

President's Colloquium Remarks

Fall 2011

Good morning and welcome to the Fall 2011 College Colloquium. It's great to see us all back together again. I trust you all had a great summer and that you feel as good as I do about the start of another college year. 2011-2012 promises to hold all the personal gratification and success we could wish for. Above all, we are wishing our students a banner year as our academic offerings continue to expand and deepen.

Our theme for this Colloquium is Academic Innovation. We have prepared some commentary on that topic and, as always, have sought to make these perorations as perspicuous as possible. First, however, I'd like to update you on some general Ocean County College news:

- Gateway Project Update: The construction of the Gateway Project, which we share with our partner, Kean University, is proceeding extremely well, on time, on budget. Evidence of this can be seen in the Gateway Building's imprint on the skyline, where structural steel has defined the skeleton of the building. Less obvious, but no less significant, is the complex work on the building foundation, roads, parking lots, and utilities. Some 400 wells supporting the geothermal heating and cooling system have been completed. One of the most important components of the building's "green design," the geothermal system will contribute to the achievement of a LEED Silver rating from the U. S. Green Building Council.

The steel support structure will be completed over the next few months followed by the installation of exterior materials, including the striking array of windows, one of the building's major architectural features.

Be sure to log on to the College's web site to follow [live video broadcast](#) of the dramatic progress of the Gateway Project construction.

- College Center Update: Preliminary design for a proposed College Center has recently been completed. Conceived to produce a cutting-edge facility in service to our students, the new center will provide a variety of features, including a one-stop location for all student support services,

greater opportunities for student activities, as well as various dining and lounge options.

Our students, the object of all our efforts here, expressed a desire for a larger, more open, light-filled dining space, a more intimate coffee shop, and café-style dining clustered around external and internal student gathering spaces. Three types of lounge areas are envisioned: one for quiet activities; one for moderate conversation and quiet music; and one for higher decibel activities such as interactive electronic games.

There will be new offices for student groups like the *Viking News*, and a complete array of student support services, such as veterans' affairs, financial aid, and advising, all located on one level with convenient access so students don't have to traverse the campus to acquire attention and assistance. And, all essential student-business functions will be clustered in this one space, making enrollment management more convenient and less time-consuming for everyone.

We are really very excited about this new project. As we continue to develop funding opportunities, we are tentatively targeting a 2014 completion date. Meanwhile, as you can see from the architect's renderings, it is going to be a beautiful addition to an already splendid campus.

- Self-Study Update: The 2014 accreditation Self-Study for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools completed its organizational phase during the Spring 2011 semester with the selection of the Steering Committee, the selection of the self-study design, and, most importantly, the recruitment of most of the self-study team leaders. We owe each of them a deep debt of gratitude for their willingness to render this service to the college: Chris Spencer, Gary Schmidt, Mike Pezzimenti, Caitlyn Cook, Mary Lancaster, Carolyn Showalter, and Beth Brierley. Thank you! The Steering Committee will be actively soliciting input on the proposed design from all segments of the college community during the Fall 2011 semester in preparation for submitting a two-phased design document to the Commission, starting in January of 2012. We will be recruiting team members throughout this fall as well, so be on the lookout for the opportunity to volunteer for one of the four self-study teams.

In addition, the Spring 2012 Colloquium will be devoted to the self-study process to allow all members of the college community to become fully aware of the design, the research processes, and the objectives of the study, regardless of your degree of active participation. It is incumbent upon all college employees, and as many students as possible, to be fully aware of the nature and progression of our study and to make whatever contributions they can make.

- Academic Affairs Changes: As we begin the 2011-12 academic year, there are also some exciting changes in Academic Affairs that I'd like to share with you briefly:

The Nursing Program is now a free-standing academic school under the leadership of Dr. Colleen Manzetti, Acting Dean of Nursing. Dr. Maysa Hayward is the Dean of E-Learning Faculty and Adjunct Faculty. The three existing academic schools are now under the direction of Dr. Robert Kleinschmidt, Acting Dean of Language and the Arts; Dr. Yehia Elmogahzy, Acting Dean of Mathematics, Science, and Technology; and Eileen Schilling, Acting Dean of Social Science and Human Services.

