



Dallas County Community College District

Office of the Chancellor

TO: DCCCD Board Members

FROM: Dr. Wright L. Lassiter, Jr.

DATE: March 13, 2009

RE: Weekend Memo #136

SYSTEMS THINKING

The readers of this commentary series each week are reminded of my view that leadership is practiced, in varying degrees, by all members of an organization. With that in mind, this column, and an occasional Bulletin, will focus on these topics for the next several weeks: (a) Modern Think reflections and applications; (b) leading in times of crisis; (c) the financial outlook; and (d) encouragement.

During challenging times it is useful to be reminded of the critical importance of "everyone pulling in the same direction." There is a passage in a certain book that reads: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body."

According to a popular story, a great orchestra had gathered to rehearse with the celebrated conductor Sir Michael Costa. As the music reached a crescendo, every instrument was being played - except for one. Distracted, the piccolo player had momentarily lost his place on the page of music. He hoped his instrument wouldn't be missed. Suddenly, Costa brought down his arm and silenced the orchestra. "Where's the piccolo?" he inquired. To a skilled conductor, and a skilled leader, every part of the system is crucial - even those that may seem less important.

The contributions of each member of a team are important. No one has the right to act as though he or she is separate from the body. And as leaders, we're to view every member of our team as a crucial part of the system, and help each individual to discover his or her role and play it.

Ponder these questions as you reflect on the importance of the overall unit and systems thinking. How do you feel about your role on your current team or on teams with whom you've been involved in the past? How do you feel about the roles of other team members? What could you do to demonstrate that you value each member and want to strengthen his or her relationship with the rest of the team? Am I truly committed to

practicing collaboration, or am I just going through the motions? Can I subordinate my self-serving and selfish opinions and perspectives for the good of the team, and the overall organization?

Effective leaders have discovered that tasks are best accomplished and goals achieved by organizing and implementing systems.

Organizations often act in surprising and even seemingly strange ways. However, when we can begin to practice systems thinking that will help us better solve problems that we face as leaders during these challenging times.

Speaking of challenging times, few functions performed by a leader are more important than that of keeping hope alive. During those times in which others are lost in a dark and seemingly endless maze of despair, effective leaders will drive away the darkness with positive projections for the future. They'll infuse those around them with optimism regarding themselves, others and the future of the organization. They know when to draw alongside of someone. They can sense whether a team member needs a quick admonition or a shoulder on which to cry.

Effective leaders, during these times, sustain hope by offering words of support. A little bit of encouragement can go a long way toward motivating those around us.

In the rough-and-tumble circumstances of life, we sometimes receive blows that leave us bleeding and gasping for breath. During such times, individuals and teams need little words of reassurance so that they can remain faithful and committed to the overall goals and objectives of the unit and the total organization.

It is my hope that all of my colleagues in the DCCCD will come to understand that encouragement is to a team what wind is to a sail - it moves people forward. We all need words of encouragement and support, regardless of our place in the organization.

The former baseball great Dave Dravecky provides some guidance concerning how we can offer the best kind of encouragement in his book, Worth of a Man (Zondervan Publishing House - 1996).

In the book he writes that encouragement is something every leader needs to offer to his or her team members. In his capacity as the leader of Outreach of Hope, a ministry geared to instill hope in cancer patients, amputees and their families, he urges his readers to offer encouragement that validates a person's worth. He notes that "it's easy for us to confuse our true worth with our sense of worth, and that our sense or feeling of worth can vary tremendously." He continues, "The problem is that our feelings don't always align with the truth. Our worth isn't tied into material things that can be bought at a shopping mall, nor is it rooted in a position of power."

He then urges his readers to help those who are struggling with self-worth to find work

that is productive. He writes that finding productive work is an important means to help men and women to sense their intrinsic worth. When we figure out why we're here and what we're supposed to be doing with our lives, we then can be infused with a sense of hope and encouragement.

