



Dallas County Community College District

Office of the Chancellor

TO: DCCCD Board Members

FROM: Dr. Wright L. Lassiter, Jr.

DATE: February 27, 2009

RE: Weekend Memo #134

SHAPING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR
A MORE HEALTHY CULTURE

On December 19th, the first half of the staff at the district office building (701 Elm Street) began the task of moving to the new district offices at 1601 S. Lamar. To facilitate the work of the moving company, employees participated in a professional development program organized by the District Office of Staff and Organizational Development. Presenters for the half-day program were Dale Perryman and Denys Blell. The first wave of staff moved in on December 19th; the second wave moved on January 9th, and the final wave moved on January 30th. For the first time the District Office staff members, who were housed in three locations, are now all under one roof. I am told that "we all like the new home!"

At each of the professional development sessions, the staff members were given a list of twelve questions that predict quality of culture and business results. In my opinion, they are appropriate questions as we work together and reflect on the advances made, and areas for improvement cited in the second Modern Think survey that I previewed last week. Ponder them carefully is my request of each of us.

- 1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?*
- 2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?*
- 3. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?*
- 4. In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?*
- 5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?*
- 6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?*
- 7. At work, do my opinions seem to count?*
- 8. Does the mission/purpose of my company (work group) make me feel my job is important?*
- 9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?*
- 10. Do I have a best friend at work?*
- 11. In the last six months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?*

12. *This last year, have I had opportunities to work to learn and grow?*

As you reflect on these questions remember my oft-stated expression: "The largest room in any house is the room for improvement." I thought that these expressions might serve a useful purpose as we examine the quite positive results of the second Modern Think employee opinion survey.

Have a pleasant weekend as the second month of 2009 comes to an end.

Administrative Offices

Clyde Porter, associate vice chancellor of facilities management/district architect, attended the annual Career Fair held at the Prairie View A&M University School of Architecture on Friday, February 13th. The purpose was to assist its students in finding summer intern opportunities and programs in Dallas with its various architectural/engineering firms, the DCCCD, and to help them find and apply for scholarships offered for 2009 with the Dallas Architectural Foundation. Clyde serves as the 2008-09 chairman of the Texas Society of Architect's Committee for Education, whose charge is to develop programs and activities which strengthen communication, understanding and mutual assistance among Texas architectural educators, practitioners and students.

The District Service Center (DSC) held its annual *Employee Recognition Ceremony* on Thursday, February 12th to celebrate the employee years of service milestones (5-40 years), DSC Innovation Award, and Professional Support Staff and Administrator of the Year awards. Also celebrated were three employee educational achievements in the past year. Twenty-nine employees were recognized for years of service.

Of special note, Joe Ward, district director of information technology, was recognized for 40 years of service. We were pleased to have his wife Carolyn from Cedar Valley College attend along with Janet Cassidy from Eastfield College, the wife of John Cassidy, who celebrated 35 years of service.

Twenty employees (those who have served at least 25 years in the District) were "pinned" with service lapel pins, as part of the District Service Center recognition ceremony. Dr. Wright Lassiter, special guest, was present to recognize Ed DesPlas, executive vice chancellor of business affairs, for an aggregate of 25 years of service to the District.

El Centro College

In preparation for starting classes at the new campus in West Dallas, the Bill J. Priest Campus has been offering computer and keyboarding classes at the West Dallas Multipurpose Center. The first classes started in August of 2008 with an enrollment of 54 students. Two additional classes were offered in September of 2008 with 22 additional students. This year started off with great success and an enrollment of 67 students in January. Interest continues to grow with new potential students already wanting to enroll for the next set of classes.

A brief article on El Centro College's Food and Hospitality Services Institute appeared on the *Dallas Observer* website on February 14th. Dates and information for the Thursday lunches and Tuesday dinners were listed. The site has already received responses/comments from people who work downtown and are interested in visiting the college. (See article attached.)

On February 12th, Gretchen Riehl presented her work with the North Texas Food Bank's (NTFB) Agency University to approximately 30 regional food bank managers from around Texas. The Agency University is a partnership between NTFB and the college designed to assist the Food Bank's member agency in carrying out their missions.

