



Dallas County Community College District

Office of the Chancellor

TO: DCCCD Board Members

FROM: Dr. Wright L. Lassiter, Jr.

DATE: June 5, 2009

RE: Weekend Memo #146

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE

When the current environment is carefully examined, we all can agree that we all can use something that could give us a little peace and contentment. I happen to believe that music can be that calming, soothing and sometimes healing balm.

Most adults my age can recall the majestic opening scene when Maria bursts forth into song - "The hills are alive, with the sound of music!"

"The Sound of Music" by William Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein opened on stage in New York in 1959 and ran for thousands of performances. Hollywood adapted it for film in 1965, with Julie Andrews as Maria. An instant success, it won five Academy awards, including Best Picture, and has come to be recognized as the most popular movie-musical of all time.

Music has the power to uplift, inspire and motivate. If you have a song in your heart, like Maria, it's magnificent, for music has the potential to be not only relaxing and enjoyable, but a genuine source of blessing and relief.

According to experts, music has definite therapeutic and recuperative power, for regardless of age, nationality or problem, few are immune to the benefits of music. We all react differently to various forms and types of music: instrumental, vocal, classical, country, rock, jazz, gospel, even hip-hop and heavy-metal. Music reaches deep inside to touch our emotional and spiritual center.

Babies and children respond to music, as do those with emotional difficulties. Adults under stress and older people fearful of the future often benefit from the soothing, melodic lines of music. Music can break down racial barriers ("We Shall Overcome") often affecting people who might otherwise not be reached. Music can stir the emotions and be instrumental in fostering an atmosphere of love and care.

We live in a world of almost universal instability. International political situations are frightening. Economic displacement in the nation and on the world scene causes us to wonder what tomorrow holds for us. In our own personal sphere, we have difficulties: broken marriages, rebellious children, dying parents, job insecurities. How do we cope? What are the answers? Who really cares?

I normally do not use this column to delve into the spiritual realm, but I will venture there on this occasion ever so briefly. In Psalm 40:1-3, there are these words that I have abstracted: "I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry." In those verses He promises a song for those who trust in Him. He promises a new, lingering melody, coming from within, from the center of one's soul. An even more meaningful word can be found in Psalm 121:1-4.

Are we alive with the sound of music in our hearts? Let the hills come alive today and forever with timeless music. Just a few words for each of our contemplative moments during these challenging, tenuous and uncertain times that we find ourselves in.

North Lake College

Our employees – North Lake College was recognized with two bronze Successful Transfer Enhancement Programs (STEP) awards from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board during its *Transfer Success* conference held on May 22nd. The college was recognized in the categories of academic support services and internal collaboration. The college's *Transfer Student Community in eCampus* program, which disseminates transfer information to students in a timely, effective manner, and its *Graduate Transfer Survey* program, which uses Survey Monkey to gather information from graduating students in an easier, more precise manner, were the programs highlighted at the conference. More than 1,000 college and university representatives were in attendance. Dr. Linda Glasscock was the co-facilitator for the Dallas region, together with Dr. Beverly Bower from the University of North Texas, and was pleased to announce the statewide recipients of the STEP awards.

Our community – On May 12th, North Lake College hosted 13 seniors in the Allied Health Career cluster at the Academy of Irving ISD to learn more about the college's nursing program. Diana Reding, nursing instructor, and Christie Keith, health careers advisor, provided the students with program information and a tour of the skills lab. Lynda Edward also provided general college and financial aid information to the students.

Brookhaven College

The pilot course for the newly developed SMART Program at Brookhaven College will have 68 students as Summer I courses begin. The SMART Program, which stands for Summer Math And Reading Together, was one of the college's retention initiatives that received grant funding from the district. Recruitment for this program, which combines developmental math and developmental reading programs into a single course, focuses heavily on enrollment from students who were graduating from Thomas Jefferson High School. The program is free, including textbooks and instructional support, and is structured to allow students who complete the program this summer to begin their fall semester with college-level math and reading skills. Czarina Reyes, Ph.D., math professor, and Monique Mannering, communications professor, are guiding the program.

Rodger Bennett, interim vice president for instruction, Teri Walker, Ph.D., dean of planning, research and institutional effectiveness, and Oscar Lopez, vice president of student development, traveled to Kilgore College. They met with a group of Kilgore staff to discuss their college's recently completed SACS reaffirmation process. The group shared their advice on the process used, how they organized the teams, and what they learned from the experience.

Kendra Valienti, executive dean of communications, and Rodger Bennett, interim vice president for instruction, were co-presenters at the *NISOD 31st Annual International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence*, May 24-27th in Austin. Their presentation topic was "Creating Collaborative Teaching and Learning Environments." The presentation reflected a 2008-09 teaching and learning endeavor between the College School of the Arts, the Physical Education, Athletics and Nutrition departments, and the Communications Division. This endeavor resulted in faculty from different divisions sharing and reviewing best teaching practices. Faculty members from each division paired up with a faculty member from another division to share and review their best teaching practices. The presentation demonstrated how creating a collaborative environment could develop continuous improvement teaching initiatives.

