



Dallas County Community College District

Office of the Chancellor

TO: DCCCD Board Members

FROM: Dr. Wright L. Lassiter, Jr.

DATE: April 3, 2009

RE: Weekend Memo #138

AN APPEAL FOR SUPPORT
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS - COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Senate Bill 41 & House Bill 2083

In general the commentary portion of the Weekend Memo is relatively brief; I am deviating from that pattern this week to inform the district community regarding the #1 priority for community colleges in the 81st Legislative Session. That issue is proportionality, and I would remind colleagues that the issue was the basis for the Governor's veto of health benefits at the conclusion of the 80th Legislative Session.

The House Appropriations Committee has scheduled a hearing on House Bill 2083 for Monday, April 6th at 8:00 a.m. and I have been assigned the task of serving as the lead CEO to offer testimony in support of this measure. As was the case with our successful efforts to overturn the Governor's veto, I want to assure my colleagues that my objective is to enlist support for the position of Texas' community colleges on this important measure. What follows is a background paper that is being used to urge our elected representatives to support our position on this critical issue.

Background: *Since the early 90's, group health insurance for community college employees has been through the state's Group Health Plan (HB 2 - 72nd Legislature). This coverage applies to all employees with the exception of those whose salaries are paid through federal funds (Rider Language in the General Appropriations Act - 67th Legislature) and physical plant employees (78th Legislature). The notion to further expand the definition of excluded employees has been debated and rejected during the last three legislative sessions. However, the Governor vetoed the second year of the biennial appropriation for health insurance benefits for all community college employees following the 80th Legislature. Subsequently an agreement was reached between the Governor, the Lt. Governor and House Speaker to restore the vetoed funds through an emergency appropriation in the current legislative session.*

Proportionality Described: As colleges have had to rely more heavily on local revenue sources due to declining state appropriations, the proportionate share of funding for historically defined eligible employees continues to change. The current proposal for an expanded definition of eligibility for health insurance appropriations is referred to as "proportionality," and it is based on the relative share (or portion) of each revenue source that a college uses to provide educational services.

Proportionality as introduced in the base bill treats community colleges unfairly by penalizing them for leveraging local resources to carry out their mission in a time when state dollars are not keeping pace with demands.

The workgroup of the Senate Finance Committee justified the inclusion of proportionality in the appropriations bill by adding contingency dollars to the formula. However, adding dollars is not a logical solution as formula funding is distributed based on student contact hours, not on a college's employee base. A college with low or flat enrollment would find itself without sufficient revenue to cover health insurance.

The Appeal for Support

Fixing proportionality in the 81st Legislative Session is our TOP PRIORITY and these three things need to occur:

- 1) Support the House Appropriations Committee in its efforts to exclude proportionality from the budget bill. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education voted to remove proportionality from the base budget bill. There is no cost to the bill as the \$110 million that had been shifted from HEGI (Higher Education Employees Group Insurance Contributions) in Article III to the community college formula has been moved back.
- 2) Pass SB 41 filed by Senator Zaffirini after consideration by the full Senate and/or HB 2083 filed by Representative Solomons after consideration by the full House. This legislation codifies the historical commitment of funding community college healthcare insurance based on employee eligibility. A significant policy decision should not be decided at each biennial legislative session with an appropriations rider.
- 3) Restore the \$154 million in vetoed funding from the 80th Legislature. Colleges have been paying health insurance money through an advance from their state appropriations. If this money is not restored in a timely fashion, colleges will not have sufficient revenue to cover the completion of the current academic year.

The Position of the Dallas County Community College District &
the Forty-Nine Other Texas Community College Districts

The Dallas County Community College District and the 49 other community college districts are in compliance with the definition of proportionality as has been the practice since the early 90's.