On February 11th, the El Centro College Paralegal Association met for its bi-monthly meeting to discuss "The Innocence Project" (IP) and the importance of "Finding the law." Their special guest speakers from the Dallas County District Attorney's Office (DCDAO) and law enforcement were Ms. Jena Parker, Mr. Michael Ware, Ms. Cindy Stromer, Ms. Michelle More, and Mr. Jim Hammond. The IP is a non-profit organization dedicated to securing the release of wrongfully convicted persons of serious crimes such as murder, rape and soon arson with the aid of forensic technology and DNA. The IP has partnered with DCDAO and has been accredited with the release of now 18 men who were exonerated for crimes they did not commit. Law students volunteer their time to work under attorneys for the IP. Paralegal students were encouraged during the meeting by Mr. Michael Ware and Ms. Parker to get involved to gain experience even at the ground floor level.

Cedar Valley College

Student Success – Cedar Valley College was recognized in a session at the *2009 Clinton Global Initiative University* for their work excellence in the development of educational and training programs connected to the development of "green jobs." The college committed to expanding learning opportunities for students and community members relative to energy conservation technologies and skills in commercial, institutional and industrial buildings. A part of this recognition also focused on their partnership with Texas A&M University.

Congratulations to Cedar Valley College for being awarded the "African American Male Student Success" retention award by the DCCCD Office of Student Retention. The project will be a collaborative effort between the Cedar Valley, Richland, El Centro, and North Lake colleges. The award is valued at \$91,266 and covers a period of four semesters.

Cedar Valley College is proud to display the works of Karmien Bowman. Bowman, the ceramics coordinator for the Tarrant County College-Northeast Campus, is nationally recognized for her work in both clay and bronze. The show will be displayed through March 12th.

The African American Males Initiative at Cedar Valley College concluded their Black History Month speaker series this week. Greg Fields, weather forecaster for WFAA-TV along with wife, Robbie Owens, field reporter for CBS-TV 11, presented "How to have successful family relations and successful careers."

Brookhaven College

Congratulations were extended to two Brookhaven College instrumental music students who took top spots in competitive auditions at the *2009 Texas Community College Band Directors Association All-State Symphonic Band* and performed in concert with the honor band in San Antonio on February 14th. Victor Ramirez, clarinetist, and Ryan Arvo, alto saxophonist, earned the first-chair positions, marking them as the best classical musicians on their instruments from all of the community and junior colleges in Texas. Four high school students, also studying instrumental music at the college, earned positions in the Texas All-State high school band groups. Chris Rzeznik, from Hebron High School, made first-chair alto saxophonist in the 5A Symphonic Band for the second year in a row. Sol Park, an oboist from R.L. Turner High School, made second-chair in the 5A Philharmonic Orchestra. Nicholas Poulides (tuba player) and Matthew Solis (euphonium player) from Ranchview High School also earned first chair in the top 3A All-State Band. Congratulations also are extended to Roy Allen, Jr., director of instrumental studies and professor of saxophone, as well as adjunct professors Rose Obenhaus (clarinet), Donna

Schmidt (oboe), and Clinton Sims (tuba and euphonium) along with the high school band directors from Hebron, R. L. Turner and Ranchview for their dedicated work in preparing these student musicians.

Faculty and staff members from Brookhaven College's Radiologic Technology program recently attended the annual *Association of Collegiate Educators in Radiologic Technology 34th Annual Education Conference and Business Meeting* in Las Vegas. The conference attracts educators and students from all over the nation. Topics at the conference range from educational assessment and new technologies to professional review. The conference also attracted many highly regarded speakers from authors to leaders in our professional societies. Stephanie Wells, radiologic technology faculty, and Valerie Martin, clinical coordinator, ran the conference student challenge competition along with Beth Veale' from Midwestern State University. Norm Burgess, adjunct professor, presented "Transitioning The Change In Your Teaching Styles; Or Why Do We Not Want To Try Something Different." Christi Carter, professor, presented "Picture Archiving and Communication Systems: The Electronic File Room."

Richard McCrary, interim president, led a group of Brookhaven College faculty and administrators to the *Achieving the Dream 2009 Strategy Institute*, February 17-20th in San Francisco. Over four days, representatives from each college in the nation participating in the "Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count" program shared success stories of their programs and strategies with the theme of "Equity and Excellence." Much of the conference focused heavily on the colleges' use of data as a tool in developing and testing their initiatives. Other presentations viewed how colleges would be moving forward with successful programs and initiatives.

