



Dallas County Community College District

Office of the Chancellor

TO: DCCCD Board Members

FROM: Dr. Wright L. Lassiter, Jr.

DATE: July 24, 2009

RE: Weekend Memo #152

CUSTOMER SERVICE POINTERS

In the past few weeks Executive Vice Chancellor Andrew Jones has moderated two important sessions with managers and staff involved in "first-line" service. The sessions were designed to address the delivery of service in a rapidly changing environment, particularly in view of the clear indication that enrollment will continue to rise to new levels for Fall 2009.

While in Washington D.C. for a business meeting a short while ago, my host gave me a copy of a very interesting book - Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Service by Kristin Anderson and Ron Zemke. The book is published by the American Management Association and is one of five books in their KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF customer service series. The other books in the series are: Tales of Knock Your Socks Off Service; Knock Your Socks Off Answers; Managing Knock Your Socks Off Service; and Sustaining Knock Your Socks Off Service. It is an easy-read book that I was half-way through its pages by the time that my plane landed at DFW Airport on my return trip.

Although written for a corporate audience, it has practical implications for colleges and universities, especially with its focus on the "customer." It is imperative that those of us who serve in colleges and universities develop a mind-set that our students (and potential students) are truly customers.

Please ponder this opening paragraph in the book's preface. "Serving customers. The two words cover so much. Answering questions. Solving problems. Untangling corporate log jams. Fixing what's broken and finding what's lost. Soothing the irate and reassuring the timid. And time after time, performing the business equivalent of pulling a rabbit out of a hat."

The authors make the case that we are experiencing a customer service revolution. In Part One they address the fundamental principles of "Knock Your Socks

Off Service."

This is how it begins: "Delivering Knock Your Socks Off Service – the kind of service that makes a positive, lasting impression on your customers – takes more than simple courtesy. Much more. It starts with understanding what good service is from your customer's point of view. What you do, how you do it, how well it must be done, and proving you can do it again – those are the fundamentals."

They posit that it also means creating a memorable experience for every customer. It means meeting expectations and satisfying needs – and in such a way that you're seen as easy to do business with. Moreover it means that the customer, the service provider, and the organization all win.

Ponder this additional quotation: "Customers don't distinguish between you and the organization you work for. Nor should they. To your customer's way of thinking, you represent the company."

Customers don't know how things get done behind doors marked EMPLOYEES ONLY. They don't know your job description. They don't know your areas of responsibility, or what you can and cannot personally do for them. What they do know is that all of the foregoing is YOUR business, not theirs.

Whether customer's feelings about the organization are good or bad often relates clearly to what they experience with that member of the organization. Their attitude is clear: "Help me with this problem." "Tell me what to do."

Each interaction between the "customer" and the "service professional," is one moment in the chain of the "customer's" experience. If you are the one providing the service, and you get it wrong at your link in the chain, you are very likely erasing from that person's mind all the memories of good experience that he or she may have experienced up to that point. But if you get it right, you have a chance to undo all the wrongs that may have happened before that individual gets to you.

The authors make the important point that what a customer wants and need is constantly changing. The same is true of the organization and the individual employee. They offer three questions that we all should ask as they will guide one's personal-service efforts.

- 1. What do my customers want from me and my company?*
- 2. How do support areas work to provide good service for the customer?*
- 3. What are the details – the little things – that make a big difference in order to address the needs of the customer?*

The authors' pattern through the book addresses these principles:

- *Knock Your Socks Off Service is RELIABLE.*
- *Knock Your Socks Off Service is RESPONSIVE.*
- *Knock Your Socks Off Service is REASSURING.*
- *Knock Your Socks Off Service is EMPATHETIC.*
- *Knock Your Socks Off Service is TANGIBLE.*

This is a neat little book that I highly recommend as we prepare for a continuing upward surge in our enrollment this fall. The contemporary community college student is quite different from the counterpart of just five years ago. They possess a "customer" mentality and also come to us with a wide range of needs and challenges.

These customer service pointers can prove useful to all of us.

District Service Center

On July 16th, the District Service Center (DSC) employee inaugural class, joined by their supervisors and colleagues, celebrated the conclusion of a 14-session staff development program that spanned eleven (11) months. Twenty-two (22) participants received certificates of completion and commemorative coffee mugs from Ed DesPlas, executive vice chancellor, business affairs. Felix Zamora, president, Mountain View College, was the keynote speaker offering the participants and their supervisors insights to our communities, our colleges, our students, and our role in serving them all.

