

# Friday, March 27, 2009

## First Things First

The rest of the Spring Semester, Summer Session and Beyond - this is an interesting story of the near future. We begin struggling in mid February with the days ahead. The discussions were difficult because there were so many unknown; the size of the State deficit, the signing (maybe not) of the State Budget until we learned that the last state senator was holding his critical vote until he could be assured that no new furniture would be purchased for a state official. The passing (maybe not) of a Federal Stimulus Package until it finally arrived with the name of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act or as it is now affectionately known - ARRA. Needless to say, our discussions about how to finish the Spring semester, whether or not to offer a Summer Session and the size of the Fall 2009 schedule—all teetered in the balance. We searched for an anchor weekly if not daily and fortunately; we found one based on three factors:

- Identification of the resources we could control and account for; namely our own budget and existing reserves
- Reaffirming the principle that all program decisions would minimize negative impact on students, and;
- Reassuring staff that there would be no layoffs or rollbacks in salaries and savings.

This triangulation of facts and guidelines made it possible for us to come up with a plan that could be implemented even in the midst of so many unknowns. We settled on a very conservative plan malleable enough to be modified as we received new information. In addition, we entered into a planning mode that addressed the short term but was firmly planted in the awareness that we needed to position ourselves for the long term well into 2009/2010 and perhaps two years beyond.

## So what have we agreed upon?

A plan to identify every possible budget reduction that could be translated into an FTEF/FTES. In other words, what could be reduced that would result in resources to offer more classes.

*[by the way I am considering a brownbag event where we will only be permitted to communicate in acronyms— like FTEF, FTES, FF&E, NANCE, TPRC, CAP, LDTP, AALMS, ARRA, BSI, BSI IV, SLOs, SLOAC, PTK, ICC, WIA, WIB, NIHM, GIS, ASF,SES, BCP, HR, DGC, PPT, IGETC, AA, AS, CEC, SOC, ALO, LRC]*

Sorry for digressing, back to the budget plan. The good news is that we have been successful, each "cost center" - new term to include all the colleges, continuing education and the District Office - has been able to identify every possible budget reduction and in turn these resources have been redirected to one major focus area; more courses for students.

As you know, we have already reduced the number of sections available to students. This exercise has been so well handled that we have managed to retain those courses most critical to

our students educational goals, we have studied the dates, times and sequence of courses most needed by students and we have, in most instances accommodated students needs.

As we began to look at Summer and Fall, it became very clear that further reductions in courses could not be accommodated without impacting programs of study. The alternative undertaken at that point was to reduce services and preserve courses (it was not exactly that simple but in fact this is what has been done when we reduce our actions to the lowest common denominator). On March 18, I forwarded to you our treatise on Reduced Service Hours. Please refer to grids 1-6 to review the details.

### **Budget Saga Part** (I've decided to stop numbering these because it is less stressful)

This section will provide you with a snippet of what' going on with the federal budget and the state budget. I Offer this information with the understanding that it is subject to change in the next 24 hours, we can however rely on the major markers to stay somewhat constant.

### **The State Picture**

The synthesis below is taken in large part from information provided by Chancellor Carroll in an excellent summary she sent out district-wide on March 26. The major items are as follows:

- Immediately after the belated passage of the State Budget, the Legislature declared the Budget once again out of balance.
- Because the property tax shortfall continues to grow, a "deficit" factor of 1.2% has been applied to our allocations from the state, which translates to \$2.4M for the SDCCD.
- The current budget, may be in trouble because one of the ways in which the budget was balanced was on the expectation that the state would be able to raise new revenues in the form of new taxes, subject to voter approval on the May 19 Special Election Ballot. These new revenues/taxes would raise \$5.8 billion. If we do not approve these measures the LAO projects that there will be another \$13.6 billion shortfall in the 2009-2010 budget that may grow to as high as \$17 billion.
- The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) has already projected that the budget deficit for 2009-2010 will be higher than anticipated in January - the cause? rising unemployment rates. The new projected deficit is now estimated at \$12 billion.
- The portfolio for the state retirement systems, PERS and STRS has dropped and as a result they are passing this decline on to us indicating that our contributions will have to increase anywhere from 2% to 4%. According to Vice Chancellor Terry Davis, this would translate to \$2.9 million for the SDCCD in 2010-11.