- Employees excluded from receiving state funding for health insurance benefits include physical plant employees, custodians, and federally funded faculty and staff.*
- The methodology in the Base Bill is inconsistently applied across higher education and places community colleges at a distinct disadvantage.*
- Direct instructional costs and health insurance costs are two totally different categories and should not be combined, or co-mingled in one undependable funding source.*
- This issue adversely affects all colleges, regardless of size, but is most sensitive for colleges who are aggressively involved in workforce training programs that rely heavily on full-time faculty, or colleges who are located in areas where there is not an abundance of available part-time faculty with required educational credentials.*
- The provision of health insurance benefits is a long term decision and colleges must be able to make long-term decisions when building programs and employing faculty. To continue to argue this important policy decision without a definitive resolution is simply a bad business practice.*
- Failure to address this policy decision, and the distinct possibility of continued fluctuations in state funding would cause the DCCCD to (a) increase tuition levels for students, (b) increase local taxes, or (c) reduce expenditures and services at a time of increased demand for educational services at a time when the state and national economy is in a state of uncertainty and flux.*

As the community college sector is the one source to positively impact workforce and economic development in the state, neither of those options is in the best interest of the Dallas County Community College District, the other college districts, and the State of Texas.

There has been one significant development over the past few days and that is the decision of the House Subcommittee on Finance to support the position of the community colleges by removing the methodology for proportionality from the Base Bill. This is a very significant, and positive, development.

If our testimony proves to be successful on Monday, our task will then move to the Texas Senate and the ensuing Conference Committee of the Texas Legislature.

Let me close by suggesting that colleagues can use this background paper in your conversations with legislators or other stakeholders. Wish me well on Monday in Austin.

Cedar Valley College

Student Success – Cedar Valley College will host the *Annual Transfer Fair* on Thursday, April 16th from 10:00 a.m. - noon on the second floor breezeway between buildings B and C. Our area university partners as well as other universities from the state will be available to assist students with questions relative to transferring to four year universities and to highlight their science, math and allied health programs. A luncheon for students and university representatives will follow beginning at 12:15 p.m. For reservations, please contact Jackie Glee at 972-860-2989.

Lemoris Barber, Cedar Valley College student, was named the Amidon/Beauchamp, Student Leader of The Year last week at the DCCCD Awards Banquet. Lemoris is a Title III reading tutor at the college and a true servant leader.

Community Development – The works of nationally recognized sculptor, Charles Coldewey will be shown in the Cedar Valley College performance gallery March 26th through April 16th. Coldewey is recognized throughout the DFW area for his life sized constructed sculptures. His current show demonstrates an intuitive and whimsical beauty. He is currently offering classes in 3-D artistry at the college.

Recently, several organizations hosted meetings on the campus of Cedar Valley College. More than 700 Head Start of Greater Dallas employees attended their annual staff development conference March 16-18th. Each person attended four classes daily in an effort to learn new methods and strategies for enhancing job performance. This is the second year the college has hosted this group. Also, on March 27th, the Kaufman County ISD hosted a University Interscholastic League (UIL) academic competition on the campus. Over 500 students participated in the highly competitive academic trials.

El Centro College

El Centro College Continuing/Workforce Education division has received re-approval as a provider for Continuing Nursing Education from the Texas Nurses Association. The approval is for three years and runs from April 1, 2009 through March 31, 2012. This designation allows the college to offer activities for nurses and provide them with the continuing education credit they need to renew their biannual licenses. The Dallas County Sheriff's Department (DCSD) formed an academy in 1951, in order to train employee's police tactics. The first class was a Basic Reserve Class (BRC). The BRC #1 graduated on December 11, 1951. The first classroom was located in the basement of the criminal courts building at Main and Houston streets. Students had to enter the officer's dressing room in order to get to the classroom. On October 28, 2008, the DSCD and the Dallas County Community College District (El Centro College) in a Dallas County Commissioners open Court session entered into an Inter-Local agreement that stated that the DCSD Training Academy would be housed at El Centro College, Bill J. Priest Campus. The first graduation class of this new academy, class #122 graduated March 13, 2009 at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. Dr. Wright Lassiter Jr., chancellor, gave the commencement address to the class of twenty four new sheriff's deputies. In his address, he spoke to them about ethics and living an ethical life, he told a story about one of his old college's professors from a business course asking the question of him and his classmates about what it meant to think like a crook. Later when the professor returned for an answer, they had plenty, but not the right one. He told them to think like a crook, however not to behave like one. Class #123 will begin training on June 1, 2009 at there new home. Gloria Smith, assistant dean, and

Derrick C. Hassell, sr. coordinator CE & work force development, manage the Protective Service Programs at El Centro College BJP Campus.