The celebration program included "Tales from the Front Lines" by Cossette Griffiths, program graduate, and "Voices Behind the Scenes" remarks by Pat Disbrow, manager, financial services department. On a lighthearted note, the festivities included three special participation awards; *the ATT*, *the Batman & Robin*, and *the Alka Seltzer* awards to four (4) deserving participants.

The in-house program was developed and executed under the leadership of Kate Kelley, executive HR director who designed the program to address staff needs identified by both ModernThink and Organizational Climate surveys with the goal of taking all DSC employees thru the program in the next three (3) years.

Eastfield College

Eastfield College launched an online orientation website last week. Online orientation is a part of the Title III grant initiative and was designed by Dr. Janice Jacques, director, Title III, Vivian Davis, retention services coordinator, and Brynndah Hicks-Turnbo, program services coordinator. Online orientation is aimed at extending the college's orientation program to students who are unable to attend on-campus orientation. It is a multimedia site designed to engage and educate new students about all that the college has to offer. It does not eliminate the need for in-person orientation but will enable the college to reach a larger number of incoming students each term while giving them up-to-date and accurate information they need in order to be successful in their academic endeavors.

"Blast of Brass" (BoB) was held last week in Eastfield College performance hall and various other music rooms. Students partook in daily recitals and master classes performed by our international featured artist, guest artists, and clinicians during BoB. They also rehearsed and performed in individual instrument ensembles such as trumpet choir, trombone choir, horn choir, and

tuba/euphonium ensemble, along with large and small mixed brass ensembles. We also offered a choice ensemble class; the students auditioned to participate in an ensemble in which they select the musicians, music, and rehearse by themselves. On Friday they auditioned as an ensemble and the winner was featured at the Friday evening professional concert. On the last day of the conference, the students performed their student recital. Fifty-six (56) students from around the community (middle, high school and early college) participated in the 2009 Blast of Brass.

The Eastfield College Office of Student Life took twelve (12) students on a field trip to Lake Ray Hubbard. Students participated in a team building exercise aboard the Seawolf. The 49 foot catamaran sailboat was built by Scott Self, former Rockwall mayor, and sails 30 times a week. Students helped with pulling up the main sail and jib and were allowed to steer the boat on the sunset cruise. Mr. Self also discussed the science of sailing.

Eastfield College will host the *Keepin' It Real Youth Empowerment Summit* on Saturday, August 1st, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Dr. Wright Lassiter, chancellor, will provide the morning welcome address, followed by workshops and entertainment planned for the attendees. We expect 450 young people (12-18 years) from all over Dallas County to attend. *Keepin' It Real Youth Empowerment Conference* is hosted by *Teen Graffiti Magazine* & Teens Reaching Teens, Inc. The DCCCD and Eastfield College are this year's host sponsors. The conference is designed to empower and produce a future crop of leaders equipped both personally and professionally to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Mountain View College

Mountain View College welcomed local chamber presidents and economic development directors on Wednesday, July 22nd, for tours of the economic development building which is currently entering its final phases of construction on the east side of campus. Claralyn Jefferson, director of community programs within the college division of business services, invited the group in an effort to gather input about the college's business development center, which will be housed in the new facility. The group's input will help determine how the college will proceed in its continued service to business and industry entities throughout north Texas in the years to come. The event was facilitated by Jim Reid, president of Momentum Texas Inc., and chairman of the Mayors Southern Dallas Task Force Small Business Development committee.

The Continuing Education Office at Mountain View College has catered to more than 425 enrollees for swim classes this summer. Classes are made up of more than 100 enrollees ages 3-under, more than 250 youth swimmers ages 6-over, and more than 65 enrollees in advanced or adult classes. All classes are taught by highly-qualified individuals under the guidance of lead instructor Rebecca Bellamy.

Mountain View College hosted visitors from the Grand Prairie Independent School District (GPISD) on Wednesday, July 22nd, for a meeting regarding "Assess for Success." Assess for Success is a collaborative DCCCD Retention grant submitted by the college and North Lake College to work with the GPISD to deliver the Accuplacer test to its junior and senior students. Sandra De La Cruz, Mike Wallace, Dr. Marva Dixon, and Mr. Ricky Mitchell, GPISD administrators were among those in attendance.

Rosa Rosales, Mountain View College program coordinator, continuing education, recently completed her graduate studies at the University of North Texas. Rosales, who has been employed at the college for 12 years and is a former student, received an MS in Library Science.

