

September 6, 2007

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: College Community

FROM: John S. Nixon, Interim President/CEO

SUBJECT: MONTHLY LETTER TO THE CAMPUS

Colleagues,

While this first week of September shows no signs of summer's departure, we've entered the fall semester effectively and efficiently. Enrollment is up, with noteworthy increases in our evening and weekend programs, and average class size is also up, demonstrating improved efficiency. I thank all of you for your hard work, dedication and focus on students, giving us a great start to the new year.

As we began the fall semester, the state budget was still in play, but the Governor has now signed the 2007-2008 budget, leaving cola and growth unchanged from allocations approved by the legislature, but vetoing funds for basic skills, an augmentation for noncredit funding and a few other, smaller items. While Mt. SAC would have benefited from an increase in revenue for noncredit programs, the state increased noncredit funding significantly last year. The basic skills funds vetoed by the Governor still may be available this year if our system can work out a compromise with the Governor over how the funds should be allocated to colleges. Our local initiatives on basic skills will continue, regardless of the status of the vetoed funds, because we have substantial one-time funds available this year.

In my August letter to you, I identified several priorities for the year, including communication among all constituencies. The employee survey from last spring clearly indicates that effective communication and effective management are areas in need of evaluation and improvement. I have asked the management team to take on the challenge of working with staff and faculty in their departments and units to determine what should constitute effective communication at unit and department levels and to evaluate current approaches to problem solving and decision-making in order to define appropriate levels of openness and

collaboration. So, I encourage you to speak openly with the managers with whom you work regularly, engaging in meaningful dialogue on interests and concerns related to effective communication, management and leadership. Although the employee survey revealed concerns at all levels of the college, I sense that we need to approach the challenges first at the smallest levels of college operations, our departments and units, in order to find the best opportunities for meaningful change. The vice presidents will be engaging their managers in dialogue throughout the year on progress in their areas related to mitigating the challenges.

Following the theme of effective communication, the Welcome Back Barbecue last month appears to have been well received by the over 600 faculty and staff who participated, and I want to make it a yearly event. Certainly, the food, music and ambiance worked together as a successful catalyst for celebrating the Mt. SAC family and the opening of the academic year. Finally, I want to remind you about my open office hours, which my office schedules monthly. If you have any interest in or need to speak with me, please come by during the open hours – I, too, want to be part of the solution to the challenge of effective communication.