

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays everyone! This week marks the end of the fall semester at NCCC and my first semester as President. It has been a great semester in many ways!

We ended the fall 2010 semester up 6% in enrollment over fall 2009. That's after an increase this summer of 14% above where we were summer of 2009. Spring enrollment looks good right now too! We are up about 18% so far for spring 2011 over spring 2010.

In all cases we are being lead by online enrollment increases. This campus of the college is up nearly 38% this fall over last fall. Online classes are a real godsend to some of our students. There aren't scheduled class periods with online classes so working adults, especially those with families, can attend classes on their own schedule. We were only offering a few online classes just a few years ago and now it accounts for 20% of our total enrollment.

The Ottawa campus is seeing an increase in enrollment for the spring 2011 semester, up about 18% right now over spring 2010. The "buzz" about the new campus we are building there may be a contributing factor. Additionally, we have several new programs starting on Ottawa campus in the coming year – Surgical Technology and Occupational Therapy Assistant – which is also playing a role in greater attendance there.

Speaking of the new Ottawa campus, the building is still on schedule and on budget. We have had glorious weather for the most part throughout the project. Although there have been a few surprises, as there are with any large building project, our wonderful team of architects, engineers, and builders have adjusted and adapted and kept everything moving forward. Special thanks go out to Josh Walker of Lloyd Builders, Kyle Trendel of Devore and Associates, Darron Ammann of Bartlett and West, and Richard Lundstrom from Health Facilities Group, and to NCCC's project manager Ben Smith who have done and continue to do a herculean effort to meet our budget and deadlines. Completing a 52,000 square foot building in March when you just broke ground in June – Wow!

We have had an excellent semester in grant awards. So far this academic year since July we have captured \$1,712,806 in federal and state funds for the students of NCCC! The Student Support Services grant leads these awards at \$1,439,430. This grant helps those who are most at-risk for not completing college and gives them additional services to help them through. We received a Health and Human Services grant for \$233,376 for equipment for our new simulation hospital and for our science labs. Just this week, we received a \$40,000 state grant to help Adult Basic Education students prepare for entering college. Not a bad semester, if I do say so myself.

The college continues to raise money from foundations and individuals. Recently we raised enough money at an Ottawa event to permanently endow a scholarship for students at our northern campus. We have had several large donations for the Ottawa campus that will allow us to properly finish the building and have beautiful outdoor plazas for our students. At Chanutte, we are raising money for our planned renovation of the science labs and health science area to create a simulation hospital. That fund raising effort is going well too.

Of course, the real success of a college is student learning and student success. I will be able to fulfill one of the proudest moments of my career as I will speak at my first graduation as President.

On Saturday, NCCC will host its December nursing graduation and pinning for the Ottawa and Online Campuses at the chapel at Ottawa University. 58 Registered Nurses and 47 Licensed Practical Nurses will receive their degrees and certificates. It is called "pinning" because these new health professionals receive a pin as well as a sheep skin diploma. It is a touching ceremony, where a member of the nursing faculty will "pin" the award to their robes symbolically making them a nurse. If a member of the graduate's family is a nurse, they will induct them into the profession by "pinning" the student. I have seen two and three generations of nurses on stage together. It is a wonderful tradition and I congratulate those students and their families on a tremendous accomplishment!

We have had some tragic news as well this semester with the loss of three of our students in off-campus accidents. I don't think a week has gone by that I have not thought about them.

I am very thankful of my excellent Board of Trustees that gave me this opportunity to lead NCCC. I have the best faculty, staff, and administration of any college anywhere, so it is easy for NCCC to succeed with these wonderful folks. As we move forward to 2011, I am sure that we will face new challenges and have even greater successes.

As always I welcome your questions and comments at [binbody@neosho.edu](mailto:binbody@neosho.edu).