

Paradise Valley Community College

Convocation 2009

August 17, 2009

Dr. Paul Dale, Interim President

PVCC faculty and staff welcome to the 2009 – 2010 academic year – a year in which we will celebrate the theme of “PVCC’s Got Talent.” Convocation serves as a great way to start the year – to reconnect, to build community, and to learn how to better engage students in the learning process. It is hard for me to believe that 365 days have passed so quickly since last Fall’s convocation at which time our theme was Good to Great in ’08. Yes. Last year was good year for the College. And who would have thought that we would have ended the year by celebrating at commencement by dancing up a storm – let’s take a look. {show Sue’s video}. This is an exciting and historic year for PVCC with the opening of the state of the art Life Sciences Building and the launching of our new campus at Black Mountain.

Thank you Mrs. Pearson for joining us today. Board Member Pearson has worked closely with PVCC faculty and staff as we moved College initiatives forward through the Board approval process. As a product of the community college– she understands our purpose and mission. Thank you.

This is the beginning of my third year of service as interim president - albeit having spent four years back in the minors as a VP in between my two stints. So have you ever wondered if you too would like to be an interim president?

- If you can explain with a smile on your face to your spouse and children that you are just experiencing interim stress and interim sleepless nights, you could be an interim president.
- If you can rationalize to yourself that your emerging grey hair is only interim and will soon revert back to its original color, you could be an interim president.
- If you truly believe that there are no such things as interim organizational conflict and budget problems, you could be an interim president.
- If you can convince three different policy group leaders and the faculty senate president that the sky is blue when it is really black with thunderclouds, perhaps you should be the permanent president.

Let me first extend a number of heartfelt thanks. Every week I witness – with great pride – PVCC faculty and staff engaged in very, very good work. While it is impossible to roll the credits and thank everyone individually, there are a number large groups I would like to thank – the teams responsible for all aspects of the life Sciences Building; the teams

responsible of the development and implementation of PVCC at Black Mountain; the front line staff in KSC and the academic divisions who have worked tirelessly enrolling record numbers of students; and our M and O staffs who once again have the campus in top shape for the fall opening. And to the team that I work with most closely on a daily basis – Mary Lou Mosley, Jackie Askin, Shirley Green, Paul Golisch, Denise DiGianfilippo, Bill Hart, Julia Devous, and Laurie Pemberton – THANK YOU. The Office of the President would not run without Alexis – thank you. And A Bldg. would not run without Pat, Jeanette, Alicann and Rita.

My remarks today are centered around three topics – general college housekeeping including several organizational and budget updates; this year's College Critical Directions; and thirdly reflecting on the meaning of our College theme - PVCC's Got Talent.

Let's begin with some general Housekeeping...In consultation with faculty and college leadership; several organizational realignments have been completed. The overall purposes of the realignments are to create greater focus on function, reduce institutional expenses, and to increase overall efficiency and effectiveness. Realignments have occurred in the areas of marketing/public relations, Institutional Advancement, and fund raising/community relations. In addition, the provision of Child Care Services has been transitioned to Head Start operated by Southwest Human Development – a long time early childhood education partner. We realized significant budget savings with the Child Care transition. An updated college organizational chart is posted on the web, and in one of my first issues of "What's on the Mind" this fall, I will outline in detail all of the changes.

Turning to our finances - the State of Arizona has yet to balance the Fiscal Year 2010 state budget. While PVCC experienced a net budget reduction last year exceeding \$800,000, with the 2008 – 2009 enrollment growth, we were able to fund a reasonable number of division priorities for this year. Until the state solves its budget issues, we may well be in a budget reduction planning mode again. Until then, while budgets have been allocated and should be spent accordingly to meet our mission, the future remains uncertain at best.

Related to our finances, several College teams have been formed to identify, evaluate, and where appropriate pursue Federal stimulus funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. While most of these funds are likely to be coordinated at the District level, PVCC will aggressively participate in the process. In addition, Arizona community colleges will be allocated \$29 million through the State Fiscal Stabilization Funds.

Now on to the Critical College Directions that will guide our work this year. As I did last year, my leadership at the institutional level will focus on three Directions – Student Success, Bringing Learning Alive, and Community Building. As examples, I'll share several emerging college projects from each Direction. A complete copy of these Critical Directions can be found on my College web page.