Have a good week as Spring Break begins next week for students and faculty, and the staff and administrators have a three-day weekend. Because it is a four-day week we will not publish the Weekend Memo, in its place I will publish another of the Chancellor's Bulletins on Wednesday. It will focus on leading in times of crisis and I will provide updates on the legislative front, the impact of the stimulus funding, and the overall financial outlook for the DCCCD. I am mindful of my obligation to offer words of encouragement and, as some would say - "to keep hope alive."

Cedar Valley College

Student Success – Congratulations to the Alpha Zeta Omicron Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at Cedar Valley College. This past week, the chapter was recognized as the most distinguished chapter at their regional conference. The organization was ranked first out of 86 chapters. Also, Rosalyn Eishen, the Phi Theta Kappa Chapter vice president of scholarship, was selected as a 2009 Coca-Cola National Finalist. Selection as a Coca-Cola finalist was based on scores earned in the All-USA Academic Team competition. This program is sponsored by the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation and is administered by Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. Chris Abraham, Phi Theta Kappa member, has been awarded the Mustang Technology Engineering Scholarship. Applicants must have completed physics or a calculus class, be currently enrolled, and have a minimum grade point average of 3.0.

Five Cedar Valley College basketball players received post-season All Conference honors: DeMarcus Catchings was selected as Freshman of the Year; Michael Conner and Rodrick Buckley were selected to the Second Team All Conference; and Josh Johnson and Brandon Page were selected as Honorable Mention players for their hard work. Two players also received Academic Honors with outstanding GPAs: Anthony Anderson Jr. had a 3.75 and Anthony Stephens had a 3.4 for the Fall semester, 2008.

Community Development – Cedar Valley College hosted its annual *Community Breakfast* on March 12th at the college. The theme for the breakfast was "Bridging Business and Education together for the New Economy." The purpose of the breakfast was to thank all of the partnering organizations that developed contract training classes as well as other events. Over 100 people were in attendance. In addition, representatives from the Texas Workforce Commission and Workforce Solutions of Dallas County attended the breakfast and shared information regarding services that are available to organizations. Representatives from Solar Turbines, Inc, and DW Distribution, Inc., also gave testimonials regarding their experiences with the Skills Development Grant. After the breakfast, representatives from the Texas Workforce Commission conducted a brief seminar on skills development funding

The Cedar Valley College Center at Cedar Hill hosted a community-based planning meeting on March 6th. Twenty-two key community members were invited to share their insights and expertise on issues impacting the Best Southwest cities. This important "think tank" session will be the first step in re-defining the mission, direction and branding of the college's off-site facility.

Richland College

Community and Economic Development – Richland College African American Connection, an employee group dedicated to the recruitment, retention, and student success of African-American students, along with Student Programs and Resources (SPAR), recently hosted another highly successful African American Read-In for 300 attendees, including college students, faculty, and staff, as well as 80 E.D. Walker Middle School students, 5 Kid’s Rule Day Care students, and 6 LaTonja Loving Arms Day Care students. This year’s theme, *Say It Loud, I Read and I’m Proud*, featured 25 reading, singing, dancing, instrumental, and rapping acts. Visiting students were treated to lunch and a campus tour courtesy of the college’s Educational Transitions division. Lucky audience members won 40 door prizes, including books and popular area merchant gift cards. Congratulations to the 2009 Read-In planning committee, which included Tameika Williams, Tacia Dillard, Alisa Jones, Bethany Wright, and Sandy Hawkins, SPAR staff, for making this event another annual success.

Student Success – Richland College Photographic Imaging Program presentation series, with support from Student Programs and Resources, recently welcomed internationally known photographer Keith Carter who conducted a seminar and lecture on the concepts of creativity, imagination, and the humanity of the image-making experience, along with an interactive book-signing. He presented, with humor, sincerity, and historical context, images from his many photographic projects and took time to discuss individual student portfolios in one-on-one sessions with students. Among his many photographic accomplishments, Keith is the recipient of 2 National Endowment for the Arts Regional Survey Grants, the Lange-Taylor Prize from The Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, and has published more than 10 books of his work.