Rosemary DesPlas, El Centro College art faculty, has an art show at the Fort Worth Community Arts Center (FWCAC) that will run from March 6th through April 25th. The show is titled “Many Shades of Black.” It includes 10 new watercolors and 3 hair drawings. The FWCAC is located at 1300 Gendy Street. You can find more information about the exhibit on their website www.fwcac.com. The show coincides with *Spring Gallery Night* in Fort Worth. (See article attached.)

Recently two student groups from North Mesquite High School (40 students) and the Garland Independent School District (25 students) visited the Allied Health and Nursing labs at the Paramount. The students had the opportunity to observe and participate in demonstrations in all the programs offered at the Paramount. All the students were enrolled in health career programs at their high schools and were in awe of the possibilities for continuing their health career education at El Centro College.

North Lake College

Our Employees – North Lake College music faculty presented a spring recital on March 31st. Allan Andrews, Francis Osentowski, Jim Eger, Olga Amelkina-Vera, Felipe Ramirez, Regina Walter, Cindy Horstman and Marsha Anderson performed. A large and enthusiastic crowd was in attendance.

Our Community – On March 31st, Jody Smith, mayor of Flower Mound, visited North Lake College to speak as part of the Government Leadership Institute, a speaker program hosted by Dr. Gabriel Bach, government faculty. Mayor Smith spoke on issues affecting students and her constituents, such as the present economy and Texas’ unemployment rate.

Our Employees and Students – North Lake College hosted the *2009 DFW Regional Science Olympiad* on March 28th. The Science Olympiad is a nonprofit organization developed to improve the overall quality of science education, increase student interest in science, and provide both student and teacher recognition for outstanding achievement in science education. Eighteen teams of middle and high school students from the Irving area competed in this year’s competition. The college science students along with math and science faculty assisted the students and served as judges for the awards ceremony. Patricia Thompson and Fredella Wortham, college instructors, coordinated the event.

Our Community – On March 11th, Dr. Roy Vu and North Lake College’s Liberal Arts Division hosted *Women’s History Month* speaker, Dr. Rebecca Sharpless, assistant professor of history at TCU. In the talk, entitled “A Shared Repast: Southern Women and Food,” Dr. Sharpless shared some of her research and writings about African-American women from the U.S. Civil War (1865) through the 1960’s.

Eastfield College

The Eastfield College library presents “Neches Journeys: Land, River, and People” an exhibition created in collaboration with The History Center in Diboll and Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Featuring information about the river, the flora and fauna and the people and communities of the area, “Neches Journeys” illustrates the rich history and culture of the Neches River Basin. The Neches River served as an important 19th century transportation route, as a home to hunters, trappers, fisherman, loggers, outlaws and bootleggers and as the epicenter of the Texas lumber industry. Deep in the heart of Texas, the river basin has become a popular recreational area and has allowed towns like Diboll and Lufkin to grow into vital economic and cultural centers. “Neches Journeys” draws on Richard Donovan’s 2006 book *Paddling the Wild Neches*, which documents the author’s solo canoe trip down the 235-mile stretch of river between Lake Palestine and B. A. Steinhagen Lake. The exhibition includes historical images, contemporary photography and archival materials from

The History Center and other collections. Humanities Texas develops and supports diverse programs across the state, including lectures, oral history projects, teacher institutes, museum exhibitions and documentary films. The exhibit continues through April 22nd.

Applications are being accepted for the Dallas PREP program hosted at Eastfield College this summer for middle school 7th and 8th graders. Dallas PREP is a part of the Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program that seeks to increase awareness and exposure to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields. Dallas PREP is an academically intense, mathematics based summer enrichment program that takes place over a seven week period (June 15th -July 30th). Participants will receive instruction in Intro to Logic, Intro to Engineering and Problem Solving. Participants will also attend STEM related field trips and be exposed to career awareness speakers and activities geared toward sparking further interest in STEM fields. Students who complete the program will earn one high school elective credit toward graduation. DISD students may attend the program free of charge and will be provided transportation to and from the program every day via DISD buses. Non-DISD students must pay a \$300 registration fee and transportation will be their responsibility. Shaunyale Canada, coordinator of school outreach, is the lead contact.