Quality Matters™ (QM) has recognized Thomas Anderson's online course "Major World Religions." Anderson is assistant to the vice president for instruction at Brookhaven College and an adjunct professor of religion. The QM™ program is a faculty-centered, peer course review quality assurance process, vetted by faculty experts. The goals of the program are to increase student retention, learning and satisfaction for online courses by implementing better course design. The college has continued efforts for the past few years to increase training opportunities for online instructors and to encourage instructors to seek recognition from QM. To date only three others at Brookhaven College previously have earned this recognition for online course development, Marie Maness, Ph.D., nutrition professor; Darise Error, Ph.D., drama professor; and Bill Hammerschlag, Ph.D., computer information technology professor.

DCCCD Campus High Schools

The Ellison Miles Geotechnology Institute was the host site for a retirement reception for Adriana Gomez, charter principal of the Carrollton-Farmers Branch **Early College High School at Brookhaven College (ECHS)**. As is the tradition, since the ECHS inception, this was a collaborative effort. The reception was attended by CFBISD and Brookhaven College employees, and community members. The farewell reception celebrated her years of service to education.

The **Early College High School at Brookhaven College** conducted its spring awards ceremony June 4th. During the event, students were recognized for academic excellence, leadership and service to others. Special invitations to an honors reception, hosted by Richard McCrary, Ed.D., interim president, were presented to 21 students who have a grade point average of 3.0 or better plus college credits ranging from 18 to 35 credits.

The **Richland Collegiate High School (RCHS)** Mentor Program is starting its second year with enormous support from current students. More than 40 RCHS rising seniors have applied to be mentors for the incoming RCHS class, with more applicants continuing to sign up daily. The volunteer senior mentors will plan and host the parent and student orientation Duck Camps scheduled for early August.

The Middle College High School at El Centro College celebrated its 18th commencement exercises on May 30th. A total of fifty students graduated. Thirteen graduates were members of Phi

Theta Kappa. All students graduated with at least 10 hours of college credit. Students earned almost 1500 college credit hours, an average of 29 hours each. Seventeen students had earned 30 hours or more and six of those students had already received their Associates degrees at El Centro College's graduation on May 3rd.

On Monday, June 1st, the **Middle College High School at El Centro College** welcomed its new principal, Mr. Eric Markinson. Mr. Markinson comes from Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth, where he was assistant principal for academics. Prior to coming to Texas, he was an administrator in public schools in Eugene and Portland, Oregon.

A special awards ceremony was held for students in grades 9-11 of the **Early College High School at Mountain View College** on May 28th. More than 10 categories of special recognition were awarded for each grade classification. Recipients of the most coveted of those awards, the outstanding student awards for each class, were as follows: Roland Reising and Alondra Rangel, freshmen; Valentin Ortiz and Tania Mata, sophomores; and Claudia Rodriguez, junior.

Richland College

Sustainable Community Building – “Social equity and justice” – Richland College hosted the Hispanic Women’s Network of Texas (HWNT) as its 2008-09 Education Seminar Series culminated in a scholarship and appreciation reception on May 27th. HWNT representatives expressed their gratitude to DISD, area counselors, and higher education institutions for partnering in the program. Luz Villegas, director of community programs, accepted a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the college for hosting HWNT high school girls last fall. Also during the reception, Kimberly Slade, Richland Collegiate High School senior, was presented one of three HWNT scholarships awarded to seminar participants. She will receive \$1,500 per year for four years, an amount also being matched by TWU.

Student Success – Alex Gonzalez, a Richland College 2006 graduate, recently informed his Richland College dual credit mentor, Bonnie Hueston, dean of educational transitions, he graduated from SMU in May with a bachelor’s degree in computer engineering and will begin his career this month as a systems engineer with Lockheed Martin in Washington, D.C. He credits his student learning success in SMU’s computer engineering program to his Richland College’s dual credit experience, the college computer networking studies, and Dean Hueston’s mentoring.

Employee Success – Audra Barrett, dean of distance learning, Zarina Blankenbaker, acting chief academic officer, and Judith Cline, adjunct speech instructor, presented a special session at the *National Institute for Staff & Organizational Development Conference*, May 24-29th, in Austin. Their presentation, *Bridge to Student Success: Supporting Adjunct Faculty*, showcased how Richland College recruits, supports, and integrates adjunct faculty to accomplish its “Four Strategic Planning Priorities for Student Learning--Response to Community, Student Success, Employee Success, and Institutional Effectiveness.” Using cooperative learning skills, a core competency for faculty professional development, they shared strategies on how to acquaint adjunct faculty with the college culture, provide professional development, and create a climate that focuses on student learning.