Employee Success – Congratulations to Bao Huynh, director of institutional research, who was elected executive member-at-large for technology during the recent state conference of the Texas Association of Institutional Research held in Lubbock.

Institutional Effectiveness – Donna Walker, associate vice president for enrollment management, recently addressed attendees at the *4th Annual Student Enrollment Management Conference* in North Carolina. Her presentation, *Enrollment Management--Do the Numbers Add Up? A Malcolm Baldrige Approach*, gave attendees strategic ideas to help meet enrollment needs during times of high enrollment and low funding.

Brookhaven College

The Brookhaven College Lab Band has been selected to participate in the New Generation Jazz Festival, April 4-5th, in conjunction with the 52nd Annual Monterey Jazz Festival in Monterey, California. The New Generation Jazz festival promotes jazz education and features instrumental and vocal groups from across the country, ranging from middle school through college level. The band is scheduled to perform on Sunday, competing against five other schools for top festival honors. Guest bands are traveling in from Japan and England, with 57 bands from six states, from Alaska to Texas, participating in the prestigious event. The festival also hosts a variety of educational clinics.

Students and faculty members in the Brookhaven College School of the Arts’ ceramics department continued their support of the Empty Bowls event this year. Lisa Ehrich, art professor, and Susan Mollet, adjunct instructor and instructional associate, had a “bowlathon,” with open studio time so students could use the ceramics lab to throw bowls from recycled clay. The bowls were taken to Trinity Ceramics, one of the major sponsors of the annual event. The *10th Annual Empty Bowls*, supporting the North Texas Food Bank, was this organization’s most successful to date, raising \$146,520 or enough for 586,080 meals for North Texans. Through Empty Bowls, local artists create ceramic bowls for the event where patrons select a bowl and enjoy a simple lunch of soup and bread. Guests keep the bowl as a reminder that there are always “empty bowls” in the world.

Patricia “Trish” Dodd, Ph.D., professor of English at Brookhaven College, has been invited to be part of a panel discussion at the *2009 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Annual Convention* in San Francisco, March 11-14th. The CCCC is the world’s largest professional organization for researching and teaching composition, from writing to new media. Dodd will be presenting during the session, “Toward a Civic Discourse on the Israel-Palestine Conflict.” Dodd’s presentation is titled “Speaking of the Other: Humanizing Palestinians.” This roundtable will present multiple perspectives on how productive exchanges can occur around the Israel-Palestine conflict. Each year the convention draws college faculty members from around the world. They gather to hear award-winning keynote speakers, attend presentations by colleagues on the latest innovations in education, and network to gain knowledge of best practices in the field.

The Women’s Expo at Brookhaven College drew more than 44 vendors with a focus on sustainability and the environment this year. “Women Taking The Lead to Save Our Planet” is the national theme of this year’s Women’s History Month and this year’s expo focused on green opportunities through local businesses and community resources as well as women’s health and wellness. Led by Suzette Vaquera-Constantine, outreach and recruitment coordinator, Outreach Services partnered in the event with the college’s Green Team, Health Center and Student Programs and Resources office. There were opportunities for students and employees to recycle everything from clothing and household items to plastic grocery bags and electronics.

DCCCD Campus High Schools

Richland Collegiate High School (RCHS) seniors continue to amass valuable four-year college and university transfer scholarships. Laura Moos, RCHS senior, has already been offered a total of \$92,000 in scholarship funds. Kings College in New York has offered her \$12,000 per year for four years. Benedictine College has offered her a \$10,500 per year, four-year scholarship, and The University of Texas-Pan American has offered her a \$9,000 scholarship.

The Early College High School (ECHS) at Mountain View College hosted a new Cohort Parent’s Meeting on Saturday, March 7th. The purpose of the meeting was to orientate 120 incoming eighth-graders who will be entering the ECHS this fall, and to provide helpful information for students and their parents. The new students will complete their registration and take accuplacer tests for the remainder of this week. Administrators report that a record number of 260 students applied for admission into the ECHS for the upcoming academic year.