Eastfield College Psi Eta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society inducted 60 new members in a formal ceremony March 28th. Dr. Jean Conway, college interim president gave the keynote address. The chapter presented the Texas Horizon Award to Judy Schwartz, student programs and resources program specialist. The award for service to Texas Region of Phi Theta Kappa was originally announced at the Regional Convention in March. The students and Dr. Conway also honored Theresa Sternat for her 15 years service as advisor to the chapter. Sternat, learning assistant director, was recently acknowledged as one of the 15 college educators in the state for the Free Masonry Award. She received her formal plaque and medallion at the ceremony. Distinguished guests included Michael Gutierrez, interim vice president of teaching and learning, and Jeff Quan, college counselor.

Dr. Rickie G. Rush, pastor and organizer of the Inspiring Body of Christ (IBOC) Worldwide Ministries, spoke to Eastfield College staff and students on “How to Handle Distractions while Seeking Academic Excellence.” The African American Cultural Awareness Club sponsored the presentation on March 12th. IBOC is one of the most progressive, flourishing ministries in America. Originally organized with 9 members, the church has grown to over 14,000 members. Prior to his current commitment as a full-time pastor, Dr. Rush taught theater arts at Skyline High School for 17 years. He has taught classes at Cedar Valley College and at Christ for the Nations Institute. Dr. Rush’s gift as a public speaker has earned him local, national and international recognition.

DCCCD CAMPUS HIGH SCHOOLS

Gayle Smith, principal, informed the **Early College High School at Nolan Estes (ECHS)** staff that she had a desire to take every student who attended ECHS to Sky Ranch during Spring Break. Ms. Smith’s desire was fulfilled- every student at ECHS (approx. 100 students) had the opportunity to spend 2 nights and 3 days at Sky Ranch Camp located in Van, Texas. The retreat provided fun activities and team building exercises for the students.

The final information session for potential **Richland Collegiate High School (RCHS)** Class of 2011 students and their parents was conducted by RCHS staff the evening of March 26th with 72 attendees participating. This number brings the attendance total for the three RCHS information sessions conducted since February to approximately 500 participants. RCHS is still accepting applications and currently has a waiting list of 24 students.

Two students of the **Early College High School at Mountain View College (ECHS)** have been invited to participate in the *Annual Boston Excursion* in Boston, Massachusetts from April 15-19th. Yazmin Chalico and Samantha Yanez, both ECHS juniors, were nominated by their teachers and then selected in a random drawing. The Boston Excursion uses site visits and educational technology to bridge the gap between the students' experience of the historical and literary artifacts with the texts they are exposed to in the classroom. The annual trip has traditionally been reserved specifically for Mountain View College students.

Brookhaven College

Students surrounded tables filled with information about career options, college majors and transfer opportunities during the College and Majors Fair on April 1st at Brookhaven College. Al Davis and Edeleu Florendo, academic advisors, coordinate the Majors Fair each year during the college's Take Care of Business Week. What was different this year is that Tricia Harrison, senior academic advisor and coordinator of the annual College Fair, worked with Davis and Forendo to present the two events on the same day to attract even more students. Faculty members represented their instructional divisions at tables with materials showcasing their courses, advising staff provided resources for career options open in different fields of study and university representatives from the region provided transfer information.

Brookhaven College created an innovative program to bring a "taste of college" to 180 Thomas Jefferson High School seniors in March. Faculty and staff members offered engaging workshops in a mini-college setting to highlight different fields of study and college challenges new students might face. Students at Thomas Jefferson were able to choose two workshops to attend. Sessions included psychology, computers, art appreciation and art history, visual communications, the summer bridge program, making the transition to college, setting goals, financial planning, and GIS. Bob Smith, Brad Thomas, Greg Jacobs, Sam Govea, Patti Burks, Cynthia Mills, Haven Abedin, Wes Smith, Gerald Bartz, Czarina Reyes, Monique Mannering, Pat Byars, Sharon Burton, and Bobby Nieman presented the college courses. The Outreach Team, Jean Kaplan, Monica Pauken, Suzette Constantine and Greg Rife, coordinated the program.

