President’s Vista

by Dr. Paul Parnell, President

Greetings Mustangs!

I appreciate the way Norco College staff, faculty, administrators and students communicate so positively and respectfully. I recognize that a printed newsletter is “old school,” but we thought we would try one edition and see if this is a helpful way to share what’s happening at Norco College. We welcome your feedback and have attached a survey to collect your input.

My first four months at Norco have been great. Let me bring you up to date on my view of what’s happening at Norco.

This fall we filled our classrooms to capacity as we served about 10,000 students with career and transfer goals and opportunities. We continue to upgrade our courses and curriculum with the relevancy of our rapidly changing technological innovations. We continue to meet the needs of our students in innovative programs, like T3P, Puente, ASNC, Honors, Supply Chain Technology, Upward Bound, CalWORKs, and Veterans.

We’ve completed our strategic plan with goals and objectives that will continue to guide us. The mission and vision we developed is ours and has meaning to us. We are

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Accreditation and other external evaluations have always seemed enjoyable to me.

The accreditation process is a self-evaluation process in which we examine what we are doing; tell our story to a visiting team of peers from other colleges who have also been through the same process; hear feedback from this team and from the accrediting body (ACCJC); and celebrate our accomplishments. However, writing our self-evaluation and participating in the site visit are really the last steps of the accreditation cycle. The real work leading to a successful accreditation is done over years as we strive to offer the highest quality educational programs and services.

- It is in all we do to hold ourselves accountable for providing the support our students need to achieve their educational and career goals.
- It is in our continuous program review process, our ongoing assessment of programs and learning outcomes, and our revisions to programs and services as a result of the assessment data we collect.
- It is in what we do every day to ensure our students have every opportunity to succeed.

Our job is to describe all of this amazing work in our self-evaluation and provide the evidence that we are doing what we say we do.

Student Services personnel are involved in the self-evaluation sub-committees, and particularly Standard II.B that specifically addresses our support services and their contribution to student achievement.

We are off to a great start. True to form, the stellar Student Services’ personnel and wonderful Norco College students have come together to engage in dialogue, to draft our self-study, and to look at our strengths and opportunity areas with openness and an honest commitment to our students’ success.

Of course, this doesn’t surprise me because that is the “Norco Way,” and I am proud to be a part of it.

Norco Budget News: Is it up?

Now that Proposition 30 has passed, we can all breathe a sigh of relief that, while we have no additional money, there will be no further cuts from this year’s budget.

**Good News and Bad News**

According to the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO), there is good news. The 2012/13 estimated budget has a $943 million deficit by June 30 2013. How is this good?

Because, after four years of significant budget cuts and downward revisions in the tens of billions, this year’s $93 billion budget has a shortfall of under $1 billion, which is an improvement. Further, the LAO estimates budget surpluses in subsequent years, so by 2017/18, we should have a $9 billion surplus. Since most of Norco College’s budget is tied to the State budget, this is good news.

However, remember that the RCCD budget has been built on some one-time fixes, such as borrowing on the La Sierra property, which cannot continue.

In 2013/14, the District will likely correct these “structural” budget issues and that could mean one more year of cuts even if Sacramento gives us the same budget as last year.

So, while there are clouds still on the horizon, the long term forecast is sunny and warm. Much is to be decided in the coming months by Sacramento, the economy, and the Board of Trustees, so stay tuned.
Student Centeredness

by Diane Dieckmeyer, Vice President, Academic Affairs

This semester, the college has been well positioned to begin the term with programs and degrees that will meet the diverse needs of our students.

In addition, numerous new degrees are in the queue, including three recently approved transfer degrees in Communications Studies, Early Childhood Education, and Sociology, and eight new career technical degrees in Computer Numerical Control Programming; Digital Electronics; Game Art: 3D Animation; Game Art: Character Modeling; Game Art: Environments and Vehicles; Game Audio; Game Design; and Supply Chain Technology.

On October 4th, thirty-four employers visited the college with booths and displays for our Career & Job Transfer Fair. The campus was filled with interested students and enthusiastic employers with over 1800 student interactions being recorded.

Two Logistics certificate programs at Norco College are the first in the nation to receive the Professional Designation in Logistics and Supply Chain Management (PLS) professional designation waiver for testing.

Also, Academic Affairs launched Career Coach, a new web-based career exploration tool to assist students in linking their classes with the local job market.

