

The first weeks of January are traditionally a quiet time for NCCC. Although we have a few interterm classes going on, the campus is fairly empty. We usually spend the time preparing for the upcoming spring semester. There just isn't much in the way of news – not this year though! Three big things happened this January.

First, NCCC has been named the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest growing community college in the country for our sized institution by Community College Week magazine! Last year we were 14<sup>th</sup>, this year 5<sup>th</sup>! By the way this also makes us the fastest growing community college in Kansas again. To make this ranking Community College Week used national data called IPEDS collected by the US Department of Education on a yearly basis.

I am very proud of what we have done as a College to open our doors to more and more students. Through our offerings at Chanute, Ottawa, online, and our many sites at high schools, hospitals, and our new Eastern Kansas Rural Technology Center in Garrett, we keep expanding, reaching more and more students in the area.

But what does it matter to reach all of these students if the students are not successful? That's my second piece of news.

Recently the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) created a new, and in my opinion, more accurate measuring stick to examine colleges and universities to see if the students are really getting their educational needs met. Previously the Feds just looked at graduation rates to see if NCCC was doing a good job or not. Which sounds ok, but if you look closer you will see that many students do not come to a community college to get an associate's degree.

For instance, if a student came to the Ottawa campus, took classes for a year to "get the basics out of the way" then transferred to KU and was successful there that sounds great doesn't it? The student got their bachelor's degree and NCCC helped provide a low-cost robust start to that degree. But for NCCC, according to the US Depart of Ed., that student is a failure. The student is a drop out and didn't graduate. Forget that he/she never intended on graduating and had their educational needs met, the fact that they did not get a degree from NCCC goes down as a mark against us.

Even under this myopic US Government measurement of graduation rate, NCCC does very well. About 33% of our students graduate with a degree or certificate in 3 years, compared to the national average of 22%. But still 33% success looks like 67% failure doesn't it?

That is why KBOR created the Student Success Index that follows a student from their community college through university and gradation. If the student completed a degree anywhere or is still enrolled working on his or her certificate associate's or bachelor's degree, that is a success.

I am VERY proud to report that, for the most up-to-date years studied 2010-2013, NCCC has a 71.9% success rate. About 72% of our students are still working on their degrees or have graduated! That is certainly better than 33%.

How good is that statistic? It makes us number 1 in Kansas among the 19 community colleges! Wow! I could not have been happier. My chest is quite puffed up right now ! (That's from pride, not from all of the holiday weight I gained this season. Ok, some of it is from pie.)

I hope you join me in being proud of your community college. First in Kansas in growth (5<sup>th</sup> in the nation!) and first in Kansas in student success. (It's not all good though. We are last in something – and that is percentage of state support from the state funding formula. We are the least state supported higher education institution in Kansas. But that is another, much less positive article for another month. Probably the same number of exclamation points though.)

Lastly, you may have heard that NCCC along with Neosho County Emergency Management hosted a full active shooter simulation on the Chanute campus. First responders from across the region participated in the event lead by the Chanute Police Department acting as Incident Command. We had about 30 students who played the part of the victims, complete with wound makeup from the NCCC Theatre Department.

My thanks to all of the first responders and the hospital for helping make the day a success. Special thanks goes to Ben Smith from NCCC, Byron Shultz from Emergency Management, and especially Deputy Chief Raymond Hale and Detective Gary Allen from Chanute Police Department for setting this up.

The shooter, played by one of the Chanute Police Officers, walked through four buildings firing blank rounds from a prop gun where we had victims waiting. He even set off a number of flash/bang grenades in the process. It was quite realistic.

Over about a two hour event first responders such as police, fire, and ambulance went through the motions of responding to our simulated event. We even had a “wounded” student transported by helicopter. Our local hospital received the 20-30 victims and practiced triage procedures.

I think all of the entities involved learned things that worked well and things that need adjusting. The College will be reinforcing some of our communication technology, installing additional cameras and swipe card access, as well and changing some of our procedures. God forbid that this kind of event ever happens but “Fortune favors the prepared,” as Pasteur said. We want to be as ready as we can be.

So, it has been a busy few weeks here at the College! It will be capped off with the start of the spring semester on Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup>. And away we go!

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me at [binbody@neosho.edu](mailto:binbody@neosho.edu).