

A Call to Action!

Speech to Delta Faculty and Staff

August 24, 2010

Dr. Jean Goodnow

Good morning and welcome to fall semester 2010. I hope that you had some quality time to refresh and reenergize this summer. We have an exciting Learning Days Program planned for you this week. Each day focuses on a specific topic area of interest to faculty and staff. Today we will focus on the state of our college. Tomorrow we will focus on service learning, and Thursday developmental education will be highlighted.

I love to begin my state of the college reports with good news and this year is no exception.

Recently, I learned that Delta College was the only two-year College to receive the Michigan Campus Compact Pay It Forward Grant in Service Learning. This is the largest service learning grant that Delta College has ever received, and I am very proud of our grant writing team of:

Barb Handley-Miller,

Lisa Lawrason,

Jeff Dykhuizen,

Denise Hill,

Teresa Stitt,

Michelle White,

Gordie Stryker, And

Nancy Vader McCormick.

Let's celebrate and give these wonderful people a round of applause. (Applause)

Over the last several months Delta College, like many other of the State's Community Colleges, Universities, and K-12 Systems, has experienced major personnel changes.

The State, like the Godfather of movie fame, has made an offer that many could not refuse. Some of our most senior faculty and staff retired this summer, and I am sure you join me in congratulating them and wishing our retirees a

wonderful future. I thank them all for what they did to make Delta one of America's Leading Community Colleges.

To date we have accepted over 50 resignations from all areas of our campus. This significant change in College personnel could weigh heavily on our ability to provide a quality learning experience for our student body and the community we serve.

However this overnight change in personnel must be met by every employee as an opportunity to grow and build upon what was developed by those who came before us.

This dramatic change in the make up of our College's employee base also becomes an opportunity for all of us to recommit to our College's Mission, Vision, and Values.

The talent base from our new employees will provide an opportunity for improved team building, cross training and a stronger future. And, as always, will be a launching pad for the success of all students seeking to achieve their goals.

Not all of our students have an equal talent, but every one of them should have an equal opportunity to develop their talents.

Last year I spoke of the serious threat that was facing us because of the economy. I spoke to you of the possible drop in State financial support, property tax, and the impact of the overall recession on our College's operation.

While most of these predictions have come true, we as a College have faced these challenges with vigor, agility, and confidence.

Responding to these dramatic budgetary realities, our College created a budget for the 2011 academic year in an inclusive and participatory manner. Led by our College's Budget Cabinet (a representative group of employees from all areas of the campus) future

expenditures were carefully weighed and measured against our strategic initiatives and vision.

Our Board of Trustees wisely agreed to a modest raise in tuition, and with the input from all sectors of the campus, we were able to cut \$1.3 million from our operating budget to meet the challenges of this new academic year. Many of these budget cutting ideas came from those of you who submitted creative budget saving recommendations to our newly established “Suggestion Boxes” around campus.

(PAUSE)

Approximately one year ago, while speaking in Michigan, President Obama challenged Community Colleges to

launch programs designed to dramatically raise graduation rates and produce graduates who are ready for the workplace or for a transfer to a four-year school.

All of the grants we have recently received, collaborative programs that we have joined within our state and nation, and technologies we have implemented help Delta to respond positively to President Obama's challenge.

The overriding message to you and all of our colleagues in Community Colleges comes down to this "Call To Action": We must commit and pledge to promote the development and implementation of policies, practices, and institutional

cultures that will produce 50 percent more students with **high quality** degrees and certificates by 2020, while at the same time increasing **student access** to a quality educational experience. I am asking every Delta College employee to examine your current practices in order to identify ways to help students understand the added value a degree or certification will make in helping them reach their goals. This must be done while firmly holding to our Delta value of excellence.

Earlier this month, I attended a community meeting here on campus. At this meeting a Delta graduate spoke to the group about his journey to success. I was so excited about his message that I want to share with each of you his inspiring story.

[Video – Joe Hernandez]

Joe Hernandez's story is wonderful. It certainly is true that sometimes we all need help in finding our way. Isn't it good to hear about the impact that we as members of the Delta family can make in helping our students find their way to success.

This commitment is not easy and there are many issues and questions that rise out of this "Call to Action", however, as American Author Napoleon Hill once wrote, **"The world has the habit of making room for the people whose actions show that they know where they are going."**

I believe that with our culture of shared governance and inclusion, we will be able to meet this Call-To-Action.

