

March 23, 2010

Spring Break is Almost Here!

One more week of school and then we will be ready for a respite (AKA Spring Break) March 29 through April 3.

I've just returned from a panel presentation with the Presidents of CSU San Marcos and CSU Dominguez Hill, Dr. Karen Haynes and Dr. Mildred Garcia respectively. The panel was offered as part of the American Council on Education Southern California Women's Leadership Network. Invariably I learn more than I bring to these presentations, and today I wrote down a few tidbits I would like to share with you that I found particularly relevant as we deal with stress:

The Three P's of Staying Positive

1. Personally – Don't take things personally, most studies show that we would be seriously disappointed if we learned how much of what happens around us actually has to do with us.
2. Permanent – We need to ask, "is this situation permanent?" or are we able to say "this too shall pass."
3. Picture – Do the specifics in the current circumstance matter in the "big picture" or big scheme of things?

The other nugget of wisdom was the reference made to a book by Mary Ann Radmacher, "Lean Forward into Your Life." The author describes her book by saying that it is about "boldly looking forward and daring to move through life's obstacles with honesty, joy and velocity." I, for one, will log on to Amazon.com and order this book. I am particularly interested in the "velocity" portion of the advice.

President's Cabinet Notes

I want to remind everyone that notes from our weekly President's Cabinet meetings are posted on the web at <http://sdmesa.edu/president/cabinet.cfm>

However, in an effort to ensure that this information is getting to you easily, I have asked Beth Cain to send the notes as a DL to Mesa College and to post the information on the web.

April 30 has been selected as the date for the next annual planning meeting of President's Cabinet. The focus of our meeting will be:

A Review of the Decision Making Process at Mesa College:

Participatory Governance as a Primary Vehicle

The topic is timely and most relevant to ensure that we become most effective in, and in our understanding of, the ways in which we can participate in major decisions impacting or college now and in the future.

Things to Celebrate

Accreditation Standards Forum –Full Steam Ahead - Great and methodical progress is being made each week as we review our accreditation self-study draft material. As you know, these forums are open to the entire campus and are scheduled after President’s Cabinet every Tuesday at 3:30 p.m. Thus far, we have completed the review of Standards IA, IB, IIA, IIB and IIC.

New Associate of Science and Certificate of Achievement in Web Design (look for these great additions in CurricuNET) - The future is here, think back twenty years would you have thought that such a degree would exist? How about terminology like, webmaster, information architect, web producer, web designer, web developer and so it goes. Congratulations to Professor Karen Owens and to her colleagues, including Hank Beaver, Robert Michaels, and Michael Davis. This is just one more way in which Mesa College can attest to our ability to educate students for the future.

March: The Month to Celebrate

The college has been very active with events, programs and presentations for everyone in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month and Women’s History Month. And, as if this were not enough, we are gearing up for our Annual Festival of Colors on March 24th. The campus is “Alive!”

Mesa’s Canyon Day: Saturday, March 20

It is often the case that in the twinkle of an eye a tradition is created; however, this only happens when the event in question is linked to an idea whose time has come. Mesa’s Canyon Day is one such idea. Our entire campus has made significant strides in understanding the principles of sustainability, eco-awareness and, most important of all, the acceptance of personal accountability for the future of our planet. One statistic that speaks to our growing success is the growth in the number of volunteers that came to help clean-up the Tecolote Canyon. In the past three years, volunteers have steadily increased from 50 in the year 2008, to 60 in 2009 and 120 in 2010!

Student and Faculty Involvement

Actions speak louder than words, and I have identified some of the most important activities on our campus (not by any means a totally exhaustive list).

The Environmental Stewardship Committee –Professor Anar Brahmabhatt co-chair

A shared governance committee, whose goal is to educate faculty, staff, and students regarding recycling, conservation, and hazardous waste disposal. The committee investigates projects and policies that encourage compliance with AB 75 and encourages the college to satisfy the

guidelines of SABRC (State Agency Buy Recycle Campaign). The committee oversees sustainable development on campus and works with building committees and green architects. The committee reviews the annual AB 75 report, and summarizes the findings for the Academic Senate. The committee assesses campus needs regarding recycling and environmental stewardship and provides feedback to the president.