Anahita Sidhwa, astronomy professor, gave a presentation on April 2nd focusing on the life and importance of Galileo. As a way to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Galileo and the telescope, the world will celebrate the International Year of Astronomy in 2009 and April 2nd-5th is a global event, 100 Hours of Astronomy, to encourage public enjoyment of the sky. Brookhaven College celebrated this week with events for star observing on April 2nd and solar gazing April 3rd. Chaz Hafey, science learning lab coordinator, and the Astronomy Department set telescopes on the lawn by the Ellison Miles Geotechnology Institute, with a special telescope for viewing the sun for the morning viewing on April 3rd.

On the first official day, April 1st, of Brookhaven College's 30 Days of Service, community service and outreach project, there were very few volunteer opportunities left. Group projects, such as packing food at the North Texas Food Bank, helping seniors care for their lawns and homes through senior adult services, making care packages for troops overseas with Airborne Angel Cadets and others filled quickly. More than 80 employees have volunteered for more than 230 hours of service and more than 60 students have volunteered. The 30 Days of Service project was developed as a way to celebrate the college's 30th anniversary in a way that also served our community.

Richland College

Community and Economic Development – In celebration of Women's History Month, during a recent Alliance of Technology and Women's Chapter of Women of Visionary Influence meeting, Martha Hogan, executive dean of Richland's School of Engineering, Business, and Technology, served as a panelist in a

discussion, *IT Trends in a Down Economy*. Dean Hogan was joined on the panel by Hewlett Packard's vice president and chief technology officer/EDS Fellow and Texas Instruments' vice president of information technology services.

Student Success – Richland College health professions staff recently implemented a student online Health Professions information session, a concept emerging from student retention/success discussions held at the division's 2007 retreat. Jamie Chaney, health professions admissions coordinator, drafted the script, updated visual images, and recorded the presentation with recording assistance from Steve Dupuis, multimedia specialist, and Joe Vines, multimedia instructional associate. Web installation assistance was provided by Shannon Ydoyaga, medical programs administrator, and Randy Jensen, multimedia graphics designer, who linked the session to the existing online health professions prospective student data form. Prospective students now have the convenient option to view this important information online rather than attending an on-campus information session. The information session is available at <http://www.richlandcollege.edu/hp/infoSession/>.

Employee Success – Congratulations to Scott Dunn, Richland College carpenter, who was recently honored as the college's facilities services Employee of the Quarter. Scott began at the college as a painter in March 2004 and was promoted to carpenter in November 2007. He has been instrumental in many classroom and office conversions needed to better serve students and staff in the teaching/learning process.

Institutional Effectiveness – Richland College leadership recently completed the analysis of the college's 2008 ModernThink survey results. Using the college's continuous improvement cycle of Approach-Deploy-Learn-Integrate, much was learned from the analysis of faculty and staff feedback, triangulating findings with the college's biennial campus quality survey and periodic employee focus groups. The college's leadership identified three opportunities for improvement and developed a detailed action plan for deployment in the 2008-10 academic years.

Mountain View College

Back by popular demand, return performances of "MVC is Magic! Magic Shows" were held Thursday, March 26th through Sunday, March 29th. Audiences assembled on Thursday to enjoy the works of resident magicians Dr. Doug Keenan, Dr. Geoff Grimes, and Jim Corvey. Friday's show featured student magicians along with club sponsors Randy Clower and Dr. Geoff Grimes. Saturday's performances highlighted visiting magician Hal "Doc Holiday" Hudgins with the Fort Worth Magicians Club. On Sunday, master magician Bill Irwin, also from the Fort Worth Magicians Club, performed a memorable show for children.

Mountain View College hosted the District 4A University Scholastic League Academic Contest for high school students on March 27th. About 350 students from Forney, Red Oak, Lancaster, Mabank, Terrell, and Mesquite competed in disciplines such as reading, writing, poetry, journalism, accounting, and the sciences. The college student organizations Sigma Delta Mu and the STAR Club served as volunteers throughout the day.