We have added four assistants to the deans, three to support the academic deans and the faculty as well as one to support Associate Vice President Carolyn Lafferty. They will improve the efficiency of information flow and data collection, up-loading schedules created by the deans, and providing intake for all student concerns. Three of these individuals are members of the OCC family. Debbie Pfaff will be providing supportive services to Acting Dean Kleinschmidt, Chuck Jannarone will be doing the same for Acting Dean Elmogahzy, and Maureen Alexander will be working for Acting Dean Eileen Schilling. Mary Fennessy will provide support for Associate Vice President Carolyn Lafferty.

We think these changes will add to the efficiency and dynamism of the Academic Affairs Division, and we extend our wishes to all for a productive academic year.

- Enrollments and College Finances: As you are aware, our enrollments have been on a downward trend for the past two years, a trend affecting

all major enrollment terms: regular semesters as well as Quick Terms and summer sessions. While our restructuring efforts of Fall 2010 have, as they like to say in Washington D. C., "stopped the bleeding," our enrollment losses, while not radical, are serious enough for concern. We have some long-term structural issues in the budget that we need to address and that we need your help with. I asked Vice President of Finance and Administration, Sara Winchester, who could not be with us today, to comment on the budget situation and here is what she had to say:

- Each 1% decline in enrollment equals a revenue shortfall of approximately \$325,000.
- Today, we are faced with a 2.5% decline in enrollment for the Fall semester, but we will not have the final numbers until September 19.
- We estimate at this time that an enrollment decrease of up to 2% can be absorbed through the following budgetary adjustments:
 - Reorganizing the SunGard contract to increase services and decrease annual cost;
 - Converting payroll to 100% Datatel. The Datatel system is now capable of providing the services we have become accustomed to through ADP, and the College will realize annual savings by eliminating the ADP contract;
 - Reducing outside service contracts used to maintain the College campus;
 - Reorganizing to take over some outsourced work, allowing OCC employees to do more work in-house to avoid paying overhead and profit to outside contractors;
 - Delaying or freezing positions on the current position vacancy list; and

- Revisiting the prioritized Planning and Budgeting Council list and holding off on non-essential expenditures.

We must also ask the Board to consider a Spring tuition increase if the enrollment decrease exceeds 2%.

In addition to Vice president Winchester's observations, I want to reiterate the many ways we have already trimmed our sails, and to thank all of you for the tremendous support you gave and continue to give in these efforts:

- We developed a Restructuring Plan in Fall 2010, reorganizing the college's major divisions for increased productivity;
- We have made tremendous strides in cost saving measures for utilities with our green buildings, the coming of the Co-Gen Plant, and other measures taken by Ken Olsen to conserve energy and spend less;
- We are deeply grateful to employees who have accepted responsibility for cost-sharing in their benefits packages, emulating employees all over our country in this time of national need;
- And we ask your help as we look at further options—at a hiring freeze and a possible tuition increase. OCC currently has the third lowest per credit tuition rate of all the NJ Community Colleges and has the lowest five-year percentage and dollar increase of all the schools, bar none, and yet while the tuition is low, enrollments continue to fall; the two do not seem related in any meaningful way and so we must revisit our thinking on this matter.

I want to add that we also must consider external forces. In a recent educational publication, one writer speculated on six ways that the recent debt deal leveraged by Congress and the President could hurt college students and their families:

1. The loss of subsidized student loans currently affects only graduate and professional school students, but there are no guarantees that the 7.5

million undergraduate students who rely heavily on subsidized loans will be able to do so in the future in the same way they do now.

2. The money saved in subsidized loans will be used to fund Pell grants, but this only covers a current shortfall and not future increases. The odds are not looking good for any future Pell Grant cap increases, including those scheduled for FY 2013-2017, according to the American Council of Education. In FY 2010, Ocean County College facilitated more than \$11 million dollars in Pell grants to more than 3,500 students.
3. Most federal loans come with a 6.8% interest rate, but the government has been giving repayment incentives, discounting the loans for on-time re-payment. These discounts will disappear in July 2012.
4. The federal government may raise the interest rate on its school loans. The new Standard & Poor's AA+ rating will probably result in an increase in the government's borrowing costs.
5. As the bi-partisan panel for debt reform surveys tax breaks, it is possible that they will scale back current deductions afforded to off-set college costs.
6. College Savings plans that permit tax-free withdrawals for college expenses may be another target for tax reform.