The annual *DCCCD Conference Day* conducted at Brookhaven College on February 19th included field trips, teacher training, great food and fellowship. This year's event began with brief remarks from Dr. John Williams, emcee and psychology professor, who introduced recorded comments from the chancellor as well as highlights from the District Awards Program. Some employees departed early on the first field trip of the day for "Retracing the steps of Lee Harvey Oswald" through the Dallas Historical Society, while others attended sessions about team-building, coping with change and human migration. Bob Ferguson, DCCCD trustee, also gave a presentation focusing on how to build community in a business by looking beyond differences. From food to finance to fitness, the presentations offered fun and education to employees throughout the day. Monica Taliaferro, director of marketing, headed this year's conference committee for a second year with programming co-chairs Sheri Van Court, professor of ESOL, and Vicki DeFord, student support coordinator, and help from more than 50 employees to make the day a resounding success.

North Lake College

Our Students – North Lake College's Phi Theta Kappa chapter was recognized in *Connections*, the annual review for Keep America Beautiful, for its involvement in "Operation Green: Improving Our Communities." The article includes a photo of North Lake College students at a tree-planting activity. (See article attached.)

Our Community – On Tuesday, February 24th, Kitty Boyle, DCCCD trustee, visited North Lake College to speak as part of the Government Leadership Institute, a speaker program hosted by Dr. Gabriel Bach, college Government faculty. Trustee Boyle spoke on the future of DCCCD, student populations, and funding.

Our Employees – George Marquez, North Lake College dean of Wildfire Institute, has received an appointment for the fourth year to serve on the Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. DEAC evaluates institutional reports for distance education

submitted by public higher education institutions and advises the coordinating board staff on broad policy issues related to distance education.

Lynda Edwards and Lesly Castillo of North Lake College's Educational Partnerships presented at the *28th Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience*, February 8-10th. Their presentation, "Making the High School-to-College Connection Work," gave attendees ideas to help high school seniors make a successful transition to college.

DCCCD Campus High Schools

Congratulations to Ethiopia Kabtimer, **Richland Collegiate High School** senior, who recently received notice that she has been awarded a full-tuition scholarship, worth more than \$52,000 per year, to Trinity University.

All juniors at the **Early College High School at Mountain View College** (ECHS) participated in a mock SAT exam on February 20th. The mock exam simulates, as closely as possible, the actual SAT exam which all of the students will be taking at a later date. Administrators at the ECHS report that the experience was extremely beneficial to all participating students.

Richland College

Community and Economic Development – Among many events celebrating Black History Month, Richland College welcomed Dr. Reinhold Wagnleitner, Austrian history professor, and Mr. Tom McDermott, New Orleans jazz pianist, for a two-day lecture/performance visit, featuring an evening community informance, *Satchmo Meets Amadeus*, and a conference day keynote informance, *Jazz - The Classical Music of Globalization*. These historically innovative, informative, and entertaining lectures with piano accompaniment cast new light on the cultural and musical background of globalization and the reasons for the global attraction of jazz, "the most unique and important contribution to modern culture the U.S. has made"--the original world music. Dr. Wagnleitner also addressed students, faculty, and staff in a lecture, *The United States of America and the World: Views from a Distance*, and Mr. McDermott performed *New Orleans Piano and Beyond* for the college's weekly music recital series.

Student Success – Congratulations to Robert Hackett, Chad McCall, and Hayley Mida, Richland College student instrumentalists, who were recently selected and performed with the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) Community College All-State Wind Symphony. Another student success opportunity resulting from the college's TMEA participation is that Frisco ISD, Lewisville ISD, and McMurry University music directors have agreed to perform clinics with the college student musicians in wind, symphony and music master classes.

Employee Success – Congratulations to Richland College part-time nurse Valerie King, RN, who was recently named as one of the *2009 Dallas-Fort Worth Great One Hundred Nurses*, sponsored by Districts 3 & 4 of the Texas Nurses Association and the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Nurse Administrators Forum. Valerie will be recognized at a Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center celebration on April 19th. Valerie is also a full-time RISD school nurse, so both institutions partnered to honor Valerie with the nomination for this award.

Institutional Effectiveness – A team from the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), a national leader in sustainability research and practice, visited Richland College February 10-11th, as part of its *Accelerating Campus Climate Change Initiatives* project. The college, beginning development of its first climate action plan, competed with applicants from around the country for the invitation to participate in this grant-funded consortium. The RMI team spent two days engaged with the college faculty, students and staff, and DCCCD officials in gathering information about climate-related initiatives, opportunities, and barriers.

Following RMI visits to the 12 participating institutions, including Yale, Tufts, University of Missouri, and one other community college--teams from those schools will gather to begin applying lessons learned to their institutions' sustainability initiatives. Following grant-funded projects at each participating institution, a publication will be released this summer to support and accelerate climate action plan development at colleges and universities nationwide.

