



Welcome Back!!!

August 6, 2015

Greetings Everyone,

This year, even more than last year, I thoroughly enjoyed the end of year festivities! The commencement ceremonies at both colleges, the specific traditional graduations of the Nursing Department, the UMOJA and Puente celebrations, the Scholarship Award ceremonies, Striving Black Brothers, CLEA, the TRiO program and the like. As I reflect on the past year, it is encouraging and gives me hope for this new academic year.

Why? Because we are starting to, like all of life, settle into a circadian rhythm. We have the funds that we need to start to rebuild some of the infrastructure and support services that are so badly needed and that insure the success of our students. We have stable leadership and as we move forward, I am hopeful and encouraged that great things are in store for us.

This year's convocation theme is "Looking Outside the Box"; going beyond the traditional, expanding our horizon, re-examining how we do things, can we do them better? Oh by the way, it is okay to have some fun! So, we are not going to recap what we've done over the past year, or recite the structural improvements we've made on the campuses, or look at the budget! There will be plenty of opportunity to do this, or just read the Accreditation Self Study; and I say this with sincerity. Much time, effort, and energy went into finalizing this document. I want to especially thank the ALOs both faculty and administrators who led this effort, Stacey Thompson and Jim Matthews at Chabot, and Diana Rodriguez and Elena Cole/Justin Garoupa at Las Positas. Also, thanks to all of you who worked on or assisted in writing one or more of the standards; thanks to the Presidents, Vice Chancellor Esposito-Noy, the editors, proofreaders and anyone else that I may have missed. It takes a team to develop the topnotch reports that have been sent forward to ACCJC. So we will not be starting the year out "in review"; it is all documented in our self-study.

That said, we have much to be proud of, we've done self-reflection on our institutions, we've identified areas where we need to shore up resources, and we've looked at our past and reflected on our history; we've examined this through the lens of the accreditation standards and the standards are

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OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

7600 Dublin Blvd., 3rd Floor
Dublin, CA 94568
Tel: 925-485-5207
Fax: 925-485-5256
www.clpccd.org

just that, standards. Standards that we need to maintain; but, there are also aspirations, where we reflect on, 'Where do we want to go from here?' The answer to this question is embodied in our educational master plans and our district-wide strategic plan. Those documents are in their final stages of completion. I encourage each of you to review them, examine them, reflect on them, fine-focus, fine-tune and give us feedback on what you feel would be appropriate.

We have had many campus meetings, the consulting firm of MiG has conducted surveys and an environmental scan, we've made special presentations to the district office staff, M&O, both academic senates, classified staff, town hall meetings and we had a Charrette in February where we had over 130 faculty, staff, board of trustees members, legislators, and our local community leaders attend and give us feedback. So, we have captured that data, identified the themes that emerged from this discussion, and used that to outline our goals for the next five years. Those themes are identified in our reports and each campus leadership has taken their report and tweaked it to align with the priorities for each campus. We have also done that for the district office because we support the efforts of the colleges and we also have organizational challenges that as a district, we need to address. So we have an operational report that will be part of the overall strategic plan which we will finalize in the next few weeks now that the colleges' plans are near completion. Again, we do not have time to include this discussion on the agenda for convocation; but there is still time, you can provide feedback by attending the campus meetings scheduled for September 8th at Chabot and September 15th at Las Positas (more details on time and location to follow from the colleges) and the district break-out session at convocation will allow for review and additional input from the district and M&O staff for the District-wide Strategic Plan.

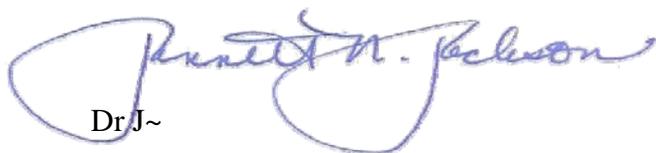
So, instead of revisiting the self-study report or educational master plans, and having me as a talking head for the morning, it is my pleasure to welcome Dr. Vincent Tinto, the renowned lecturer and scholar on the First Year Experience and what it takes for students to succeed. He will talk to us and reflect on what we have done already and the future ahead of us and the challenges that lay before us. A short bio of this educational leader is included as an attachment with the program of the day's activities.

It is a tight schedule, but I would be remiss if I didn't encourage you to attend the ice cream social and take advantage of "Das Bus," the bay area's original mobile Volkswagen photo booth. The only collateral required is a smile.

Again, I am excited about the upcoming year, we have much to smile about, and yes, I still love my job! Welcome back and I hope you are as charged as I am!

See you at Chabot College on August 13th!

All the best for the coming year,



Dr J~