Enviro-Club - Professor Claude Mona, Faculty Advisor

The purpose of the members of the Enviro-Club shall be promoting ideas and actions that benefit the environment as well as educating ourselves and others regarding all aspects of environmental sustainability and eco-friendly practices, including but not limited to, topics of “slow” food, recycling, and water conservation. We shall also maintain the organic garden at Mesa College.

Third Canyon Day Event – Professor Don Barrie and Lina Heil Co-Chairs

Last Saturday, I participated in one of the most rewarding activities on campus - Mesa’s Canyon Day Event. I began to write my own summary, but have opted instead to use the information provided by co-chairs, Professor Don Barrie and Lina Heil detailed below.

“By all accounts, the event was a great success. In short, over 120 volunteers removed 12 shopping carts and hundreds of pounds of trash and recyclables from our beloved Tecolote Canyon! Canyon Clean-up volunteers also removed invasive species, trimmed back overgrown trails, and generally spruced things up in Tecolote Canyon on both sides of Genesee Avenue. Sincere thanks go to Ranger Janice Lavallee of the Tecolote Canyon Natural Park and Nature Center, for directing clean-up operations during the event.

The real credit for the event's success of course goes to the volunteers themselves and also to our community partners, including Linda Vista Town Council, City of San Diego Parks and Recreation, Tecolote Canyon Natural Park and Nature Center, Councilmember Donna Frye's office, and the Tecolote Canyon Citizens Advisory Committee. Local schools, including Kearny High, Mira Mesa High, and Mark Twain, sent many volunteers thanks to the excellent promotional efforts of Tom Kaye, president of the Linda Vista Town Council. Several student volunteers also came from City College.

Closer to home, numerous individuals, and groups from Mesa College participated in the Canyon Clean-up, including the Enviro Club, the Women's Union, the STAR Club, the Classified Senate, Associated Student Government, the bookstore, the Teacher Education Program, and the Physical Science and Biology Departments.

Michael Fitzgerald (Culinary Arts/Management program) deserves special credit for providing refreshments to Canyon Clean-up volunteers. Special thanks as well go to professors Bill Brothers and Leslie Seiger for sharing their expert knowledge of canyon flora and fauna during the event.

Student Canyon Clean-up Volunteers from Mesa College

Joshua Caron

Dung Tray Ngo

Brad Perron

Ablelrazely Manbeh

Yohanna Bernardo

Channin Fulton

Priya Bhakta

Caroline Mukeshimana

Tsigeroman Hagos

Cody Cooper

Sarah Turner

Angela Stanger

Yvonne Spayed

Emily Prieto

Cory Jacobson

Jeremay Romero

Mia Malvestuto

Lidetu Girmay

John Tichnor

Cheryl Tichnor

Pooria Daryabeygi

Tony McGovern

Rachel Monk

Eddie Levya

Suk Kim

Nataly Yonlee

Anyma Kleinsovge

Thomas Briggs

Maria Angle

Nicole Coffee

Richard Melencianojimenez

Thomas Teagne

James Holmes

Kristin Hunter

Carla Colden

Alma Gonzalez

Curtis Chase

Naomi Grady

Anthony Ayala

Educating Rita

Some of the most fascinating things I learned from Professor Seiger's lecture on the flora and fauna of the Canyon include:

- Being introduced to my first "San Diego Sun Flower"
- Learning that "Oak Apples" are not really a fruit but a cancerous caused by insects who lay their eggs and cause this growth to occur to protect their larvae
- Medicinal plants can be found in the Tecolote Canyon including, Yerba Santa and Willow Bark (the source of aspirin)

- Dangerous plants include, our well-known “evildoer” Poison Oak, Castor Bean (three of these will poison an adult) and the Greek Tragedy antagonist, Hemlock.

- Cactus needles are really extremely thin leaves that have acquired that shape because they do not need to photosynthesize in the solar heat of the desert. I also learned that cactus pods are really the stem of the plant. I’ll have to remember this next time I see a plate of “nopalitos con huevo.”

- “Fire followers” is a name given to underbrush that only blooms after major fires. The reason is that, under normal circumstances, this brush has no access to sunlight and thus stays dormant. When a fire occurs, the undergrowth is exposed to the sun and we are able to see beautiful fields of wild flowers that help turn tragedy into beauty.

- If anyone would like to learn more about Tecolote Canyon, we are free to join a group of middle schoolers who will be visiting our campus on April 16 to take part in an activity called the “Canyon Classroom.”

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

Rita M. Cepeda, Ed.D.

President

San Diego Mesa College