I look forward to having further discussions and dialogue over this academic year.

Meanwhile, Delta College has seen, over the last couple of years, record growth in our student enrollment and graduates.

In order to meet the needs of these growing numbers of students, Delta has recently applied and won significant Federal grants and area foundation support.

Our success in winning a Federal Title III Grant helps Delta College expand our capacity to serve academically

challenged students by providing funds to improve and strengthen our academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability.

A core objective of this year's grant was to strengthen student service programs designed to improve academic success, including innovative courses designed to help retain students and move the students rapidly into core courses and through program completion.

Under the direction of Vice President of Student and Educational Services, Trevor Kubatzke and Dean Margaret Mosqueda, we have added Brigit Dyer to our student service team to lead our retention efforts.

In addition, the on-going work of our new Student Engagement Office under the direction of Casey Cornelius has brought new and innovative ways to improve on student campus life. Students' engagement in campus life has a direct and positive effect on their college experience.

In his theory of student involvement, Alexander Astin, Professor Emeritus of Higher Education and Organizational Change, at UCLA, states that (Quote) "the greater the student's involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development". (Unquote)

According to the Community College Survey of Student Engagement's 2009 Executive Summary, "colleges can strengthen student engagement by making outside-the-classroom engagement inescapable." The Office of Student Engagement is committed to creating an involved and engaged campus community at Delta College.

In the area of community grants, we recently were awarded two major gifts from two of our Community Foundations.

Under construction now in Broadcasting is a new \$750,000 TV studio made possible through a generous gift from Saginaw's Frank N. Andersen Foundation.

And, this spring, Delta College learned that it would be receiving a check for over $\frac{3}{4}$ of million dollars from the Harvey Randall Wickes Foundation of Saginaw in support of training. The Wickes Foundation gift supports three special projects:

- First is the gift of **\$215,000 for Medical Simulation Expansion**, which allows for the purchase of four additional simulated manikins and upgrade another for use in its health teaching classrooms.

- Second, is the gift of **\$200,000 for a Wind Turbine Engine**, which will allow Delta College to acquire and ship a used wind turbine engine to Delta.

Acquiring and installing this training equipment will enhance learning for the current 56 students in the

Wind Technology program. Demand for wind energy is expected to grow dramatically within the next 5 years.

And,

- Third a **\$341,000 gift for an Alternative Energy Integrated Systems Center**. This will involve repurposing of open, flexible space within Delta's Technical, Trades & Manufacturing wing to include the industrial wind turbine, engine repair, safety climb wall, and other elements of cross-functional training to allow for creative and innovative curriculum delivery.

When confirming the gift, Harvey Randall Wickes Foundation President, Hugo “Ted” Braun, Jr., noted the role Delta College plays in our community. He said, “Our current grant to Delta College is being made with a focus on assisting curriculums which have expanding need and high job training and retraining opportunities,” he continued, “Healthcare and Alternative Energy are growing programs at Delta, which are responsive to the needs of our region’s local employers. There are excellent prospects for future jobs in these areas”, stated Mr. Braun.

Delta’s goal is to make sure that the education that we provide to our students matches these community needs.

Other grant initiatives are being pursued to help in refilling essential positions and to help us refocus our resources to meet the ever changing future.

With all of this relatively good news, it may seem odd that we must begin to contemplate the inevitable shortfall of college-educated workers in the near future.

The demand for college educated workers has more than doubled since the early 1970s. The September edition of the Community College Journal reports that within the next decade 63% of all jobs will require a post-secondary education.

According to labor economists, Tony Carnevale and Donna Derochers, the country is due to face a shortage of 14 million college-educated workers by 2020. The current recession has deferred the early signs of this shortage; however, this shortfall will eventually occur.

To close the gap, researchers estimate America's colleges and universities would need to increase the number of degrees awarded by 10% annually. Workers in the near future in search of family-wage jobs won't have a choice but to pursue a higher education.

The Community College Journal states clearly that this demand is not a challenge we can afford to ignore.

(Quote) “Our grandparent’s economy, which promised well-paying jobs for anyone who graduated from high school, is fading and will soon be altogether gone.

