



# Dallas County Community College District

---

## Office of the Chancellor

TO: DCCCD Board Members

FROM: Dr. Wright L. Lassiter, Jr.

DATE: September 4, 2009

RE: Weekend Memo #158

### PRACTICE CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

*For this week's commentary I want to focus on our early successes as we begin the 2009-2010 year. Presidents and their teams are to be commended for the fall enrollment. We have continued our pattern of being the largest community college district and the largest undergraduate institution in the State with a duplicated headcount enrollment that exceeds 74,000 students! Each college exceeded headcount and contact hours for the same period last year. That is a success worthy of a celebration!*

*It should also be noted that I received several messages from students and parents commending staff for the highly efficient service that was provided at several of the colleges.*

*As I read this week's news and the e-mail messages from presidents, each college had some extraordinary "first week" activities. I am pleased that student success, retention, efficient teaching, and services were focal topics at each location.*

*All five new community campuses are open and ready for service. The numbers of students enrolled thus far confirm the wisdom of taking this bold initiative to be of service in under-served and under-represented sectors of Dallas County. The esteemed Dallas Morning News columnist Bob Miller had a half-page article that highlighted the Richland/Garland community campus in this past Sunday's issue in the business section. He also made reference to the Pleasant Grove community campus of Eastfield College.*

*This past week I received word that three of our new buildings have received architectural design awards, which brings the number of design awards received thus far to eight (8). This is yet another accomplishment worthy of being celebrated.*

*The staff in the district office has had two weeks of professional development and "fun" activities under the banner of "Know and Grow." I participated in most of the activities and took pride in the commitment of the staff to supporting the overall focus on student success, and the need for this corps of colleagues to function in a more cohesive and collaborative manner. I am confident that the staff of the District Office of Staff and Organizational Development will be honored to "share their plans and secrets."*

*I recently read a short item by Terri Levine titled "Why managers can't increase productivity with current methods - and what to do about it." Here is a brief abstract from the article. "Employee meetings usually revolve around problems and decisions. Lighten things up every once in a while with a "What's right" meeting. It doesn't have to be a lengthy rah-rah extravaganza: Just bring your group together to highlight a couple of recent successes and express your appreciation for everyone's work. Your people will have a more positive attitude about their contributions, and recognition of success may spur more innovations as well."*

*It took me some time in my career to learn to embrace the power of celebrations and "fun." Try it - it works!*

### **North Lake College**

*Our community* – North Lake College has been awarded a \$500,025 Skills Development grant in partnership with Conexis Benefits Administrators LP. The training project will provide computer, management, customer service, project management, communications and proprietary software training related to processing benefits for 483 existing and 36 new employees at Conexis. From August 31, 2009 to August 30, 2010, the 67-course, 12-month customized training project developed by the college will allow Conexis to efficiently handle increased business due to current layoffs. The overall goal of the grant is to increase the skill level and wages of the Texas workforce.

*Our students* – The Visual and Performing Arts Division at North Lake College held an artists reception for its "Annual Spotlight Show," September 1st in the gallery. The show features digital images, paintings, graphic design work, drawings and sculptures by college students Austin Beavers, Kara Dahl, Sam Fitzgerald and Leigh Marrs. The artwork will be on display until September 15th.

*Our employees* – Ulanda Forbess, faculty and Wildfire mentor team leader at North Lake College, has successfully passed a national standards review of ENGL2311 Technical Communication through the Quality Matters™ (QM) program. QM is a faculty-centered peer course review quality assurance process for online learning. The goals of the program are to increase student retention, learning and satisfaction in online courses by implementing better course design.

### **Brookhaven College**

The Brookhaven College Bears volleyball team started the season with the number one ranking from the National Junior College Athletic Association's Division III pre-season poll. The team members

proved worth the high ranking with wins at their season opening tournament September 28th and 29th. The Lady Bears defeated Ranger College, Paris College, Western Texas College and Hill College to win the Lady Bears Invitational. The trophy stayed home this year. Way to start the season!