Brookhaven College

Dancers' Theatre is in final rehearsals for their "Summer Dance Festival" (SDF) at Brookhaven College. With choreography by students and special guest performances by Shelley Padilla, Company Mayes and the Repertory Dance Theatre of Texas, the SDF presents a unique outlet for the dance students in the college's dance department. In addition, the performance is free and takes place outdoors where guests can bring a lawn chair or blanket and relax in the International Courtyard. Performances are July 31st and August 1st-2nd at 8:30 p.m. The festival is coordinated by Key Meersman, professor of dance.

With a little help from NASA, Brookhaven College has celebrated the anniversary of man's first steps on the moon. On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin took the first human steps on the surface of the moon. To celebrate the event, on July 22nd at 8:00 p.m., Chaz Hafey, physics and astronomy learning lab coordinator at the college, offered a presentation "40 Years Ago We First Set Foot Upon the Moon." Hafey had lunar rock samples at hand for the presentation and shared them with students in the geology labs on July 20th. Students could have their photos taken with the moon rocks and were able to use microscopes for close-up views of these priceless specimens.

Members of the Outreach Department at Brookhaven College have been spending a large part of this summer working with a variety of nonprofit agencies to reach high school students and area adults. Julie Hanson, outreach and recruitment coordinator, met with 75 high school students currently in foster care to discuss college and financial aid options through an event at the Refuge House. She and Monica Pauken, outreach and recruitment coordinator also had an opportunity to talk to more than 100 high school students and their mentors at a college fair for Girls, Inc. In collaboration with Texas Woman's University, 15 girls from Girls, Inc. will be visiting the college to take a tour and to hear about community college opportunities. In addition to their work with nonprofits, Julie and Greg Rife, outreach and recruitment coordinators will be attending an education fair for more than 1,500 JP Morgan Chase employees in the Lewisville area.

Rodger Bennett, interim vice president of instruction along with 10 other district faculty and administrators led by Dr. Andrew C. Jones, vice chancellor of educational affairs, and Dr. Sharon L. Blackman, senior associate vice chancellor, attended the Institute for Higher Education Policy's Summer Academy in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, July 21st-23rd. This year's emphasis at the Academy was "Cultivating Student Access & Success: Investing in First-Generation Student Achievement." Attendees focused on strategies and best practices to increase college access and success for first-generation students. The Summer Academy also addressed first-generation student issues through daily activities that will help institutional teams integrate best practices in student learning, use of data to develop cultures of evidence, and developing strategies to sustain campus change and build buy-in.

DCCCD Campus High Schools

On Monday, August 22nd, members of the Texas High School Project, one of the co-founders of the **Early College High School at Mountain View College, (ECHS)** will host a professional development meeting on campus. The objective of the meeting will be to further develop and define collaborative efforts and objectives between the Texas High School Project, the ECHS, and Mountain View College.

Richland Collegiate High School (RCHS) incoming juniors will have the advantage of participating in a unique mathematics class the Richland College Mathematics department has designed for them this fall. Dr. Celeste Hernandez, associate dean, reviewed the Accuplacer scores of 18 new RCHS students who scored very high in college level math potential, and she worked with RCHS Donna Walker, deputy superintendent and Dr. Kristyn Edney, principal, to develop a combination math class offering

both college algebra and trigonometry. This class is intended to help close the gap for students with exceptional test scores who want to be challenged more in their first semester. These 18 students will be able to take upper level physics classes by meeting their math requirement earlier and will earn additional transferable course work toward upper-level mathematics, science, and engineering bachelor degree plans at four-year institutions.

North Lake College

Our students – Students in the North Lake College TRiO Upward Bound program were honored at the *10th Annual Student Recognition Ceremony* on Thursday, July 23rd. Approximately 30 high school students from Irving High School, Nimitz High School, Irving Academy and MacArthur High School were present during the ceremony to receive recognition for completing their year with the TRiO Upward Bound program. To receive recognition, students participated in after school tutoring, college readiness courses, community service activities and the summer enrichment program. Guy Melton, TRiO director, and Charlotte Brown, student services specialist, presented the awards.

Our community – On July 22nd, Rene' Castilla, executive dean, North Lake College South Campus (NLCSC) and Keith Murray, director business resource center were interviewed by Irving Community Television on the NLCSC for the program called “InVision Irving.” The program profiles unique businesses in Irving. The focus of the discussion was the college’s Business Resource Center, which represents a partnership between the college and the Greater Irving Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce. The center provides support and training for local small-business owners and entrepreneurs. The program will air in August.

