



Special CSN Chronicle

At the beginning of each semester, I hold “roundtable” discussions for faculty and staff at each of our campuses. This year, I shared a number of items, and the group discussion added many more that I’d like to share with you. This information will also be posted on my blog.

What I Shared as Introductory Themes:

NSHE ISSUES

- PEBP: We are unable to exit the current plan for now. NSHE is looking at other options.
- The formula funding committee: The old formula is out and the committee will work to propose a new one that will likely include performance metrics. The system has issued a framework for a new formula.
- Complete College America: CSN made its first-year goal with 2,294 completions in 2010-11.
- An update on Community College Task Force: The virtual college idea is dormant, but other ideas, such as expanding partnerships with K-12, are being explored.

CSN ISSUES:

- New admission policy: 1) a high school diploma or qualified international student, or 2) GED or home school certificate, or 3) examination:

Students may be admitted under alternative criteria by satisfying one of the following requirements:

1. Placement testing scores sufficient for entry into ENG 100 and Math 095 or higher; or
 2. Transfer credits equivalent to NSHE’s ENG 100 and Math 095 with grades of “C” or better from another accredited college or university; and standing at a previously attended institution including but not limited to, records of disciplinary action.
- MyCSN : We are continually working to improve the functioning of MyCSN, which is a work in progress. CSN has added the call center, which is helping hundreds of students a week navigate the new system.
 - Plan for 8% tuition increase: We collaborated with students over the winter break to create a detailed plan that was approved by the Board of Regents. The plan is available on the CSN home page for review.

Cheyenne Roundtable Discussion:

A faculty member discussed problems he had navigating MyCSN. Other faculty praised CAPE’s MyCSN training session. Dr. Richards emphasized that faculty can use the MyCSN call center for help.

There were questions about the formula funding committee and CSN's historic funding inequity. Dr. Richards emphasized that policymakers are aware of CSN's historic funding inequity and want to address this issue. As the formula discussion evolves, CSN officials are speaking with system staff, lawmakers and other higher education officials about this process to ensure the new formula addresses CSN's needs.

A faculty member asked if President Richards supported tenure as she perceived there is a growing disdain across the nation for the practice. Dr. Richards stated he fully supports tenure and that tenure will continue in its current form at CSN.

Several praised the renovations at Cheyenne. Dr. Richards stated CSN will submit a capital improvement project to the system and legislature for \$16 million more for improvements to the campus.

An individual asked for a status update on the northwest campus proposal. CSN is pursuing a lease from the BLM or an act of Congress for the land patent. Since the advent of the economic slowdown, Dr. Richards said there has not been much momentum for this project.

Several faculty discussed the need for greater collaboration with their counterparts at UNLV to ensure CSN graduates can transfer seamlessly. Dr. Richards noted that states that do articulation well between the university and community college levels have statutes in place that require it.

A faculty member questioned whether the CCA goals would be part of the new funding formula. Dr. Richards discussed some of the National Governor's Association (NGA) metrics that they hope will be included in the new formula to ensure that it better reflects the mission and goals of community colleges.

Charleston Roundtable Discussion:

A faculty member brought up the need to increase advisement at CSN to help more students graduate in less time. Dr. Richards talked about the new plan CSN developed over the break for the 8% fee increase and how that will be used to increase the number of advisors and other frontline student support staff. He noted that other states have put resources on the first-year, full-time, degree seeking students that make up the graduation rate cohort.

A professor asked about some students he had that had trouble passing math. Dr. Richards discussed the math tutorial centers that are included in the plan for the 8% tuition increase.

Another professor presented several ideas and Dr. Richards addressed some of them, including the chronic issue of articulation. He said Nevada may benefit from a statute in this area.

There was discussion about the 60-credit maximum policy and how the curriculum committee could implement this new policy in time to meet the regents' deadline. Dr. Richards said he would support the work of the Senate's curriculum committee.

A professor brought up the issue of UNLV articulation agreements again and asked that the administration email a list of all the schools with which CSN has articulation agreements to the faculty. This was done through the Faculty Senate chair.

A faculty member asked about the funding formula and what metrics would be used to measure performance. Dr. Richards explained the hope of the four Nevada community college presidents that the NGA measures would be included. He explained the three dimensions of the system's proposed funding formula framework. There was an ensuing discussion about how the system is advocating to allow colleges and universities to keep their tuition and fee revenue.

Someone asked about the progress of the bridge programs with the school district discussed last fall. They are scheduled to begin this summer.

Henderson Roundtable Discussion:

There was a question about CSN's strategy for the new funding formula. Dr. Richards explained the framework of the system's proposed holistic approach. There was a discussion about how to estimate the true cost of instruction and using national models. The use of performance metrics was also discussed.

A faculty member asked about future maintenance at Henderson. Dr. Richards discussed a proposal that will go before the BOR at the March 1 and 2 meeting to do a mechanical overhaul of the A building this year.

A faculty member noted that the national pressure on colleges and universities to focus on outcomes may result in professors making their classes easier to ensure more students successfully complete their courses. He wondered what the ramifications of a new formula that focuses on performance measures will be. Dr. Richards said that he and other presidents were concerned about consequences of many new initiatives. He emphasized repeatedly that faculty are not to diminish the academic rigor of their classes; indeed, they should increase it.

There were questions about the level of preparedness of incoming students. Dr. Richards discussed the bridge programs and the relationship CSN has with the school districts. He also stressed that CSN has a great GED program that can help students.

A faculty member suggested the college explore requiring students to take prereqs or a student assessment before they are allowed to take online courses. Dr. Richards said he would share that idea. Again, he stressed that faculty should not diminish academic rigor.

Finally, a faculty member asked if there was anything CSN could do to help introduce students to the variety of classes offered at CSN. The nature of the electronic schedule and course lookup make it difficult for students to browse course listings and learn more about different classes outside their major that might expand their horizons and enhance their college experience. Independent of MyCSN is a browse list, but it's not linked to the registration system.

Roundtables will continue at the beginning of each semester on each of CSN's three campuses.

--Mike Richards