North Lake College

Our Students – On Saturday, March 7th, North Lake College English Honor Society, Sigma Kappa Delta (SKD), held its spring induction ceremony. Agnes Karanja, former student, who will be attending Harvard University Business School in the fall, and Christina Ford, Sigma Kappa Delta president, were speakers. Guests and inductees enjoyed musical selections performed by Dr. Francis Osentowski, music faculty, and Marsha Anderson, humanities adjunct. SKD is cosponsored by Dr. Phyllis Elmore and Tracie Hernandez, English faculty.

Our Community - North Lake College Health Services hosted its 2009 Health Fair on March 4th. The college gallery was filled with representatives from local hospitals and a wide variety of health care vendors and associations. Hundreds of students and employees took advantage of free blood pressure, body fat and HIV screenings, and others signed up for the national bone marrow registry.

Our Students – North Lake College Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter officers traveled to Waco on March 7th for the PTK regional convention and brought home more awards than any other chapter in the Texas region. Awards included: Five Star Level, 2009; Texas Top Chapter, 2008-2009; Communications Award, 2008-2009; Yearbook Award, 2009; Icarus Award Outstanding Merit and Achievement, 2009; Chapter of Service, 2009; Hall of Honor for Chapter President, Peter Babcock; Hall of Honor for Vice President of Service, Ida Jagne, 2009; Hall of Honor for Advisors Hall of Honor, William Videtto, 2009; and Tejas Award for Friend of the Texas Region, 2009.

Our Community – On March 10-12th respectively, DCCCD Trustees Martha Metzger and Diana Flores visited North Lake College to speak as part of the Government Leadership Institute, a speaker program hosted by Dr. Gabriel Bach, Government faculty. The trustees spoke on a number of topics and issues affecting the DCCCD and the college students, such as funding and future governmental legislation.

Eastfield College

Sunnyvale High School (SHS) students now have the opportunity to get a head start on their collegiate careers thanks to a new partnership between Sunnyvale Independent School District (SISD) and the DCCCD. Beginning this semester, qualifying SHS students will have the ability to obtain college credit while simultaneously fulfilling high school graduation requirements. Students who qualify to enroll in dual credit courses at SHS will be concurrently enrolled at Eastfield College. SISD faculty members who hold a graduate degree in the related subject area and also have met the required dual-credit training will teach the courses. Classes will meet as part of the regular daily SHS schedule. The dual-credit program at the college is currently being offered in school districts across the area, including: Mesquite, Garland, Rockwall, Forney, Dallas Christian School and Bishop Lynch High School.

Eastfield College hosted its 10th Annual African-American Read-In on February 25th. The SPAR sponsored event to celebrate African-American history month was coordinated by Brynndah C. Hicks, Title III Grant program services coordinator, and Judy Schwarz, SPAR program coordinator. This year's theme was "A Celebration of Firsts." Participants were invited to share favorite literary works by African-American writers who were "first" in achievements in the fields of art, education, science, sports, medicine and politics. Oscar Passley and the college jazz ensemble provided pre-show entertainment. Schneil Dunn, continuing education program director, emceed the event and provided information on "African-American firsts" throughout the program. The college staff and students were joined by District Service Center colleagues and Samuell High School students. Also on hand was John L. Mack, local poet and motivational speaker, who asked the question "When will we see the last of the firsts?" Richmond Punch, Yale graduate and professional violinist, enlightened the audience with emotion stirring musical selections to complete the event.

Amy McDonald, marketing department, was honored last week by being awarded Volunteer of the Year for 2008 for her involvement with Keep Mesquite Beautiful (KMB). Volunteers from all different city groups came together at the Mesquite Convention Center for the City of Mesquite's annual volunteer luncheon. Amy has served on the board for three years, participating in KMB's trash bash, recycles day and much more. This year, she is serving as Chairman of the Board.