Johnny Castro, child development professor, presented a workshop on professionalism for child care staff at the “Annual Child Care Summer Sizzler” at the World Trade Center on August 29th. The event is presented by ChildCareGroup each year and brings together education and training professionals with child-care center owners, director and staff members for a full day of training. The topics ranged from childhood literacy and health issues to business and professional support for center directors.

Dr. Richard D. McCrary, interim president of Brookhaven College, and Monica Taliaferro, director of marketing and public information, attended the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) On the Road event on September 3rd. The guest speaker was Antonio R. Flores, Ph.D., HACU president. The association represents Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) where Hispanics constitute 25 percent or more of the total enrollment at either the graduate or undergraduate level, or both, and associate member institutions where Hispanics comprise a minimum of 10 percent or 1,000 of the total enrollment.

### **Eastfield College**

John Emery of Eastfield College participated in the “Sharing Life Back to School Fair” on August 22nd, benefiting disadvantaged youth in the Mesquite ISD. He provided information on academic, technical, and continuing education courses and programs. This year more than 1,000 students and their families participated.

Nancy H. Beaver, program administrator for the Child Development/Teacher Preparation program, was recently notified that the Child Care Assess Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS) grant was renewed for the last year of the four year period (for 2009-2010) under Eastfield College’s current grant at \$48,387. Beaver also received notice of a new award of four years starting next year (2010-2011). Eastfield College scored 107 out of 110 points. The award is based on 1% of Pell awards for the Pell fiscal year preceding the grant start, which mean that the award was based on the 08-09 school year. The CCAMPIS grant helps support the college’s evening child care program for students taking evening classes.

Tina Mewhinney, Eastfield College chemistry instructor, has finally achieved a lifelong goal and gave herself a great 60th birthday present – a Ph.D. in Chemistry after two years of study from University of North Texas. Her major area of study was in organic chemistry from the College of Arts and Sciences and a minor in educational psychology from the College of Education. Mewhinney’s dissertation research was a study of cognitive development of organic chemistry students in a large cooperative learning class of 250 students at Virginia Commonwealth University last year. She received her M.S. in chemistry in 1973.

Eastfield College and Green Mountain Energy (GME) Company unveiled the campus’ new solar array on September 2nd. It is the first photovoltaic (PV) solar system to power a school in the DCCCD. The solar system is ground mounted and will be used as a teaching tool for the college. Texas-based GME donated the 4.4 kilowatt (kW) solar panel system to the college. The GME® solar array at the college was installed on the campus grounds near the swimming pool. GME’s “Super Earth” mascot, representatives from GME, Dr. Jean Conway, Eastfield interim president, members of the college’s

sustainability committee, and members of the community participated in the event to officially “flip the switch” on the solar array.

### **Mountain View College**

More than 300 vehicles delivered recyclables during “Super Recycling Day” at Mountain View College on Saturday, August 29th. The event was held in collaboration with the City of Dallas to kick-off the college’s “Go Green Campaign” for the 2009-2010 academic year. A team of more than 40 volunteers - staff and faculty from the college, Early College High School students, Student Government Association members, and Phi Theta Kappa members from throughout the district - donated their time and efforts to ensure the event’s success.

The Office of Student Life at Mountain View College hosted a “Lion’s Luau” campus-wide welcome party to kick-off the new academic year on September 3rd. The event offered lunch, games, and a variety of outdoor activities for the entire campus community. The highlight of the event featured a memorable performance by the Grace Hula dancers, an independent dance organization from Dallas specializing in live Tahitian, Hawaiian, and fire dancing performances.

Mountain View College and Texas Tech University (TTU) have formed a partnership to offer completion of a TTU bachelor’s degree in bilingual education, right here in Dallas. The college teacher preparation students will report to campus for informational meetings with TTU advisors and faculty, for class meetings, and students can complete a degree through TTU and begin taking upper level courses in bilingual education based on courses completed at Mountain View College. The TTU courses will be offered in an online, blended format. The program will begin September 12th, allowing the college’s teacher preparation students to begin taking classes through both institutions at that time.