While some of these possibilities now seem remote, others of them are very real and reduce financial incentives for college attendance. All of these could add to the current forces that are negatively impacting our own enrollments, and we need to be aware of these and deal with them.

As Vice President Winchester has suggested, we need to think in constructive and systemic ways about reorganizing our spending so that we are spending to build the institution rather than just spending in ways that have been effective in the past but may not be effective any more.

We need all of you to work together and to work with us to help envision and enact constructive uses of our assets. We are a financially

sound institution and will remain that way as long as we work together to think and act creatively about our financial health.

Probably the most significant college news relates to our dramatically expanding distance learning offerings and this, in turn, relates to this morning's Colloquium theme: Academic Innovation. By all accounts, the greatest innovative change in higher education in this century, what some have called the tsunami effect, continues to be the expansion of online learning. According to *Inside Higher Education*, enrollments in online courses, nationally, went up 21% in Fall 2009 and another 17% in Fall 2010. The well-regarded *Sloan Report*, which has studied online education in the United States for the past eight years, informs us that:

After remaining steady for a number of years, the proportion of chief academic officers saying that online education is critical to their long-term strategy, took an upward turn in 2010. Sixty-three percent of all institutions reporting said that online learning was critical . . . an increase from fifty-nine percent in 2009.

Nearly 30% of all college students now take at least one course on line, and three quarters of those institutions reporting to the Sloan researchers, about 2,000 of the 2,600 U.S. colleges and universities reporting, say that the economic downturn has increased demands for online courses and programs.

As noted in the publication, *Trends in Higher Education*, one significant trend for 2011 is that "Distance Education will be at the forefront of providing accessibility to students—here and around the world" and, in addition, that distance education will soon be a \$15 billion industry. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* also places online learning among its six top trends on the horizon. It sees the use of mobile devices, game-based learning, learning analytics, e-books, and augmented reality as additional technological innovations in support of online learning. Fox Business News notes that "colleges are facing severe budget shortfalls which may force the technologically hesitant to embrace the idea of online courses." Jim Hundreiser, Associate Vice President at Noel-Levitz, has noted that online learning is an expectation of future college students. "Students of

tomorrow," he says, "will be looking for more expansive online course offerings, and the fact is that tomorrow is really today."

This view of national trends is certainly reflected and bettered here at Ocean County College. Since 2007, the number of online sections offered here has increased by 70% and the number of credits completed has increased by 73%. Online classes now account for almost 12% of Ocean's total credit offerings. Clearly, like Kean at Ocean, online learning is a growth market and one that we must pay attention to in these days of precarious revenue streams and enrollment stagnation.

Our own learning outcomes studies in student learning success in online courses assure us that student grades and persistence rates are comparable with face-to-face classes. Seventy-nine percent of those students enrolled in online courses receive a passing grade or better. Previous negatives relating to student retention and student success, both locally and nationally, have changed drastically as our online student population grows more sophisticated and more comfortable with the technology, and as the technology continuously improves.

Given all of this information and given our need to uncover new revenue streams to insure the fiscal stability of our institution, Ocean County College has made two major commitments to the expansion of online learning, one national and one international.

On the national front, we have begun a partnership with Pearson Learning Solutions in an effort to enhance our online services for students and faculty and to expand our enrollments well beyond the borders of Ocean County. Many of you have already been working with the Pearson team on training and course migration and are familiar with some of the positive changes the partnership has brought. Others of you will become more fully acquainted with Pearson's services as this academic year moves forward.

Under the arrangement with Pearson, Ocean County College continues to be totally responsible for academic oversight, administrative services, program development and support, faculty selection, course instruction, content and curriculum, admissions, financial aid, and academic records. Pearson will provide access for our students to its "Learning Studio" learning

management software, as well as provide student tracking systems, reporting analytics, real-time training, technical and operational support, faculty support, enrollment counseling, course conversions, and in-depth student support. They will use their national outreach to help make students all across the U.S. aware of what Ocean Online has to offer and how they can go about enrolling with us.