Institutional Effectiveness – Fonda Vera, Richland College dean of research and planning, participated in two presentations, “Using Baldrige Discipline to Build a Culture of Continuous Improvement” and “Responsible Risk-Taking: A Baldrige-Inspired Approach,” during the *Kentucky Center for Performance Excellence Conference* on June 4th in Frankfort, Kentucky. Dean Vera was invited to speak along with representatives from three other Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipient organizations, The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, Mercy Health System, and PRO-TEC Coating Company.

Cedar Valley College

Student Success – Cedar Valley College in partnership with the City of Dallas will host WRITE – Workforce, Readiness, Internship, Training, Experience – a summer youth training project beginning this month. Over 500 students will have the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge to be successful in the workplace. As part of the stimulus package, students will be placed in area businesses for employment. Each Friday, those students will attend a full day of training to learn the “soft skills” that are necessary for the work environment.

Community Development – Cedar Valley College, along with various community organizations, will participate in the annual *Best Southwest Juneteenth Celebration* on Saturday, June 13th from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at the Community Park, located at 1700 Veterans Memorial Parkway. The schedule for the event includes free helicopter rides, bounce houses and face painting for the kids as well as a full schedule of entertainment. In addition, there is also a basketball tournament scheduled. For more information about the event, contact the City of Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department at 972.218.1300.

The Family Music Theater will present *West Side Story* on June 19-21st and June 26-28th. The musical is based on the Shakespeare’s classic tale of Romeo and Juliet. Although set in the 50’s in New York City, the epic tale of love amid the clash of gang violence and rivalries is relevant today. Performances are Friday and Saturday nights beginning at 7:30 p.m. with Saturday matinee performances beginning at 1:30 p.m. and Sunday matinee performances at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call 972.860.7444, ext. 9302.

El Centro College

On May 26th, two groups of sophomore students from the Academy of Irving ISD paid a visit to the North Lake College Nursing Department. Christie Keith, senior academic advisor for nursing and allied health, gave a presentation to both groups. Her presentation revolved around goal-setting, the importance of education beyond high school, and the nursing program. Sherry Glick, skills lab coordinator, then took the groups on a tour of one of the skills-labs. Sherry talked about different procedures and expectations that take place in the labs. She also introduced students to the “SimMan,” which is a mannequin who serves as a patient and is programmed via computer to respond in different ways. “SimMan” is a tool that is helpful in evaluating the clinical and decision-making skills of nursing students.

The May 31st issue of the *Dallas Morning News* special supplement spotlighted the many advances that have been accomplished by Texas Health Resources (THR) hospitals and medical staffs. El Centro College has been a major contributor to the success of THR and its member hospitals. The college partners with THR to provide on-site education in associate degree nursing for their selected employees. The college accepts 40 students each semester that THR identifies as meeting both the college and THR’s criteria to be enrolled in the Associate Degree Nursing Program. This partnership began in 2003 and has resulted in over 150 nurses being educated for the THR system. The college faculty travel to the THR education center to deliver lectures via their system-wide conferencing studio. In addition, El Centro College has provided technical support as it relates to testing and other on-line services. THR has approached the college to duplicate these efforts in selected allied health programs as well. (See article attached.)

Jessie Beecham, nursing faculty, received a seed award for Nursing Clinical Experience for at Risk Students. This will enable at risk clinical students to attend extra clinical classes during the summer, winter mester and May mester to increase their success. The collaborating college will be North Lake College.

Joe Williams, CE marketing specialist, was notified that the back cover of the *El Centro College Summer 2009 Schedule* was selected to be featured in the Learning Resources Network (LERN) Club Brochure Gallery. LERN offers members the opportunity to see exemplary practices in brochure design and included the Lean Institute cover designed by Joe Williams as an exemplary design.

Mountain View College

Mountain View College was well represented at the *National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence* from May 24-27th in Austin. Those who gave presentations at the event included Dr. Janice Franklin, professor, humanities and music; Liz Nichols, interim dean, arts, humanities/social sciences; Dr. Matilda Saenz, vice president of instruction; and Dr. Kizuwanda Grant, executive dean of communications and teacher education. The closing session of the conference paid tribute to all 2009 Excellence Award recipients, including those from the college.

A Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Infrastructure Team meeting was held at Mountain View College on May 27th. The purpose of the interdepartmental meeting was to work collaboratively to establish viable career pathways for STEM students at the college. The event was coordinated by Dr. Karen Valencia, executive dean of science, allied health and physical education.