First of all Student Success. As you have heard me say many times... student success can be attributed to students' ability to: successfully navigate college processes and procedures; effectively set and monitor educational, personal and career goals; effectively establish relationships with faculty, staff and other students; get involved in college life and feel connected; AND the most influential indicator of student success is the degree to which students are active and engaged learners and participate in educationally purposeful activities. Equally as important - as Rick Vaughn says – learning is a function of the quality of faculty and staff. Simply put, excellent faculty generate exemplary learning. Excellent staff generate exemplary out of class learning.

This year we need to carry through on our efforts to measure institutional student success. The College Strategic Planning Team developed a set of performance measures and student success indicators. This fall a College team will distill out four or five general student success indicators so we can clearly see institutional level progress.

Areas such as: students' acquisition of critical thinking skills (as measured by our general education learning outcomes); successful course completion; completion of developmental course sequences; AGEG completion; and successful student transfer need to be measured at the institutional level. Through measurement we will be able to say that yes "PVCC students Got Talent!"

Our drive towards student success is also tied to the state and national movement to increase student degree completion. The Governor and the Arizona Board of Regents have pledged to increase the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded annually to 36,000 from the current 18,000. Why, because our economy depends on it and because Arizona ranks amongst the lowest in per capita bachelor degree holders. The new ASU – MCCD agreement - MAPPs, and the recent changes in Arizona University admissions requirements for transfer students, provide PVCC an opportunity to significantly increase the number of ASU bound students.

At the national level, President Obama's American Graduation Initiative calls for an increase in the number of community college students by 5 million by 2020. PVCC will be a part of the movement and we will find ways to increase the number of college graduates in Arizona. I believe that through programs such as Honors, Early College,

ACE, Hoop of Learning, dual enrollment, and three plus one programs, we are now the “new Gateway” to the bachelors’ degree.

I believe that we have a significant, if not historical, opportunity to re-define the community college role in terms of student success leading to transfer and baccalaureate degree completion. The national conversation has set the stage, new ABOARD admissions and transfer requirements are giving us the tools to expand our recruitment of potential students and to increase persistence and success for students at PVCC.

I’ll now highlight two emerging projects that exemplify our desire to “Bring Learning Alive.” – Open Educational Resources and a new professional development program for adjunct faculty.

Open Educational Resources or OERs are online educational materials offered freely and openly for anyone to use, improve, and redistribute. OERs can be full courses, course materials, content modules, learning objects, and textbooks. Let me emphasize the words offered freely and openly for anyone to use. A growing trend across higher education is the replacement of textbooks with online OER materials. For every \$100 a student pays to PVCC for tuition and fees, they spend \$72 on textbooks. Think of what we could save students and the competitive advantage gained if we moved in this direction.

Just ask Kurt Hill, John Douglass or Doss Powell who are already using “free” textbooks in classes they teach. Please take some time to check out the PVCC OER web site developed by Sam Fraulino and Carol Myers to learn more about OERs. I am confident that PVCC faculty and staff in collaboration with other MCCCD colleges can take the lead in sheparding OER into our student learning experiences - why - because PVCC’s Got Talent.

Another project that will “Bring Learning Alive” is an innovative adjunct faculty professional development being developed by Marilyn Cristiano, Phil Jalowiec, Pat Marchok and Michaelle Shadburne. In this pilot, new adjunct faculty will have a paid opportunity to participate in a two part program – first Ready Set Go an extended orientation for adjuncts hired right before the semester begins, followed by EDGE, a semester long, hybrid delivered sessions on teaching and learning strategies utilizing the free League for Innovation tool - “Getting Results.” Especially for new adjunct faculty preparation and confidence are critical to their success and I am confident that this program will make a positive difference.

Our third critical direction is our continued effort to “Build Community” – both internally and externally and the Black Mountain campus will be one of our primary anchors for community outreach. Later in the program the Black Mountain team will provide an excellent overview. Amazing potential rests at Black Mountain. We not just launching a site of PVCC we are engaging in a Black Mountain Campus partnership with the Valley of the Sun YMCA and the Foothills Community Foundation – who will operate a Community Center. All three partners are committed to a synergistic relationship founded on three shared values – lifelong learning, health and wellness and community service. The Black Mountain campus will be a national model for lifelong learning and will be a critical PVCC community-building tool. Yes PVCC’s Got Talent at Black Mountain.”