The Wilfred J. Airey Library and Puente have partnered to bring us a robust Read 2 Succeed program focusing on Hunger of Memory: The education of Richard Rodriguez, by Richard Rodriguez. We are enthusiastic about the author’s visit on November 29th.

In the face of a difficult economic climate, the faculty and staff at Norco College have remained committed to working hard to meet the needs of our students both inside and outside of the classroom.

Academic Senate and Accreditation?

by Dr. Sharon Crasnow, Norco Academic Senate President & Professor, Philosophy

The role of Academic Senates in the California Community Colleges is clearly spelled out in California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 53200.

In Title 5, the Academic Senate is defined as an organization “whose primary function, as the representative of the faculty, is to make recommendations to the administration of a college and to the governing board of a district with respect to academic and professional matters.” The section goes on to delineate academic and professional matters that include “Faculty roles and involvement in accreditation processes, including self-study and annual reports.”

Our role in accreditation is thus codified in law, but how the faculty roles and involvement are accomplished varies from college to college.

At Norco College, the Senate has revised its processes from previous accreditation self-evaluations in a way that makes a lot of sense from the perspective of the senate and, hence, the faculty. Norco Academic Senate Standing Committees—Academic Planning Council, Assessment, Curriculum, Program Review, Student Success, Library Advisory, Distance Education, and Professional Development—carry out the work that Title 5 assigns to the senate, which covers all academic and professional matters.

These standing committees serve as resources for the Accreditation Steering Committees as they address the standards and write the self-evaluation. The membership of the Accreditation Steering Committee, the timeline, and the processes for accreditation have all been affirmed by the Norco Academic Senate.

The involvement of the Senate ensures that there is broad participation from all segments of the Norco College community and particularly that all faculty are fully involved in and informed about accreditation.
President (Continued from page 1)

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Tell us what you think
about the Norco Mustang
News. Take our survey at
https://www.surveymonkey.com/
s/fall12news

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also helping to craft the
RCCD strategic plan and
updating our own Educational
and Facilities Master plans.
Our budget is stabilized for
now with the passage of Prop
30, and we are preparing for
an accreditation visit in 2014
with systematic planning,
authentic assessments and
learning outcomes.

Exciting things are
happening around campus.
We are finishing construction
projects under the voter-
approved Measure C,
including the Network
Operations Center and ADA
upgrades. The Art Gallery
hosted tremendous exhibits
featuring student art,
significant Norco history and
area Hispanic artists.

The first Mustang men’s
and women’s soccer teams
competed in burgundy and
grey uniforms at the highest
levels with great
sportsmanship. The college
hosted the Kiwanis Club Lake
Norconian 5K run through
the campus and the Navy base.
Recently, faculty, staff,
administrators, students and
community supporters enjoyed
an afternoon of planting in our
Water Demonstration Garden,
sponsored by Southern
California Edison.

In the near future, we will
diversify our energy resources
in an effort to save general fund
dollars with the installation of a
natural gas-powered fuel cell.

We are all looking forward
to the March 2013 opening
of the “Norco Trading
Post,” a weekend
marketplace destination
shopping area for local
residents; this will take
place in the college parking
lots and generate revenue
for Norco College.

As you can see, we are
busy with the work of
serving the Norco, Corona,
and Eastvale communities
with the best educational
opportunities possible.
What a privilege to be here
and part of this great
endeavor.

Accreditation (Continued from page 1)

staff, and students. Each is
assigned to a sub-committee
responsible for one of the four
accreditation standards. The
steering committee teams
gather evidence, enabling them
to produce sections of a
comprehensive Norco College
self-evaluation document
(likely to run to several hundred
pages).

The self-evaluation records
the extent to which we believe
we are meeting each of the
various sub-standards and will
include planning items for those
areas where the committee
finds improvement to be
especially warranted. (The
2009 self-evaluation included
56 planning items.)

The committee has already
produced a draft of the self-
evaluation. A revised draft is
due in December with initial
editing to be done in winter,
2013. A final draft must be
completed by late fall, 2013 so
that the Academic Senate, the
ISPC, the COTW, and the
Board of Trustees have time to
read and approve it.

Although the production of
an accreditation self-
evaluation falls largely on the
shoulders of steering
committee members, in truth,
everyone at Norco is involved.
Everyone has a stake in
ensuring that the work is
accurate and complete. More
importantly, everyone has a
role to play in maintaining the
excellence of the college.
Whenever we work toward
that end, we’re helping to
prepare for accreditation.

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