Welcome Back: 2015 Fall Semester

This week, each college welcomed students and faculty back to launch the beginning of a new academic year. On Monday, August 24, I took the opportunity to visit each campus with pizzas in tow, as a thank you to the college staff for all of their hard work. Each campus was filled with palpable energy and excitement. Much of this positive energy was due to the convivial environment created by the college staff, faculty and administration. Each day, our college staff demonstrate their passion and commitment to the students; this commitment will serve us well as we move forward in the semester and the rest of the academic year. Thank you to all of the Trustees for your dedication over the summer to handle the business of the District. Your efforts helped to ensure that every college starts the Fall Semester on a positive and promising note.

New Faculty to be Hired

According to the 2015-16 budget, specific funding has been allocated to hire 24.11 fulltime faculty. I am working with the Vice Chancellors and the College Presidents to determine the additional number of faculty that can be hired, based on a formula that takes the Faculty Obligation Number (FON), retirements, anticipated growth, and FTE adjustments into account. A number will be determined shortly and communications will be sent to all interested parties.

Release of California Chancellor's Task Force on Accreditation Report

Today, California Community Colleges Chancellor Brice W. Harris released the 2015 Chancellor's Office Task Force Report on Accreditation. This task force was established to evaluate the current state of accreditation of community colleges in California and to recommend possible courses of action that would best serve students within the 113-college system. Members of the task force included representatives from the Statewide
Academic Senate, chief executive officers, chief instructional officers, organized labor, elected Boards of Trustees and the State Chancellor’s Office.

The task force noted several findings, but concluded that the California Community College System and its member institutions have lost confidence in the ACCJC and that change is needed. The recommendation is to develop a plan by spring 2016 to begin transitioning California Community Colleges to a different accrediting body.

If the recommendations of the task force are implemented, the California Community College system will be working to strengthen a regional accreditation system to ensure that colleges are accredited in the same, consistent manner. To view the full report click here.

**Stabilization Frequently Asked Questions**

I have received good feedback about the Stabilization FAQ Sheet created. Please look to this document to help address questions or concerns about the 2014-15 stabilization. If you still have unanswered questions, please send your questions to our District PIO, Letitia Clark. She will get the answer to your question and update the FAQ sheet accordingly.

**Days Left for Open Enrollment**

Open Enrollment is only available until September 2. To make necessary changes, please email cccdbenefits@cccd.edu or visit the District’s benefits page for more information. For immediate assistance, call 714.438.4727

**Orange Coast College Focus Day**

Today, August 28, Orange Coast College hosted their annual Focus Day. The program was filled with college leadership and in the audience sat enthusiastic faculty and staff members who eagerly received an update on the state of the college, enrollment numbers, building development and ways to ensure continued success for our at-risk students.

A highlight of the morning was keynote speaker Gustavo Arellano, the editor of OC Weekly and an alum of OCC. The day began with a continental breakfast and was followed by lunch and guided tours of the Math, Business and Computing Center.

Thanks to Board President Lorraine Prinsky, Trustee Dave Grant and Trustee Mary Hornbuckle for attending and showing your support. What a great way to kick off the first week of the Fall Semester!

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Gene Farrell, Interim Chancellor