

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 8, 2007

TO: College Community

FROM: John S. Nixon, Ph.D., Interim President/CEO

SUBJECT: MONTHLY LETTER TO THE CAMPUS

Colleagues,

While October may bring cooler temperatures, Mt. SAC is heating up, as all of us feel the pressures of very full classes, construction, re-locating, training on the new enterprise computing system (Banner), and an ever increasing number of meetings and other obligations. However, I find in myself and observe in others that passion and success are sure cures for stress brought on by our pressured professional lives. Thus, the many positive, productive and triumphant activities and events, centered on student success, can bring quick relief.

For me, two recent activities have rejuvenated my passion for our profession and for pursuing our mission of helping students achieve success. The Associated Students held its annual retreat a couple of weeks ago, and I had the honor of attending the weekend event. Forty bright minds with bright futures bonded with each other and with highly motivating Mt SAC faculty, staff and administrators to explore the theory and practice of leadership, diversity and stewardship of our environment. The students were serious and focused, but they also had fun, demonstrating the power of the group to support and celebrate the individual. Through lecture, demonstration, dialogue, games and nature walks, our student leaders learned, laughed, and taught each other about the values of difference, identification and shared vision. They asked some tough questions of the college leaders who attended, and, as one of those leaders, I found the dialogue professionally and personally enlightening and revealing. Our student leaders and all of you who

support them are doing exceptional work, and I applaud and respect them and you.

The second activity occurred last week, when twenty-five Mt. SAC faculty, staff and administrators participated at the statewide Student Success Conference in San Jose. The Mt. SAC team gave presentations on several of the very successful programs we have in place to promote student success, including Bridge, learning communities, and a new tool to assist us in compiling and using data to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. The significant presence and contribution of Mt. SAC at the conference demonstrates the depth and breadth of your commitment, creativity, and passion. (I note that one foundation participating at the conference approached us to participate in a grant funded program, which is unusual since most colleges have to apply to foundations for support.) As I interact with colleagues from around the state, I consistently hear words of respect and envy for all you do to support student success at Mt. SAC. The success you bring to students and to your own professional lives is sufficient fuel to sustain our shared passion for education, community and college.

JSN

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