

CRAFTON HILLS COLLEGE
President's Letter
September 28, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

What an exciting two weeks: a fire which required an evacuation, program review and planning deadlines, accreditation presentations on our progress report and construction. I shall endeavor to keep the campus informed on issues and the latest information I have on budget, accreditation, facilities and campus activities.

Fire

On Wednesday, September 23 at 4:30 p.m., a fire broke out about a half mile (as the crow flies) northeast of the campus. By 5:30 p.m., the fire had expanded to cover several acres. At 6:30 p.m., the Cal Fire Incident Command advised us to close and evacuate the campus. Our staff and campus police and security did a good job evacuating students and personnel in a safe and orderly fashion. Since our campus was also used as a staging area for fire personnel and equipment and as a landing site for fire helicopters, we were advised by the Incident Command that the campus needed to be closed the following day until 6 p.m. Besides notifying staff and students by telephone and e-mail, we used our texting system, Alert-U. Alert-U is an optional program that students and staff can sign up for that sends a text message directly to a person's cell phone. Since the fire, more than three hundred names have been added to the system for a total of 1,572 names. We are launching a campaign to add all staff and as many students as possible because it works and it is quick.

On Thursday night at 6 p.m., with the fire near containment, classes resumed. Again we used our telephone trees for notifying staff and e-mail and Alert-U for students.

Vice President of Administrative Services Charlie Ng and Police Chief Pat McCurry were our liaisons to the Fire Incident Command so there was smooth coordination with emergency personnel. We have had two de-briefing meetings to evaluate our response to this emergency incident and we will be making necessary improvements. If any of you have suggestions to make our emergency procedures better, please direct them to Charlie Ng.

Enrollment

- Students are continuing to pay the difference in fees that they owe. According to Joe Cabrales and his staff the debt is now down to \$57,110.50. We shall continue to send reminders to the students (730) who missed the August 28, 2009 deadline. There are two consequences to nonpayment: first, students who do not pay will not be permitted to enroll for the spring semester; second, the amount not paid will be deducted from our allocation from the State.

Accreditation (The Crafton Challenge)

- The Crafton Council viewed the final version of the Progress Report to be sent to the Accrediting Commission. Our Board of Trustees will approve it at their October 5, 2009 meeting. Thank you all for your input and for your attendance at the different presentations made by Cheryl Marshall and Matthew Lee.
- So what happens next? After approval by the Board of Trustees the report will be sent to the Accreditation Commission to meet the October 15 deadline. We will have a visit by a team of two

in late October or early November. The Commission will read our written report and the report submitted by the visiting team and will vote on our status in January.

- Have we achieved complete resolution to the recommendations? No. Have we made significant progress? Yes. Work will continue until we achieve “complete resolution.”
- Currently the district is organizing committees to work on the recommendations for the October 15, 2010 report. Membership on these committees will include representation from the two campuses and the district.

Facilities

- In the past two weeks the mayor, a council member, and the city manager of the City of Yucaipa have toured our construction sites. All have been very impressed by the progress of the construction.
- We are still on track for a completion date of late Spring for both projects.

Budget

- Many other community colleges are making decisions on summer session 2010. Some have already announced reduced sessions by 50%, one multi-college district is only having summer session at two of its four campuses, and only two at this time have cut summer session.

Default rate

- John Muskavitch, director of Financial Aid, recently informed me that our default rate for Crafton Hills is 5.2%. The Federal loan default rate is important to a financial aid office because it is a threshold level set by the Department of Education. When an institution exceeds a 25% loan default rate for the prior three consecutive years, it will be removed from all Federal financial aid programs. Schools that lose their eligibility to participate in Federal aid programs may never be allowed back. In 1999, CHC was at great risk of losing all Federal aid programs because it had a default rate of over 22% and the director was instructed to take aggressive measures to reduce the default rate.

I am pleased to say that for the past three years CHC's loan default rate has been in the single digits which is reflective of the strong debt counseling policies and procedures implemented many years ago.

A Final Note

Great job club leaders! I understand many students signed up to receive more information on club activities during the Associated Student's Club Rush. All participants were given a cup of Coldstone ice cream and received toppings when visiting the club information tables.