An advising luncheon was hosted by the Mountain View College Science, Allied Health and Physical Education Department on September 1st. Attendees from national societies and prominent higher education institutions were present to lend insight on how the college’s new engineering program can best serve the needs of all STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) students. Topics included the recruitment of STEM students, transfer and articulation agreements for engineering students, and creating a collaborative infrastructure of curriculum and pedagogical alignment.

### **DCCCD Campus High Schools**

The first week of fall semester activities for juniors and seniors of the Early College High School (ECHS) at Brookhaven College culminated in Friday assemblies designed to ensure each student is “off to a great start.” Presentations by Brenda Dalton, dean of student success, Anne Darrouzet, ECHS academic advisor, Pam Geisinger-Sandy, ECHS counselor; Rosie Oliveira, new ECHS principal, and Marilyn K. Lynch, Brookhaven College liaison to ECHS, included information about student support services, academic planning, important dates, activity plans and other success strategies.

The **Early College High School (ECHS) at Mountain View College** held a PTA Board Meeting on September 3rd. The meeting was held to plan the first open PTA meeting of the academic year, which will be held September 10th. Those in attendance at the meeting included Dr. Rina Davis, ECHS principal, Eric Pierce, associate principal, and Darian Montgomery, school counselor.

As a result of the Sengal seminar trip six (6) **Richland Collegiate High School (RCHS)** seniors and staff chaperones took last December, Alassane Gueye of the Ameth Fall High School in Saint-Louis,

Senegal, West Africa began classes this fall in the college's American Culture and English Institute. Alassane's goal is to pursue associate and bachelor's degrees in English. Several Richland College/RCHS faculty and staff worked together to make Alassane's dream of coming to the U.S. to earn a degree in higher education come true.

This fall 137 **Middle College High School (MCHS) of El Centro College** students have enrolled in 171 classes. The MCHS hosted a "meet the teachers" night on Wednesday.

### **Cedar Valley College**

*Student Success* – The Commercial Music Department at Cedar Valley College began their fall recital series this week to the sound of the Larry Spencer band. Spencer, a teaching working professional, was accompanied by previous faculty member Arlington Jones, renowned saxophonist Tom Braxton and several other area jazz professionals. Next week's featured artists will be the Rhett Butler Group. Rhett is most well known for playing two guitars at once. The recital series occurs weekly at 12:45 p.m. in the performance hall. For a schedule of the complete recital series visit: <http://bit.ly/s8ZMq>. (See schedule attached.)

Comerica Bank, community partner, presented Cedar Valley College with a check this week in the amount of \$10,000. The generous gift will be used to create an entrepreneurial academy and provide scholarships to support the African American Male Initiative.

The Continuing Education Department at Cedar Valley College has secured a contract in the amount of \$64,000 with *Texans CAN!* to provide specialized expert services for the Collaborative Dropout Reduction Pilot Program. Acting in a consultative role, the college will assist *Texas Can!* to increase the number of students graduating from high school, reduce the number of students who drop out, increase students' job skills, increase students' employment opportunities, prepare students to graduate college-ready, provide continuing education opportunities for students, and sustain dropout reduction and recovery strategies beyond the contract.

### **El Centro College**

We were informed this morning by Doug Hankins of BRW + Architects, Inc. that the West Campus received the title of "Outstanding Design" for the 2009 *American School and University (ASU)* portfolio. The West Campus will be featured in the November issue of *ASU* magazine.

El Centro College's Office of Student Life sponsored a few days of events called "Welcome Back" that consisted of some unusual activities. Huge blow-up toys of basket-ball throws, an obstacle course, a dunking booth, and tricycle races added lots of fun to the student center. A "design your own El Centro Tee-shirt" activity provided food for thought (one student created a beautiful design that said "Peace, Love and El Centro"). Some students have been wearing their t-shirts every day this week (hmmm...). A number of creative opportunities for displaying and recruiting for all of the college student organizations were presented, and all activities were surrounded by a host of motivational speakers and quotes to help get students into an enthusiastic frame of mind for beginning the semester. Over 1,000 students are on record as having participated.