On the international front, we will be starting, in the Spring 2012 semester, a pilot program with Tianjin Radio and TV University in Tianjin province, People's Republic of China. We are very interested in exploring the international online learning market. To tell you a little more about the China partnership, I introduce to you Pat Fenn, Executive Director of Distance Learning at Ocean County College.

Pat...

Oh, the Places You'll Go! I loved that Dr. Seuss book, even if I did read it a zillion times to my son. But, it is an apropos book for Ocean Online.

We are going to be creating new "maps" of the OCC campus!! First stop is China. In our efforts to increase our E-learning outreach and increase enrollment for OCC, we have begun an initiative with Tianjin Radio and TV University and CampusCruiser Computing Corporation to offer a DL pilot program in Spring of 2012 to students in the Tianjin Province. This is located approximately 90 miles east of Beijing on the coast in the People's Republic of China. If successful we will broaden the recruitment of students to other provinces in China.

Tianjin Radio and TV University which we also refer to as RTVU, was established in 1958 as Tianjin Radio and Correspondence University, which was the first distance learning institution in China to conduct teaching by radio and mail. These students will be looking to transfer to US based schools after successful completion of their degrees. At the end of the month, representatives from RTVU will be making their first official visit to our campus.

OCC courses will be offered on the CampusCruiser Learning Management Platform emanating from a server in Shanghai to avoid any

restrictions in delivery of our content. The pilot program will offer five separate courses on line during the spring semester (SP 2012) (ENGL 151, HIST 181, PSYC 172) and program-specific courses (CSIT 165 and BUSN 131), which will be taught by Ocean County College instructors.

Upon successful completion, approval and evaluation of the Spring pilot, we will move for FALL 2012 to offer a minimum of two full degree programs online - Business and Computer Science. We are also looking at developing Faculty orientation programs in teaching to the Chinese educational culture, Developmental courses, ESL programs and others that may be needed.

So stay tuned and get ready to plot our journey on the new Ocean Online maps!

Thanks, Pat. Now allow me to ask a man that needs no introduction, Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs, Professor Richard Strada, to talk about other areas of academic innovation that are of interest to us this morning.

Richard...

Thank you, Dr. Larson. As we begin this new academic year, we look forward to continuing our support for all the innovations from last spring's Colloquium:

- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Critical Thinking
- E-Portfolios
- The New Exit Standards for Workplace Readiness

This year, Professors will be able to use new smartboards in all our campus instructional buildings. This will allow them to do such things as write right on the projected slide/image, move images with their hands for emphasis, as well as many other imaginative operations. A faculty workshop is being offered today to discuss many technological innovations, all of which will be available in the new Gateway Building, including Epson short-range projectors and glass boards that will remove the need for dry erase pens in every class room. And, later this semester, we will be experimenting with

new furniture for the Gateway Building, furniture that permits various rearrangements to assist in the achievement of the day's learning objectives.

As you all know, a new partnership has been initiated with Pearson and their Learning Management System. This partnership goes beyond the use of a platform that replaces WEBCT/Blackboard. We are pleased that OCC's full-time faculty members will serve as both members of Master Course Development teams and Course Reviewers for any courses that we may need to purchase directly from Pearson.

As part of our E-learning program, articulation agreements are being developed with other four-year schools, such as Arizona State University, so that our fully on-line students will be able to pursue a bachelor's degree and beyond without ever leaving their homes.

One of our new Homeland Security degree program is perfect for our E-learning program. It is anticipated that a complete online program will be totally operational by the spring semester. In addition to our traditional student recruitment, we plan to offer this program around the world to the men and women of our armed forces. An in-depth discussion of this program, our direct involvement with Monmouth University, and the future directions for the program will be discussed at one of the faculty workshop later this morning.

If you have been following the changes that are occurring in the evaluation of teaching around our state and nation, you know that it has been a focal point for the government. OCC will also be re-examining faculty evaluation, and perhaps making some revolutionary changes. I invite faculty participation in a study group that will be formed by academic affairs to re-examine the entire evaluation process, with the goal of developing a collegial improvement process that benefits teaching and learning at OCC.

