

Friday, December 19, 2008

Goodbye to 2008

When we look back at 2008 and we are telling our grandchildren about the "year that was," we will find ourselves talking about the "Great Economic Crisis of 2008. " We may also pull out our favorite video of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and point to Michael Phelps and his 14 Olympic gold medals, the most won by any Olympian, as we tout the benefits of drinking all your milk and eating your vegetables. No doubt we'll talk about the August 1, 2008 complete eclipse of the sun, and finally, we'll end with the greatest story of them all: We will recount the day when we were part of history as we went to the polls in the elections that selected the first African-American President of the United States of America. This was the "year that was" because we have learned, as a country, that we can be resilient in times of crisis, generous in times of scarcity, and always hopeful because of the belief that each of us can have an impact on the future.

Mesa's Holiday Spirit

At Mesa, the celebrations abounded. Departments and offices around the campus found time to celebrate and to gather around the spirit of joy and the spirit of giving. In the midst of the revelries, there were many among us who worked quietly to think about the greater community and those in need even beyond our borders. I only know of a few, but I am sure that there are many more that have made it a point to help those most in need. Some of the stories I know include:

- Professor Jeff Berry, who each year collects toys donated by the faculty and staff of the School of Arts and Languages, makes a drive south, and throws a Christmas party for about 175 children in a neighborhood two hours south of Ensenada.
- Student-led drives, including a toy drive by the Fashion Club; the gift drive by the Women's Union and Mesa Honors Club benefiting the homeless children at the Monarch School; and the adoption of a family - a single mom and daughter - by the Physical Therapy Assistant students.
- The Classified Staff's annual shopping bazaar - now in its 11th year- for the children at the San Diego Center for Children!
- The SDCCD police department's toy drive, an effort that will bring a smile to many faces
- Students, faculty and staff who donated books for the opening of the Child Development Center's Lending Library - just in time for the holidays.
- Faculty and staff who donated books, crafts and other items to throw a holiday party for children of our CARE program students.

It is clear to me that Mesa College and its core values shine especially when trying times face our community.

The Budget Saga Part V

The State

As you may have noted, I have changed the format of this update just a little. I could not bring myself to start with budget news, so I've opted to place it third on my narrative. In a nutshell, partisan politics continue. The Republicans proposed to cut \$22 billion to narrow the budget gap, a proposal that would have translated to a 14% reduction for community colleges or a whopping \$1 billion. The Democrats acted next, proposing a \$19 billion package of cuts and revenue increases, which once again failed on a partisan vote. Then, it looked for a while that we might have a solution when both houses of the Legislature approved a package of \$18 billion in spending cuts and tax increases, sending the bill to the Governor who "vetoed" the proposal sending the Legislators back (*Do not pass go; do not collect \$1,000*). The governor cited that while he accepted most of the proposed cuts and revenue proposals, he wanted a "stronger economic stimulus package and more permanent spending cuts."

Observers have described this situation as a "standoff." What word would you use to describe the situation?

Mesa Student Activists

The Student Senates of the California Community Colleges have been very active, protesting cuts to our colleges. On Wednesday, December 17 our own Mesa ASG joined with other students around the state in a coordinated "mass fax day." Mesa students alone faxed more than 200 messages in one day.

Holiday District and Campus Closure

Please remember that the campus is officially closed from Tuesday, December 23 to January 1, 2009. No one is permitted on campus. This policy is for your own safety.

Sad News

Today, after a valiant and courageous battle, Mesa's Head Football Coach Matt Kofler passed away due to liver failure. No information is yet available regarding memorial services but this information will be posted as soon as it is known. Matt leaves a great void and a great legacy to all who knew and worked with him.

President's Cabinet Update

At its meeting of December 16, the President's Cabinet acted on the following items:

1. **Major Events Approved for Publication**
 - a) 2nd Annual Classified Staff Development Conference, 4/7-8/09 - Administrator Responsible: Dean Bergland
 - b) Student Appreciation Day, 12/17/08 - Administrator Responsible: Dean Hands
2. **Closure Guidelines for District Offices, Colleges and Continuing Education**

District guidelines for closure during breaks were discussed. It was noted that during the holiday break (Dec. 23-Jan 1), the district is officially closed, and no one, including faculty and staff members, is allowed to be on campus during this period. Exceptions, if

any, require approval at the Chancellor's Cabinet level. Admissions and Records will also be closed during this period, so students have no need to be on campus.

3. **Strategic Planning Committee**

The membership and purpose of the Committee were reviewed and accepted.

4. **Faculty Inquiry Network (FIN)** (Chabot College)

FIN approved proposal prepared by Tracey Walker and Wendy Smith for this two-year, funded project and will send information packet to those involved.

5. **Campus Construction Schedule**

Ron Perez will continue to work with Dave Umstot to prepare timeline to present at President's Cabinet. A campus wide presentation will be scheduled in February 2009.

6. **Mesa College Foundation**

The Mesa College Foundation conducted a one day retreat on Saturday December 13. Consensus was achieved regarding the future direction of the Foundation aimed at expanding its mission and goals for the future.

IN MEMORIAM

MATHEW KOFLER

August 30, 1959 - December 19, 2008