech area for recycling. No one doubts anymore, that we are living through the emergence of a comprehensive movement around sustainability in which everyone must do their part. Congratulations to our students for continuing to lead the way.

Native American Heritage Month - In 1990 President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November as "National American Indian Heritage Month." This proclamation had been a long time coming beginning in 1915, when Red Fox James, a Blackfoot Indian, rode horseback from state to state seeking approval for a day to honor Indians and delivered the endorsement of 24 states directly to the White House. The theme for this year's

heritage month is "Celebrating Tribal Nations: American's Great Partners." Here at Mesa a celebration was held on Thursday with traditional tribal singing, food and arts and crafts exhibits.

The Beat Goes On

Great events that help to lift our spirits.

10/9-11/6 -- Mesa College Art Gallery Exhibit: PreMeditated: Meditations on Capital Punishment by Artist Malaquias Montoya. Featuring the paintings and silk-screened posters of a leading figure in the West Coast political Chicano graphics art movement. Mesa College Art Gallery, D101. Gallery Hours: Tue., Wed., Fri., 12- 5 p.m.; Thu. 12-8 pm. Free admission.

11/1, 2 – Mesa College Dance Company Presents "Play the Floor." Outstanding performances featuring Mesa College dance students. Fri., Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m.; Sat., Nov. 2, 2:30 and 7:30 p.m., Lyceum Theatre, Horton Plaza.

11/1 – Orientation Session: Health Information Technology Program. Potential students interested in this career program attended an informational and inspirational program.

11/5 – Music Recital Hour... featuring Paul Bowman on Guitar, "a program of modern classical music. Bowman has been praised for his versatility and fearless attacks at dissonant sounds and unpredictable rhythms." - Joe Falleta.

President's Cabinet Update

At its meeting Tuesday, November 4, the President's Cabinet:

- Approved for publication the British Debate Exhibition scheduled for November 20, 2008.
- Introduced Sebastian Law, newly elected ASG President.
- Reviewed Academic Senate Resolution 08.10.4 regarding the Academic Calendar for 2009-10.

Discussion also ensued regarding the possibility of mid-year budget cuts, followed by summary presented by President Cepeda resulting from a panel presentation sponsored by USD's College of Educational Policy and Law (CEPAL) on the topic of the California Economy.