

The CSN Chronicle

Welcome to *The CSN Chronicle* for February 2009. The *Chronicle* lets me share some of the news and important questions raised by our faculty and staff members from time-to-time. A major part of this Chronicle discusses the impact of the federal stimulus bill.

Legislative Session

The 2009 Legislative Session is underway, and our primary focus is on the operating—which includes the recommendations of the SAGE commission--and the capital budget. Recommendations for higher education in the executive budget provided little guidance for legislators. We began in January to form an advocacy group of faculty and staff who are regularly contacting legislators and conveying our messages. On January 27th during pre-session testimony I outlined the impacts of the budget recommendations as well as the needs of CSN as it continues to grow. We are also watching developments on SAGE and PEBP recommendations, and the governor's recommendation for a 6% roll back in employee salaries. These initiatives are untenable particularly for CSN employees and retirees. The outcome of the federal stimulus package bears directly on state budget decisions, and with the federal bill ready for passage, Legislative leaders can now develop solutions for the next biennium. We remain optimistic. We are well positioned for favorable consideration to support student enrollment growth and our capital needs.

There are still many days remaining in the session and continual contact is essential. My thanks to our advocacy group and to all who are communicating with their legislators. PLEASE KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

I have asked the leadership of the Faculty Senate to consider a Provost governance model for CSN. Under this model, the Vice President for Academic Affairs would carry a second title of Provost and would affirm the concept of a strong academic affairs unit at the College. In addition to his/her VPAA responsibilities, this officer may supervise and coordinate other College functions directly or closely associated with operating and supporting CSN's academic function.

Black History Month

With the Legislature in session and concern about the budget, I want to make sure Black History Month does not pass without due deference. It has come to my attention that there is at least one student at CSN who had no idea that February was Black History Month. This is truly a shame and I hope all of you are discussing the contributions of African Americans to our nation and our community with the students with whom you work. There is a special scholarship reception taking place on the Cheyenne campus on Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 6 p.m. in the June Whitley Student Center. Community leaders Commissioner Lawrence Weekly, the Urban Chamber of Commerce's Diane Pollard and Assemblyman Harvey Mumford will be honored that night. All proceeds will go toward CSN scholarships. For more information go to www.csn.edu and click on the events section.

More information about the month can be found at: <http://www.biography.com/blackhistory/>.

Questions from Faculty and Staff Members:

“What improvements are planned for parking on the campuses?”

Enrollment growth has again created pressure for additional parking, particularly at the Henderson and West Charleston campuses. We are exploring the addition of more parking behind the temporary buildings at the Henderson campus. At West Charleston, we are initiating discussions with Bonanza High School to use the east lot of the school. Parking will be a continuing challenge for us.

“What is in the stimulus bill for Nevada and for higher education?”

It appears that Nevada may receive about \$1.4 billion from the federal stimulus bill. The following are highlights of some key provisions of the bill, based on preliminary information from discussions I have been part of in Nevada. Please note the change in Pell Grant maximums, the new American Opportunity Tax Credit, stabilization funding, and specific funding for workforce training and sustainable technologies. Funding for higher education construction appears to have been dropped.

Clean, Efficient, American Energy: Objective: To put people back to work and reduce our dependence on foreign oil, we will increase renewable energy production and renovate public buildings to make them more energy efficient.

- Smart Grid/Advanced Battery Technology/Energy Efficiency
 - Supports U.S. development of advanced vehicle batteries and battery systems through loans and grants.
 - **This impacts CSN workforce training and automotive technology programs.**
- Tax Incentives to Spur Energy Savings and Green Jobs
 - Provides grants of up to 30 percent of the cost of building a new renewable energy facility to address current renewable energy credit market concerns.
 - Provides a tax credit for families that purchase plug-in hybrid vehicles of up to \$7,500 to spur the next generation of American cars.
 - Includes clean renewable energy bonds for state and local governments.
 - Establishes a new manufacturing investment tax credit for investment in advanced energy facilities, such as facilities that manufacture innovative next-generation green technologies.
 - **This impacts Nevada’s Employment, Training and Rehabilitation department, CSN workforce programs, contract education, and applied technologies.**

Transform our Economy with Science and Technology: Objective: To secure America’s role as a world leader in a competitive global economy, we are renewing America’s investments in basic research and development, in training students for an innovation economy, and in deploying new technologies into the marketplace.

- Investing in Scientific Research
 - Provides \$3 billion for the National Science Foundation, for basic research in fundamental science and engineering. Most of this funding will not be available to community colleges.
- Extending Broadband Services
 - Provides \$7 billion for extending broadband services to underserved communities across the country, so that rural and inner-city businesses can compete with any company in the world.
 - **Nevada has a need for extended IT services, and this may provide support for the new ERP migration.**

Education for the 21st Century: Objective: To invest in education to help America become more productive and competitive.

- Preventing Teacher Layoffs and Education Cuts by the States
 - Prevents teacher layoffs and other cutbacks in education and other key services, by establishing a \$53.6 billion State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, including: \$40.6 billion to local school districts using existing funding formulas, which can be used for preventing cutbacks, preventing layoffs, and helping to support school modernizations, or other purposes; \$5 billion to states as bonus grants for meeting key performance measures in education; and \$8 billion to states for additional high priority needs such as public safety, which may include education.
- Making College More Affordable
 - Increases the higher education tax credit to a maximum of \$2,500. It also makes it available to nearly 4 million low-income students who had not had any access to the higher education tax credits in the past – by making it partially refundable.
 - Increases the maximum Pell Grant by \$500, for a maximum of \$5,350 in 2009 and \$5,550 in 2010.
 - Adds \$200 million to the vital College Work-Study program.

Help Workers Hurt by the Recession: Objective: High unemployment and rising costs have outpaced Americans' paychecks. This portion is designed to help workers train and find jobs, and help struggling families make ends meet.

- Extending and Improving Unemployment Benefits
 - Continues through December 2009 the extended unemployment benefits program which provides up to 33 weeks of extended benefits.
 - Increases unemployment benefits for 20 million jobless workers by \$25 per week, and encourages states to modernize their UI systems to keep up with the changing workforce with expanded coverage.
 - Temporarily suspends the taxation of some unemployment benefits.
- Helping Workers Find Jobs
 - Provides funding to help workers find jobs, including \$4 billion for job training such as formula grants for adult job training, dislocated worker job training, and youth services (including funding for summer jobs for young people); \$500 million for Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants to help persons with disabilities prepare for gainful employment; \$500 million to match unemployed individuals to job openings through state employment agencies; and \$120 million to provide community service jobs to an additional 24,000 low-income older Americans.

These last two items are of particular interest in Nevada and at CSN. Training programs will be provided by community colleges, and Nevada expects to invest \$22 million in workforce development and training.

Federal action coupled with feedback we've received from Nevada legislators gives us hope that CSN will emerge from the present budget crisis with renewed strength.

--Mike Richards