The following workshops are being offered today:

“Interdisciplinarity in the Curriculum and Beyond”

The facilitators will begin with some definitions of interdisciplinarity and then provide some specific examples of the wide range of possibilities for

incorporating interdisciplinary studies into both the curriculum and the larger college community. They will preview a sample of pertinent materials, and then engage the workshop attendees in a guided discussion about some of the real possibilities for interdisciplinary study at OCC.

“A New Exit Standard: Workplace Readiness”

The premise upon which this workshop is based is that students often leave the college environment with a poorly-defined set of skills that are requisite for workplace success. While faculty feel comfortable with addressing students’ intellectual development, they are often less comfortable with addressing personal, emotional, and career development needs of students, even though 70% of all students see college as career preparation. Learning transfer and a revised Taxonomy are among subjects considered in this workshop.

“How Might E-Portfolios Work at Ocean County College?”

After summarizing a history of e-portfolios and viewing how they are implemented in a variety of ways at other colleges and universities, Group III wishes to launch a faculty conversation about the use of this technique at OCC, especially with regard to a possible link to the integration of student work in addressing our General Education Goals with a meaningful performance narrative.

“What Do We Think We Mean By ‘Critical Thinking’?”

One of the College’s ten General Education goals is “Critical Thinking,” but do we have an institutional definition for this term that can be expressed by “meta-level” concepts that transcend the disciplinary divide? This is the first in a series of faculty conversations that will attempt to view all of OCC’s General Education goals and the ways in which we define them.

Thank you, Richard, for summarizing these original efforts of faculty and staff to explore ways that we might improve the quality of teaching and learning. I look forward to attending some of these sessions and seeing all the presentations posted on the Teaching/Learning web page on Campus Cruiser.

As Abraham Lincoln stood on the East Portico of the Capitol in Washington, DC, looking out at a vast throng of American citizens who had

come to witness his historic inauguration speech on March 4, 1861, he spoke these now famous words intended to calm those who feared what his Presidency might portend for civil war. He said, "While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no administration, by any extreme of wickedness or folly, can very seriously injure the government in the short space of four years." That sentiment holds meaning for us equally well. Each of us, not just the Board and President, but each of us has a profound responsibility to ensure that our beloved institution is well served, as it surely will be so long as each of us rises above personal interest with the courage necessary to virtuously and vigilantly see it flourish.

You are all aware that I firmly believe not only in the exceptionalism of Ocean County College, which has, like our great Nation, clearly been the recipient of Almighty blessings and good fortune; but, I also firmly believe in the exceptionalism of each and every one of you who work so diligently to achieve and model excellence. Our dreams are great. Our work is hard, honest, and worthy. I commend you, from the deepest part of my being.

Let me add that I am enormously heartened by a new spirit of collaboration and warm civility that I feel emerging across the campus. We have a wonderful opportunity to put contentiousness behind us and awaken to a new era marked by willing integration of purpose and vision. Let us pledge to capture this moment and hold it.

Paraphrasing Mr. Lincoln's words, 'I am loath to close. We are not opponents, but friends – we must always be friends. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every lecture hall and ceremonial commemoration, to every living heart and hope, all over this broad and beautiful campus, will yet swell the chorus of unity, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.'

Thank you.

Now—before you go, it is time for us to announce the 2011 ***Outstanding Employee*** award:

Let me tell you about this year's recipient.

She is a dedicated employee who has coordinated various programs for her department, programs that have benefitted the efficiency of college operations enormously. She shows a positive and helpful work ethic towards countless students, faculty, and staff alike. She has been employed by the college since 2002 and has enjoyed consistently "outstanding" and "above average" annual evaluations. She is noted as a "team player," "friendly," "warm," and "courteous." In fact she exemplifies the very exceptionalism to which I just referred. She brings a "let's do it" attitude to the School of Nursing—and, if you haven't already guessed, the 2011 Outstanding Employee award this year goes to AUDREY DVORAK. Come on up, Audrey!