



The CSN Chronicle

Greetings to all! There is much activity on many fronts that I'd like you to know about.

White House Summit on Community Colleges

Earlier this month, I had the great privilege of attending the White House Summit on Community Colleges, a special experience for me and most valuable for the whole national system of our colleges. President Obama expressed his goal of attaining 5 million more college completers by the year 2020. I've posted on my blog an outline of the summit if you wish to know more about the discussions and events of the day.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 amended the Trade Act to authorize the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program (TAACCCT, aka C3TG). The Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act included \$2 billion over four years to fund this program, which will be awarded by the Department of Labor at the amount of \$500 million per year. By statute, the program is designed to ensure that every state, through its eligible institutions of higher education, will receive at least \$2.5 million.

Nevada's community colleges are applying as a consortium for this funding. Funds are to be used for program development for degree programs that will have a benefit to trade impacted workers if they choose to participate, but programs will be open to all students. The focus must be on quality certificates and/or degrees that will result in meaningful employment based on local needs. We are also encouraged to engage community partnerships in this process.

In addition, Nevada is a participating member of **Complete College America**, an organization that will assist us in bolstering college completion goals in two ways:

1. Provide resources and support in writing state consortia grants with a focus on accelerated intensive certificate and degree programs that will reduce time necessary to obtain designated degrees and substantially increase completion based on successful models; and
2. Develop a national consortium of community colleges that would apply to develop and disseminate a portfolio of three to four nationally portable STEM one-year certificate programs. These one-year programs will be nested within two-year associate degree programs that are themselves fully articulated with four-year programs.

CSN is participating in the Nevada consortium. Ann Johnson is our representative on the state wide project, but we will be involving community partners as we launch our part of this project. You'll be hearing more about this effort over the next biennium.

NSHE PLAN, etc.

The Board of Regents has adopted an NSHE PLAN that has been posted on the CSN home page and Budget Issues web site and shared with state leaders. The plan empowers colleges and universities to set and retain tuition and fee revenues, and it describes many more aspirations for the system of higher education, including:

- Committing to performance metrics and linking those metrics to funding (National Governor's Association);
- Producing more graduates as a Complete College America partner;
- Revising the funding formula that has battered CSN;
- Accelerating degree programs;
- Placing credit limits on degrees;
- Dropping low-yield programs;
- Supporting part-time faculty;
- Investing in efficiency efforts;
- Decreasing the time to graduate;
- Optimizing financial aid;
- Setting tuition and fee rates and keeping the revenues locally; and
- Seeking more external funding from grants and donations.

This is a plan that combines excellence and austerity to attain success.

Although it's early in the process, CSN has already begun its implementation of the NSHE PLAN:

- Our new strategic plan has an implementation component of tasks, success indicators, timelines, accountability, and reporting.
- CSN Student Affairs has begun Project Graduation, which has identified 4,269 students with 45 hours or more who have not graduated and is directing them with interventions for specific advising.
- We have increase student financial aid. The number of students receiving aid is up 42% in four years, and dollars awarded is up 165%, from \$23 million in 2006-07 to \$63 million in 2009-10.
- We have a part-time faculty convention planned for 2011, and more partnerships developing with CCSD to help students with developmental education and gifted/talented opportunities.

And we're working with other institutions to implement this plan. It is our hope that implementation of the plan will help us appeal for federal and foundation grants that are seeking institutions willing to employ similar initiatives aimed at assisting students with certificate and degree attainment. We will be working with other colleges in the system on these grant requests.

Fall Fun Fest is an initiative of the CSN Foundation to raise money for CSN and to offer a family event over Nevada Day and Halloween. The staff members of the Foundation have brought together craft booths, concerts, local authors and book signings, and a carnival that will be open to the public. This is a major event, staged for the first time. The set up for the festival may cause you some inconvenience on Wednesday night and Thursday in terms of parking, but this event represents a unique opportunity for CSN to engage the community in a wholesome and entertaining event. Many thanks to the organizers and volunteers for our Fall Fun Fest.

Questions from Faculty and Staff Members:

“How many students are enrolled this semester?”

Our official census date is October 15th, but the last numbers I saw—a day ago--showed 43,686 headcount (up 1.4% over the same time last year) and 22,286.4 FTE (up 2.5%).

“How are we doing?”

Often asked, this general question means, “How’s the external fiscal environment.” Actually, it’s relatively good. The election is consuming local and state energy, but beneath the politics and campaigning a number of healthy signs reinforce my optimism. Our enrollment is up. Our budget is sound. Our investments are growing. Our economic benefit to southern Nevada is well documented and widely published. Our faculty and staff are engaging students. And our students are generally staying enrolled in their classes and enjoying the learning environment of CSN. We’re having an excellent fall semester!

Best regards to all.

--Mike Richards