### **The Federal Picture**

A recent memorandum from Jack Scott, Chancellor of the California Community Colleges summarizes the impact of federal stimulus funds on California Community Colleges. Detailed below is a synopsis of the major aspects the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA):

- Not all federal funding is temporary and most of it will be available for the next two years.
- California is estimated to receive \$31 billion of the next two fiscal years.
- K-12 and higher education share is estimated at \$7.9 billion
- Workforce development activities are also slated to receive \$6 billion dollars. Many of these training and education activities will rely on community colleges and adult education.

A summary of the various federal stimulus programs most likely to yield resource opportunities for community colleges is detailed below:

**1. State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (\$6 billion).** The federal stimulus package provides California with this funding allocation based on the state's school age and total population. These funds are divided into two separate pots:

**2. Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (\$494 million).** The federal stimulus package provides an additional \$494 million in WIA funds for California. These new funds are intended to serve youth, adults and dislocated workers. The funds are allocated in three main streams:

### **Department of Labor Competitive Grants**

\$750 million nationwide for competitive grants for worker training in high growth and emerging industry sectors.

- \$500 million is earmarked for job training in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable industries. Any remaining funds will be prioritized to train workers for careers in allied health care fields.
- \$200 million nationwide for additional assistance for dislocated workers.
- \$50 million nationwide for YouthBuild Activities that target high school drop-outs who re-enroll in an alternative school.

The Chancellor's Office is actively engaged with the Governor's Office, the Legislature, the Legislative Analysts' Office, the Department of Finance, the Department of Education, and federal representatives in order to make effective and efficient allocation decisions.

In addition, one of the most promising activities of the Chancellor's Office is their work with US Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, former California State Legislator, Congresswoman and California Community College Trustee. Given Secretary Solis' background, we are well positioned to ensure that support for our colleges will be front and center.

### **The Beat Goes On**

Jaye VanKirk, the State Academic Senate Stanback-Stroud Award winner! This award publicly acknowledges the individual who performs in an exceptional manner to advance intercultural harmony, equity, and campus diversity by making exceptional contributions to the college beyond usual obligations.

## **Cesar Chavez Commemorative Events and Parade**

The largest contingent of Mesa College Participants too, part in the Cesar Chavez Commemorative Parade on Saturday, March 29 followed by a Mesa Booth at the Festival de la Familia that I must say had many more visitors than that of our illustrious colleagues next door, USD!

Yours truly received an award at the Cesar Chavez Breakfast. The Cesar Chavez Visionary Award was one I was honored to share with Trustee Peter Zschiesche.

## **Athletics**

The Men's Tennis team clinched its first SoCal team championships will be on 4/14 at a site to be announced. The Pacific Coast Conference Individual Championships will be from April 16-18 at the Balboa Tennis Club starting on the 16th at 12 noon.

## **Mesa Press Wins Awards**

At the 2009 Journalism Association of Community Colleges Annual Conference, our very own Mesa Press received the JACC's award for General Excellence, the highest honor any newspaper can receive. This is the first time in our history that our student newspaper has been so honored. In addition, several of Mesa Press student staff were signaled out for honors including:

- Megan Looney, 1st place, Opinion Writing (also the first time we have won 1st place in any writing category!)
- Christina Moran, honorable mention, Opinion Writing
- Johnny Ngo, honorable mention, Critical Review
- Kenny Kinder, honorable mention, Sports Game Story

Congratulations to our award-winning journalists and to Janna Braun, Mesa Press Faculty Advisory!

## **Celebrations and Active Engagement**

- Women's History Month
- San Diego Science Festival
- African American Latino Male Summit
- Festival of Colors

## **President's Cabinet Actions in the Month of March 2009**

I am introducing a new format to report on the activities in President's Cabinet. This new format included a copy of the entire agenda for the meeting with notations following each item where appropriate. It is for this reason that I will place this information on the website under the heading, "President's Cabinet Summaries." Please refer to:

[www.sdmesa.edu/president/cabinet.cfm](http://www.sdmesa.edu/president/cabinet.cfm)