On September 11th at 9:30 a.m., the West Campus of El Centro College located at 3330 North Hampton Road in West Dallas will be the site of a community conversation discussing how Latino education attainment can be improved. Open to the general public, the conversation will be led by Juan Sepulveda, executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for

Hispanic Americans, and will give attendees the opportunity to voice their thoughts on the subject. Information gleaned from the session will serve as the foundation for the new presidential executive order that will govern the White House initiative. A similar session is scheduled in the afternoon of the same day at Mountain View College.

On August 31st, Channel 8-TV News ran an interview with John Wells, El Centro College financial aid director. The interview, which is included in the television station's series on "Surviving in 2009," was originally aired earlier this year. In his interview, Mr. Wells explains the importance of financial aid for college students as well as how vital it is for students to start the process early. He also details the many ways for students to obtain financial assistance, including loans, grants, scholarships and other measures that are available.

### **Richland College**

*Sustainable Community Building* – "Social equity and justice" – This semester Kay Coder, sociology professor, and Amy Bell, history professor, are collaborating in a learning community - *Race, Ethnicity, and Community: An Inside Look at Multicultural America*. Students in the class are studying the effects of political, historical, social, cultural, and media influences on behavior and the perception of others, with special emphasis on issues of race, ethnicity, community building, and peace. The course focuses on four specific ethnic groups: American Indians, Hispanic/Latino Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans.

*Student Success* – Fall 2009 students were welcomed to Richland College during the *Annual Welcome Party* in the Fannin/Bonham breezeway, hosted by Office of Student Life. Day and evening students were treated to refreshments and the sounds of the college's Steel Band to usher them festively into the new semester.

*Employee Success* – Congratulations to Paula Eschliman, associate dean of instructional support, on being honored with Richland College's 2009-2010 Innovation of the Year Award for implementing Teaching Learning Circles for adjunct English faculty. Her innovation provides a mentoring and evaluation program for English adjunct faculty to exchange teaching and learning ideas and best practices, identify strengths and areas needing improvements, enhance instruction, promote communication, and create community for the more than 60 adjunct English faculty. This innovative program provides greater self-analysis and feedback than the formal evaluation of instruction process allows.

*Institutional Effectiveness* – As part of Richland College's systematic continuous improvement cycle, a cross-functional team is leading the college's effort to identify, review, and enhance mapping of all the college's institutional processes. The team expects to complete their work by the end of August 2010 at which time the focus will shift to mapping departmental level processes.

### **LeCroy Center**

The instructional technology staff of the LeCroy Center has been busy this year providing assistance to students, faculty and staff across the DCCCD in various areas, including training and help desk assistance. Colleague and Microsoft products, and other software training has resulted in more than 600 training course offerings in 2009, not including the more than 65 eCampus training courses (Faculty Training) this year. Data and evaluations show an overwhelming percentage of faculty and staff were satisfied or very satisfied with the level of training. In regards to the Blackboard eCampus system, we are averaging 9,600 simultaneous users throughout peak hours and about 5,000+ during

non-peak hours (Fall 2009). This is a 115% increase over last year. More stats and data will be shared throughout the year.

Dottie Clark, Nancy Harrison and Bob Crook attended the *North Texas Community College Consortium's Fall Leadership Convocation* at Collin College - Spring Creek Campus on September 4th. Featured sessions included "President Obama's Plan for Community Colleges," "The 81st Session of the Texas Legislature in Review," and "New and Revised NTCCC Initiatives: CLARA II, The Moveable Feast; Global Education." Speakers included Pam Anglin, Erma Johnson-Hadley, Bill Holda, Jesse Jones, Justin Lonon, Richard McCrary, Tom McKeon, and Jennifer Wimbish.

During the *North Texas Community College Consortium's* conference, Nancy Harrison was one of 26 participants from 15 member colleges who "graduated" with this year's Consortium Leadership And Renewal Academy (CLARA) 2008-09 class which is hosted by the NTCCC. CLARA is a year-long regional leadership development and renewal program. It creates a valuable network of colleagues in many different leadership roles from many different community colleges. Bob Crook has been selected to participate in the 2009-2010 CLARA Academy from the LeCroy Center.