Over the past three decades, higher education has become a virtual must for American workers.” (Unquote)

As stated by Molly Corbett Broad, President of the American Council on Education, “America needs a national strategy to enhance our greatest national resource: The knowledge, skills, drive, and creativity of our people”.

Dr. Broad insists that we must focus on high schools, where current academic standards leave many students unprepared to do college-level work. We must help traditional and non-traditional students who are struggling to find the right institution, and to figure out how to pay for it.

Dr. Broad stresses that we must engage students on our own campuses, where too many of them fall through the cracks and fail to achieve their educational goals.

We must be first and foremost devoted to the education of our students, and accept the solemn responsibility to

prepare individuals to succeed in an increasingly competitive global environment.

These efforts are consistent with our strategic goal of student success and our AQIP action projects.

Another area of great excitement this last year was the development of 12 innovation incubator initiatives. These projects have impacted a wide area of college needs with new and creative opportunities for our students, faculty, staff, and community.

Each project approached innovative ideas in a collaborative and sustainable fashion. If you were a part of our innovation incubator initiative last academic year....Please stand up and be recognized (Applause).

Continuing our efforts to be a national leader in the areas of diversity and student success, Delta College has been selected as one of 100 plus colleges across the United States to participate in the national two year “**Achieving the Dream**” program.

“Achieving the Dream’s” student-centered vision is focused on creating a “culture of evidence” on community college campuses in which data and evidence drive broad-

based institutional efforts to improve student outcomes, and share best practices and strategies. “Achieving the Dream” is a perfect fit for Delta College because:

- Several years ago we started developing a culture of evidence with Assessment of student learning and by participation in the AQIP Accreditation process;
- We strengthened our developmental education program;
- We are improving and strengthening our academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability through the Title III Grant; And,
- We have developed an easy to access and use Dashboard.

During our two year participation in the Achieving the Dream program, Delta College will build internal and external stakeholder commitment to a long-term student success agenda, and implement policies and practices that address problems uncovered during the planning year.

The members of our “Achieving the Dream” team include:

- Gail-Hoffman-Johnson – Dean of Teaching & Learning;
- Trevor Kubatzke – Vice President of Student & Educational Services;
- Mary Beth Looby – English Professor & Director of Developmental Education;
- Michael Wood – Director of Institutional Research;

- Tom Lane – Our new Vice President of Instruction & Learning Services; And,
- Myself.

David Baskind, Assoc. Professor of Psychology, and

Brigit Dyer, Director of Retention, will co-chair our team.

Following my formal comments this morning and a short coffee break, we will reconvene here in the Lecture-

Theatre for a panel discussion on the opportunities facing

Delta College through “Achieving the Dream”. Leading

our discussion will be several of our “Achieving the

Dream” team members.

Last but not least, this new academic year brings the informative and time saving Delta College On-line Portal. This portal, first introduced to our students earlier this year, is now available for every employee.

From this portal you need only sign on once and you can reach your:

- Calendar,
- E-mail,
- “MyDelta”,
- “Desire to Learn” our new Learning Management System that replaced “Educator”, And,

- All of the campus information once available only on DeltaNet.

This unique portal is still in the developmental stage and we encourage you to try it out and let us know what you think.

Be sure to check out regularly the newly designed Dash Board. See how our culture of evidence clearly demonstrates the many facets of student success through:

- New Applicants
- Enrolled Credit Hours
- Degrees Conferred
- Market Penetration
- Occupational Placement Rates,

.....And much more.

This is exciting information to follow because we must all be aware of where our students come from and how well we are doing in achieving student success.

President Obama, speaking at the University of Texas on August 9th of this year declared education to be "the economic issue of our times.

"It's an economic issue when the unemployment rate for folks who've never gone to college is almost double what it is for those who have," he said. "It's an economic issue when nearly eight in 10 new jobs will require workforce training or a higher education by the end of this decade."

White House officials said the president's speech was designed to highlight the administration's overriding goal when it comes to higher education: Making the United States No. 1 in the proportion of students who graduate from college.

Every one of us must make a pledge to do all we can to help our students reach their goals. Every one of us can play a role in ensuring that the our community college district realizes that 10% annual increase in citizens earning a college degree or certificate, and in doing so, ensure that Delta College is our communities' first choice to learn, work, and grow.

[The Power of 10% Video]

Thank you, and Let's have a great year!