Juanita Austin, Collin County Community College Districts academic dean of developmental education, shared her life story with Eastfield College staff and students as part of Women's History Month on March 9th. Ms. Austin has overcome great adversity in her own life, and she inspired participants to discover the possibilities within themselves. She shared her life story of intention, purpose and perseverance as she rose from picking cotton and attending a two-room schoolhouse in West Tennessee

to becoming an academic dean and touring all seven continents. Her world travels have provided insight into different cultures and values that she shares with her audiences.

Mountain View College

Visually pleasing works created by both Mountain View College students and art faculty are currently displayed on campus in separate exhibits. The college art faculty exhibit is on display in the Treetop Gallery until March 20th. A reception for this exhibit was held in the gallery on Monday, March 9th. The Student Photography Exhibit is on display in the Kiva Gallery and will also run through March 20th. A special reception for this exhibit was held on Wednesday, March 4th. Both of these events are sponsored by the college Arts, Humanities/Social Science Department, and are conducted by David Kirkland, college gallery coordinator.

On Saturday, March 7th, students in the Teacher Preparation Program at Mountain View College hosted a Parent's Day workshop for parents of young children. The teacher preparation students facilitated workshops and discussions pertaining to nutrition, food safety, how to read grade reports, and communicating with teachers. Workshops were conducted in both English and Spanish.

Megan Hubbard, Mountain View College aviation student, recently received a \$500 scholarship from the Hella Flying Fezzes. Hubbard received the scholarship on Saturday, February 21st at the Cold War Air Museum in Addison, Texas. Richard Parra, the college aviation instructor, was also in attendance for the scholarship presentation. The "Flying Fezzes" are an aviation interest group whose members are all Shriners, a fraternal organization known for creating and supporting the Shriners Hospitals for Children. (See article attached.)

Dr. Paul Benson and Debbie Moreland-Nichols, Mountain View College faculty members, entertained and enlightened students and staff on March 12th during a discussion about Dan Brown's "The DaVinci Code." A number of fascinating topics and puzzling questions were addressed regarding the Knights Templar, Mary Magdalene, and the "sacred feminine." This educational exchange was sponsored by the Student Programs and Resources Office and the Arts, Humanities/Social Science Department.

El Centro College

Catherine Carolan, Echocardiology Technology Program coordinator at El Centro College, was featured on the American Society of Echocardiography website, in the Sonographers section, as the "Volunteer of the Month" for February. The featured profile was great exposure on the national stage and for the college's Adult Echo program and the new Pediatric Echo program. (See article attached.)

Christine Schubert-Logue recently attended the 2009 BAM (Blacks at Microsoft) event hosted by Microsoft in Irving, TX. This event was for high school students from all ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 150 students had opportunities to discover new technologies and participate in hands-on activities with Microsoft staff. The students were very enthusiastic about the day's activities. They had a chance to speak to several recruiters from colleges and universities. Several students expressed interest in engineering programs and technology/convergence programs. Also present was Brian Caton, adjunct instructor, who works at Microsoft Corporation and teaches Microsoft networking courses at El Centro College.

Joan Becker, Ann Powers-Prather, Deborah Smith, Carol Speyerer and June Stanley, nursing faculty attended the *Texas Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (TOADN) Conference* in Austin on February 19th

and the *Texas Community College Teachers Association* on February 20th. Joan Becker was elected to serve on the Nominating Committee of TOADN for 2009-2010.

Twenty El Centro College administrators, led by President Paul McCarthy, recently received certificates from the City of Dallas' Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), signifying successful completion of two-and-a-half days worth of CERT training. This team-training exercise is designed to familiarize volunteers on ways to protect themselves, their families and their neighbors in the event of a catastrophic disaster. Course participants also acquire the knowledge and skills needed to step in and assist CERT professionals in emergency situations. A second series will be scheduled soon for the remaining college administrators and other college volunteers.