A delegation of fifteen Mountain View College employees attended workshops for student service personnel at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville March 5-6th. The group attended workshops regarding academic advising, student transfer information, and articulation agreements. Some of the areas represented from the college included academic advising, R.E.A.C.H., Rising Star, and TRiO Focus.

As part of Women's History Month, Mountain View College welcomed guest speaker Ramona Curtis on Friday, March 27th. Curtis, who is the Director of Human Relations at Baylor University, gave a lecture entitled "Will Venus Align with Mars." The lecture focused on communication styles between men and

women while demonstrating the importance of psychology, speech, and human development within the realm of women's studies.

LeCroy Center

A team from the LeCroy Center and Dr. Andrew Jones, executive vice chancellor for educational affairs, originated The LeCroy Center's first live webinar on Tuesday, March 31st. The topic was "Cultivating Academic Excellence and Success for African American Males." There were 280 individual registrations for the program, and about 90 live connections. The event was coordinated and distributed using the Wimba Classroom webinar tool.

The presenter, Dr. Eric Gravenberg, originated his part of the session from a community college in Northern California. Dr. Gravenberg is CEO of a higher education consulting firm, The Gravenberg Group, and the national coordinator of the African American Male Initiative for The Presidents' Roundtable, an affiliate of the National Council of Black American Affairs of the American Association of Community Colleges. Also, Dr. Jennifer Wimbish, president of Cedar Valley College, was instrumental in the planning of the webinar.

Dr. Jones, Emilio Ramos (LCET) and Bob Crook (LCET) coordinated the program from the Center. Ramos was assisted by David Chien, Andrew Mashburn, and Freddie Castillo. Crook was assisted by Martha Kelley and Dea Yemen, who provided the technical information to all of the registrants along with Robin Bartoletti and Katie Crone.

Recently California State University, Northridge hosted its *Annual Assistive Technology Conference* in Los Angeles, California. Vendors from around the world provided talks on accessibility and universal design as well as present the latest technology for assisting persons with disabilities. David Wood (LCET), the IT access coordinator for the DCCCD FAST Team attended this conference and collected information on assistive technology as well as interviewed seventeen different vendors whose technology would be applicable for students with disabilities. The video of these interviews will be made available and a copy provided to the Disability Services Office for each campus later this month. In a continued effort to provide for all students and comply with state and federal laws the IT Access Coordinator for the DCCCD has met with the DCCCD VP Council to discuss accessibility and the need for Universal Design at our campuses. In response, the VP Council has created a subcommittee to address computer and online accessibility issues. For more information on assistive technology, accessibility or Universal Design, please email David Wood at drwood@dcccd.edu. Also visit the FAST TEAM at our website fast.dcccd.edu.

Valerie Cavazos, LCET/Dallas TeleLearning, will be teaming up with the DCCCD staff for the *89th Annual American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Convention* in Phoenix, Arizona, April 4 -7, 2009. Cavazos will exhibit Dallas TeleLearning distance learning products and services while showcasing the new Digital Resource Repository to conference-goers. The AACC recently elected Pamela Quinn, LCET Provost, to the 32-member governing board. The official installation of this appointment will be held at the AACC Conference next week.

Becky Stinson, LCET/Dallas TeleLearning, was in Roanoke, Virginia last week exhibiting at the *Virginia Community College System New Horizon's Conference*. During the event, she presented a session focused on Dallas TeleLearning's Digital Resource Repository. This week, Becky's on the road again at the *TxDLA Conference* in Corpus Christi, Texas. There, she'll be exhibiting, presenting a general session on Dallas TeleLearning courseware and a vendor session on the Digital Resource Repository. She will also host the Texas Consortium spring 2009 meeting.

Barbara James, LCET/ Help Desk, recently was recognized for her online Master's Degree studies in Educational Technology with Boise State University. Barbara was challenged with the task of a collaborative activity in which online groups had to study about the main Meso-American tribes. Each member of the group had to become an expert on one particular aspect of tribal life, provide online research and make formal online presentations based on the jigsaw activity by Elliot Aronson's model. <http://www.jigsaw.org/> To see more on how technology was used in the Meso-American Jigsaw Search Using the Internet, visit the website at: <http://edtech2.boisestate.edu/jamesb/502/jigsaw.html> (See articles attached.)