



## **The CSN Chronicle**

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

### **Strategic and Fiscal Direction**

Many preliminaries are underway preparatory to the 2011 legislative session. On August 27<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Regents adopted a budget recommendation for the next biennium that is a maintenance-level request. Even so, by following state budget office guidelines, it's about 24% higher than the previous biennium. We certainly commend the Board for its unfailing support for our system of the higher education.

At the September Board meeting, action was taken to link state funding with quality improvements in NSHE. A plan was presented and approved to reinvent the System with changes in tuition and fee setting, design of the funding formula, goals and performance metrics, efficiency and effectiveness, financial aid, partnerships, and accountability. The plan is available on the NSHE and CSN web sites. I have formed an All-College Committee on Innovation and the Future with the task of developing ways CSN will implement this plan (as well as other reviews and initiatives that are underway in NSHE).

Also at the September meeting of the Board of Regents, the new strategic plan for CSN was approved. We're moving ahead with steps to implement it.

Texas Station will be the site for our annual Holiday Party on Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for this wonderful celebration. Again this year we will partner with Three Square to collect packaged and canned food for people in our community.

### **Cheyenne Improvements**

Our venerable Cheyenne campus needs considerable capital investment to improve its facilities. Sherri Payne and her staff have developed a phased plan to upgrade public circulation and assembly space with new carpet, painting, and mechanical improvements. Major improvements will need state funding, but there is much we have done and will do to make the space better for faculty, staff and students. New carpeting has been installed in the Nicholas J. Horn Theatre, new flooring has been added to stairways, and the replacement of the corridor carpeting has begun and will continue for the

next couple of years. We are also going to begin renovating many of the older restrooms in the main building. Each semester we will be working on improvements to renew the campus. Also, by next fall semester, science labs will be greatly improved in two ways: We're adding a "permanent" modular laboratory facility that we'll use during renovation of the current science labs, and we'll keep the modular facility operational after the construction is finished to add more capacity for our science program.

Of course, improvements of the magnitude we have planned will not be without disruption. Furniture has to be moved and in some cases replaced. We're sorry for the inconvenience, but when completed the space should look and feel much better. Thank you, Sherri, for the effort on this important project.

CSN has received a grant of \$756,000 in emergency management funds. This grant will support an initiative to improve the safety of our campuses and our police department. Proceeds of the grant will support equipment, training, and emergency preparedness efforts for the institution.

#### **Questions from Faculty and Staff Members:**

##### ***"How many students are enrolled this semester?"***

Our official census date is October 15<sup>th</sup>, but the last numbers I saw indicated headcount enrollment was 40,044 (up 1.1% over the same time last year) and 21,622 FTE (up 3.16%).

##### ***"Are budget cuts over?"***

No. CSN has cut its budget every fiscal year since 2007, and we're not finished. Based on our experience, a retrenchment plan was approved as part of our new strategic plan. The retrenchment plan sets forth principles and priorities for future budget reductions, and it keeps our priorities focused on jobs and students. I fully expect another round of budget cuts during a very difficult legislative session, but we're prepared. We know how to do this with the college-wide community involved in the process. Ahead of us are many days of advocacy, persuasion and tough times.

##### ***"Am I going to lose my job?"***

I'm being asked this question more often this year, and I know there is uncertainty among our people. Please know, however, that since 2007, protecting jobs has been a priority through all the budget cuts. CSN has fared better than most institutions through these hard times because of our planning, growth, and extensive involvement of people in the process. Be assured we will do our utmost to keep our priorities straight, to keep you fully informed, and to protect our mission and people.

Best regards to all.

--Mike Richards