Mountain View College

Mountain View College held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, February 19th to celebrate the completion of a new science and allied health building and a new sports complex. Members of the Dallas County Community College District who participated in the ceremony included Dr. Wright Lassiter, chancellor; Martha Sanchez Metzger and Sonny Williams, DCCCD trustees; Felix A. Zamora, president, Mountain View College; Lennie Chamberlin, facilities design specialist; Steve Park, executive director of bond programs; Steve Novotny, bond programs project manager; and Al Erdman, bond programs manager. The new sports complex is located on the west side of campus and features a soccer/football stadium, two practice soccer fields, a baseball field, a softball field and a jogging trail. The science and allied health facility, also on the west side of the campus, adjoins with the existing science wing. The 38,000-square-foot building will host nursing labs, biology labs, chemistry labs, biology non-majors labs, a computer classroom, associated prep areas and faculty offices. Funding for the new facilities was provided by a bond package approved by Dallas County voters in 2004.

During the week of February 16-20th, the Communications and Teacher Education Division and the Student Programs and Resources Office hosted Dana Smith and Ryan McNabb, park rangers from the Black Heritage Trail in Boston, Massachusetts. The park rangers brought their fascinating presentation on the rich history of the free African American community in Boston in the years leading up to the Civil War. The lectures focused on the unique role of Boston in the abolition movement, the Underground Railroad, and the early struggles for equality and justice. McNabb and Smith also visited Northlake College and Richland College campuses during their visit to Dallas. Proceeds from the Mary Stupp Endowment Fund for Social Justice also helped to make the trip possible.

Cathy Edwards, student programs and resources director and Student Government Association advisor at Mountain View College, was recently named as a recipient of the prestigious Administrator Award of Distinction by the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society of Two-Year Colleges. College administrators, nominated by Phi Theta Kappa chapters, are selected for this award based on outstanding support provided to Phi Theta Kappa over the years. Edwards will be honored at the *Phi Theta Kappa International Convention* on April 16-18th at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center in Grapevine.

Jerry Scheerer, dean, research and planning, released the Mountain View College Spring 2009 Credit Student Change Analysis on Monday, February 23rd. Highlights of the report included a headcount of 7,370 credit students, which set another record high enrollment for the college. Also, among the many encouraging aspects of the report was the Fall 2008 to Spring 2009 retention rate -- 62 percent among credit students, and a 20 percent increase in credit students over the age of 38.

Eastfield College

On February 13th, the Ryder Jon Piotr's Nomadic Gallery (RJPNG) made a stop at Eastfield College. Created by the collaborative team of Ryder Richards, Piotr Chizinski and Jon Whitfill, the RJPNG is a 24-foot long Ryder truck rented and converted into a sophisticated traveling gallery space. Participating artists included: Laura Boldon, Piotr Chizinski, Ryder Richards, Sue Anne Rische, and Jonathan Whitfill. This presentation of art, in an alternative venue, creates a level of excitement not often associated with the established art system. The artists, through innovation, have the ability to bypass all perceived boundaries. The ability to educate with the arts and involve the public is developed through conversation, a joining of

forces, and a bit of creative thinking. The RJPNG travels throughout Texas and beyond, bringing contemporary art to the doorsteps of galleries, museums, schools, colleges, and cultural institutions. Eastfield College was a chosen college stop for this nomadic exhibition through association with David Willburn, the college's art faculty member.

Dallas County Commissioner Mike Cantrell appointed Don Baynham, associate vice president for outreach and advancement, to the Dallas County Historical Commission (DCHC). The DCHC consists of volunteer members appointed to two-year terms by the Dallas County Commissioners Court. The Commission advises County Commissioners on matters pertaining to historical preservation and to initiate and conduct programs and activities to assist in the preservation of Dallas County's historical heritage. The Commission works closely with the Texas Historical Commission in Austin, a state-funded agency charged with coordinating and promoting local historical preservation efforts statewide.

Yolanda Roncal, Eastfield College ESOL program advisor, was appointed to the Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Education Committee for 2009. The committee includes representatives from DISD, the business community, and major higher education institutions in the Dallas area.

Art Sykes, Eastfield College facilities director, recently attended the *Texas College and University Facilities Conference* in San Marcos. Conference co-hosts were Texas State University and the University of Texas Health Science Center-San Antonio. Sykes was one of the 19 college/university/industry facilities professionals on the conference planning committee. Major conference workshops included: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board integrated campus planning, building information modeling, EED/sustainability in college/university buildings, construction cost control, campus safety and security audits, and many other critical topics for facilities professionals.