Now let’s turn to our theme of PVCC’s Got Talent”

The notion that “PVCC’s Got Talent” originated with a group of faculty – spearheaded by Dina Preston-Ortiz – expressing a desire to tell our many stories of successful and talented students, faculty, and staff.

Let’s for a moment suspend the thought that “PVCC’s Got Talent” is simply a marketing theme and let’s imagine that it is something bigger – how about a visionary proclamation, how about an aspirational value – perhaps even an inspirational mantra.

Three stories will demonstrate what I think our students are capable of, what they could aspire to do, what — and given the powerful relationship between engaged students and talented faculty and staff — what kind of positive social change students will make when they leave us?

Last year, a compelling video appeared on a Chinese web site. Evan Osnos, the New Yorker magazine reporter covering the story wrote “ the video captured the mood of nationalism that surged through China after the Tibetan uprising in March that sparked foreign criticism of China.” {Let’s take a brief look at a clip of the video} The first week that the video was on line it drew more than a million hits. The creator of the video – Tang Jie when asked by a western reporter how he made the film responded, “Do you know the program movie maker?” When asked how he learned the program His response was “I learned it on the fly from the help menu – I must thank Bill Gates!”

Story #2 - The current head of the FDIC – is Shelia Blair. She has no formal training as an economist but has worked in Washington for over twenty years, appointed by a Republican President she is currently serving under the Democratic administration; she was a philosophy major in college. She was one of the first government officials to speculate about the coming demise of the financial markets by uncovering and documenting the problems with subprime loans. Later she urged the re-structuring of

loans rather than allowing mortgages to go into default. Her initial warnings occurred years before the hit of the financial crisis. It was her combination of critical insight and bold communication skills that earned her a Kennedy Profile in Courage Award.

My final story...In 1997, a tiny Danish island community of Samos submitted a plan to the Danish Ministry of Environment and Energy as part of a competition to show they could wean themselves off of fossil fuels. After their Plan was selected, one island resident took the lead to sell the plan to others often times providing beer to attract a crowd. Soon many small family led initiatives began to take shape – solar heat, straw burning furnaces, wind turbines – the island soon became known as the “renewable energy island.” The island now has off shore and land based wind turbines as well as biomass energy producing plants. The response of the islanders was captured by a reporter - “When the organizers talked to local people they said – come on – maybe in your dreams could this small island make such energy changes.” The energy produced from the turbines provides the equivalent of all the gasoline and fuel consumed on the island along with biomass energy plants the island has significantly reduced its carbon footprint.

So what do stories about a Chinese filmmaker activist, a U.S government bureaucrat, and a small Danish Island have to do with us and our theme of “PVCC’s Got Talent?”

When I read about these events, I was struck by just how conceivable it really is that PVCC students are capable of making such talented and notable contributions. While we may not make headlines, our students will transform our little piece of the world. Think about it – if a young man using off-the-shelf film making software can inform millions of a different point of view – if a philosophy major using critical thinking skills can foretell the demise of the financial markets – and a group of Danish citizens can transform their island using basic knowledge about alternative energy – think about what our students will do when...

Our Phi Theta Kappa students – advised by Steve Nicoloff – get excited about their college-recycling project this year

Students in our learning communities – championed by Renee Cornell – are better able to connect the dots between complex subjects and issues

Film students of Tony deShay connect with Jon Storslee’s CIS students to launch a compelling world view changing video

Our life sciences building’s learning spaces enhance Dr. Deb Adair’s teaching so students are really turned on to science

Students in Professor Gangaden's philosophy and Bahman Maneshni's economic classes – use critical thinking to understand economic markets to help solve Arizona's fiscal problems

This year's class of Emerging Leaders genuinely engages in their service-learning project to address one of many local social problems

I could go on...

Join with me this year to live the theme "PVCC's Got Talent" – Challenge yourself to further integrate student success strategies into the work you do, commit to inspire students to try harder, take time to acknowledge and celebrate the many talents and successes of your colleagues, and find a way to make the PVCC learning experience just a bit more compelling and real for students.

My very best wishes for a rewarding and talented year. Thank you.