Mountain View College's Claralyn Jefferson, director of community programs, and Gerald Andrews, coordinator for contract training, recently attended a Lancaster Chamber of Commerce membership luncheon at the Lancaster Recreation Center. As part of the luncheon, Jefferson and Andrews also heard a presentation by keynote speaker Craig Morgan, regional manager of economic development for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway.

Seven students at Mountain View College recently received recognition for research they contributed to the Killer Asteroid Project, a world-wide NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) program operated by the Astronomical Research Institute (ARI) located in Charleston, Illinois. The students contributed by downloading images taken by powerful telescopes at ARI, taking measurements of near-Earth objects that might pose a potential impact hazard to our planet, and reporting those findings electronically to International Astronomical Search Collaboration personnel at Hardin Simmons University. During the spring 2009 semester, the college students were credited with nine significant findings of near-earth objects. Though there were more than 150 schools from 13 countries participating in the project during the previous academic year, Mountain View College was the only college in Texas which participated during the spring 2009 semester. Some educational institutions participate just once, and are then replaced by others waiting to join. Physics students at the college were fortunate enough to participate in both the fall 2008 and spring 2009 semesters, making 20 total discoveries and finding three near-earth objects that were previously unknown, and unnamed.

Eastfield College

Terrance Wickman, longtime Eastfield College developmental math adjunct faculty, was recently awarded the Legion of Merit, the prestigious award for meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements. The decoration is issued both to U.S. military personnel and to military and political figures of foreign governments. The award is one of only six U.S. decorations to be issued as a neck order (the others being the Medal of Honor, Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor, 9/11 Heroes Medal of Honor, Chaplain's Medal for Heroism and the Presidential Medal of Freedom) and the only U.S. decoration which may be issued in award degrees. The Legion of Merit is sixth in the order of precedence of U.S. military decorations, and is worn after the Defense Superior Service Medal

and before the Distinguished Flying Cross. Colonel Wickman has served in the U.S. Army Reserve for 36 years, including his current assignment as the Chief of Staff for the 807th Medical Command stationed out of Seagoville. Throughout his career, Wickman has consistently distinguished himself in a variety of challenging positions including Battalion Commander, Medical Center Executive Officer and Medical Command Chief of Staff. His performance of duty represents exemplary achievement in the finest traditions of the U.S. Army.

Twenty members of the Eastfield College Science Club and four advisors traveled to Washington, D.C., May 25-30th, for a “STEM in Action” educational field trip. The students held fundraising events to earn part of the cost of the travel. The group also received support from the college’s National Science Foundation (NSF) STEP grant, making this experience possible. The itinerary included visits to the national monuments, memorials, Air & Space Museum, Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Zoo. In addition to seeing the exhibits, the group attended a lecture on space exploration and witnessed archaeological research in the museums. A highlight for the team was their tour of the National Science Foundation where they met the NSF program officer for the college grant. Dr. Eileen Lewis, P.O., and Dr. Susan Hixson, STEP director, hosted the tour. Students personally expressed their gratitude for the scholarships and support NSF has provided for their education. NSF staff advised students of careers with the National Science Foundation. Students and advisors stayed at the American University (AU) where they experienced the residential environment and learned of AU’s programs. Advisors included Dr. Carl Knight and Rik Post, biology professors, Janet Foreman, student life advisor, and Norma Mendoza, NSF-STEP grant information specialist.

Patrick Patterson, Eastfield College criminal justice faculty and recent graduate of the FBI Citizens Academy, visited the FBI Training Center in Quantico, VA, and the FBI Headquarters in Washington, DC, May 12-15th. Sponsored by the FBI Division in Dallas, the Quantico tour included an overview of the training division and tours of the Academy and Tactical Firearms Training Center, FBI Crime Laboratory, Hogan’s Alley, and an overview of the TEVOC (Tactical Emergency Vehicle Operations Center) driving program. Patterson also was invited to attend the 21st Annual Candlelight Vigil at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC. At the FBI headquarters, along with several presentations by CIA and FBI Special Agents, Patterson met FBI Director Robert Mueller, III. The DC trip also included a tour of Washington’s newest museum, The Newseum, which featured a special exhibit of the history of the FBI entitled “G-Men and Journalists; Top News Stories of the FBI’s First Century.” The exhibit included over 200 artifacts, including the Unabomber’s cabin. J. Edgar Hoover’s desk, Patty Hearst’s coat and gun, and the electric chair that killed the Lindberg baby kidnapper.

Eastfield College was acknowledged at Garland ISD’s BEST (Business Educators Students Together) Partners in Education annual luncheon on May 12th. Paul Mayer, Garland Chamber CEO, Ron Jones, Mayor of Garland, and Dr. Steve Mittelstet, Richland College president, recognized Eastfield College, Richland College and the DCCCD’s contributions to the school district. Dr. Jean Conway, interim president, and Sharon Cook, communications director, represented the college.