Richland College

Sustainable Community Building – “Social equity and justice”-The U.S. Department of State included Richland College as a tour stop for the International Visitor Project for Tunisia. The 14 Tunisian visitors were invited to the United States under the auspices of the Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program with specific objectives to meet American educators involved in English language teaching and second language acquisition and experience class observations, lesson planning, and curriculum design training. The visitors observed a Richland College American English and Culture Institute (AECI) class, engaged with AECI students in a learning activity, visited the college’s ESOL lab, and enjoyed a campus tour. The visitors expressed how impressed they were by the rich cultural diversity of the college’s students and employees.

Student Success – Congratulations to David Cockrum and Majid Hazby, Richland College Human Development (HD) 2315 students who have been awarded transfer scholarships to SMU, providing them full tuition for five semesters. As part of their human development learning experience, they were involved in service learning activities at the Family Gateway. Their HD class met regularly at the downtown homeless family shelter, and the experience provided them a context for becoming actively involved in building sustainable local and world community.

Employee Success – The Bath House Cultural Center (BHCC) presents *Art Beyond the Stage*, an art exhibition featuring a collection of renderings, costumes, art, and other theater objects created in recent years by regional designers for Dallas theatrical productions. The exhibition includes the work of Jennifer Owen, Richland College coordinator of technical theatre services and continues at the BHCC through August 8th.

Institutional Effectiveness – Bao Huynh, Richland College director of institutional research, recently presented a staff development session, *Process Mapping for Continuous Improvement*, to the District dual credit staff. The presentation highlighted the benefits of process mapping, such as helping staff to

streamline work processes, promoting a deeper understanding of those processes, and building group consensus. He shared examples of tools the college uses to map key institutional and departmental processes.

Cedar Valley College

Student Success – Several staff members from Cedar Valley College attended the Institute of Higher Education Policy (IOHEP) Summer Academy on “Investing in First-Generation Student Achievement” July 19th-23rd, in Ft. Lauderdale, Fl. The mission of the IOHEP is to increase access and success in postsecondary education around the world through unique research and innovative programs that inform key decision makers who shape public policy and support economic and social development. The Summer Academy targeted strategies and best practices to increase college access and success for first-generation students. Anna Mays and Judy Cotton attended the conference representing the college.

Other members from Cedar Valley College spent this past week at the Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation. The three day institute was held to discuss successful assessment practices and to emphasize quality enhancement initiatives related to improving student learning. In addition to plenary sessions, the institute featured campus-based programs of a variety of institutions, small group discussions, and frequent networking opportunities. The Institute was held in Houston, Texas. Conference participants representing the college were: Dr. Christina Tomczack, Dr. Tommy Thompson, Dr. Elsie Burnett, Ginnette Serrano, and Grenna Rollings.

El Centro College

El Centro College received the following notification from SACS: The Commission on Colleges reviewed the institution’s monitoring report following the submission of a fifth-year interim report in December 2008. No additional report was required.

Rusty Allred with Mustang Technology Group reports that Fabian Estrada, El Centro College student is working with senior engineer Jim Evans of Mustang this summer and learning a lot about mechanical engineering on his paid internship. Fabian and Juan Sifuentes from Cedar Valley College are the first two interns and scholarship recipients of the Coalition for the Advancement of Students in Engineering (CASE), a collaborative with El Centro College, Cedar Valley College, The University of Texas at Dallas, and Mustang Technology Group. The coalition was formed last year to maximize student success in pursuit of engineering degrees. Mr. Allred also announced that Mustang is increasing their support for scholarships for El Centro College and Cedar Valley College students to \$10,000.

You’re invited. El Centro College’s new West Campus (ECCWC) at 3330 North Hampton Road is holding an open house on August 1st between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 12 noon. Ana-Maria Naro, West Campus director, reports that the campus will have on-site registration with counselors and financial aid representatives ready to assist you. We will also have informational workshops to get you started towards your educational goals. The ECCWC is located in the heart of West Dallas, in close vicinity of downtown Dallas and near three major highways. This satellite educational center offers a variety of courses for students pursuing a degree or seeking to improve workforce skills through continuing education.

On Thursday, July 23rd, El Centro College employees enjoyed 15 minutes of fame, a special series of events during the year designed to celebrate the role our employees in seeing to it that our college works effectively to ensure student success. Employees were invited to the college’s green space along Main Street at their convenience to join in a beach party for 15 minutes between 12:30 p.m.-2:00 p.m. On the program: Fun, hot dogs, popcorn, lemonade, ice cream, summertime music. Did we mention

FUN? The innovator and coordinator of this event is our CQIN committee composed of 10 employees selected to work together to come up with practical suggestions about how to encourage innovation in all of the college's work groups. Another initiative of the group is improving the way the college welcomes and orients new employees.