Executive Director’s Report
By Dr. Eric Clark

Preliminary spring enrollment numbers are up. Figures from the Spring 2009 semester show a 10.7% credit enrollment increase compared to the Spring 2008, or an increase of 6,740 students. These numbers follow the preliminary Fall 2008 8.2% increase compared to Fall 2007. The preliminary enrollment figures reinforce the fact that our numbers increase when the economy goes down.

Our office is gathering as much information about the federal stimulus package as we can. We have attended several meetings and conference calls on the subject. It appears there are several sections that may benefit the community colleges. Funds are supposed to be available to restore FY09 budget cuts, to provide for modernization and renovation and repair for existing buildings on campuses, and to help pay for workforce training. These are just a few of the areas we have identified for the community colleges. While much about the package is still not clear, it appears the money will begin to flow quickly, and we must be prepared to act. As soon as more information is made available, we will be sure to pass it along.

The legislative session is quickly coming to a close, with “sine die” adjournment scheduled for April 4. The House and Senate have both passed the community colleges’ support bill and the SBCJC’s administration bill. Different figures are in each bill, and the next step is to meet in a conference committee to reach an agreement on the final versions. The deadline for the appropriations conference reports to be filed is Wednesday, March 25.

The new SBCJC headquarters is continuing to make its way through the legislative process. S.B. 3083, the bill that gives the SBCJC land to construct a new headquarters, has passed the House and Senate and now must go to conference. H.B. 1722 is this year’s bond bill for most state agencies. The Senate version of this bill allocates $2 million to the SBCJC for a new headquarters and $4 million to the colleges for renovation and repair. This bill now must go to conference and faces the March 25 deadline. I think the Senate’s $2 million is likely to be the final number, which will be plenty to get our project moving.

We are continuing to track legislation pertaining to the community colleges. Remember that you can access this information on our website. Phi Theta Kappa’s Capitol Day is Wednesday, March 25. Events will begin at 9:00 am in the Capitol’s Old Supreme Court Chamber. Speakers include Senator Doug Davis, Representative Kelvin Buck, and Brenda Davis from Archives and History, who will speak on the architectural history of the Capitol. The lunch will begin at 11:30 at the Marriott. This will be an exciting day for this outstanding group of community college students.

Finance Division News
By Deborah Gilbert

The finance division has been assisting the programs division with enrollment verifications this month. We are happy to be a part of this very important task and it gives us an opportunity to visit the colleges. The Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) has instructed state agency to complete an internal control study by June 1, 2009. This is in response to SAS 112 on internal controls. This is the first year an internal control study has been required. After this initial study, an annual study must be completed by December 31 of each year.

The Finance Division has been studying, attending various meetings, and participating in conference calls over the past few weeks trying to learn all we can about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) aka Stimulus funds. Both the House and Senate have passed their versions of our appropriations bills – S.B. 3222 (Administration) and S.B. 3223 (CJC Support). Conferences will be named soon. The deadline to file conference reports on appropriations bills and revenue bills is March 25, 2009.

Inside this issue:

- Workforce Education
- Career and Technical Education
- Athletics
- Workforce Monitoring
- Technology Division
- Grants and Related Activities
- ABE/GED
Workforce Education

By Dexter Holloway

The second quarterly meeting of the Chief Career-Technical Officers and Deans Association (CCTODA) and the Workforce Directors Association was held on February 25th at the Beau Rivage in Biloxi. This meeting was held in conjunction with the Creating Futures Conference. The two Association presidents, Scott Alsobrooks of Pearl River Community College (Workforce) and Mary Ann Sandidge (CTE) of MS Delta Community College, facilitated the joint meeting. Chris Crawford of Sivad, Inc. gave a presentation on his company’s online training products. Dr. Willis Lott, President of MGCCC, provided a Legislative update, and Mark Scott, of Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding, discussed the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) and employment opportunities at Northrop. After lunch, the two groups broke out by Association, with each conducting its own meeting to discuss important issues relevant to their respective areas. The Workforce Directors started discussions on next year’s project guidelines and policies. After the meeting some of the Directors and Deans attended the 2009 Creating Future’s Conference. The next joint meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 21-22, 2009 at Southwest MS Community College.

Career and Technical Education

By Dr. Shawn Mackey

On February 2nd, I had the pleasure of attending the opening of Hinds Community College’s new Rankin County Career and Technical Education Building. The building features a very modern design and is equipped to provide students the skills they need for 21st century jobs. On February 18th, Mississippi Public Broadcasting Network hosted a live radio broadcast focusing on the declining economic climate. I was invited to represent the Community and Junior College System in a panel discussion aimed at providing encouragement and direction to individuals who were unemployed or who were facing the possibility of unemployment. The forum gave me the opportunity to tout the community and junior college system, our colleges’ close connections to employers and the workforce, the training and education programs we offer, and the overall value we provide to students the training, re-training and education. On February 23rd, Mississippi State University’s Research and Curriculum Unit (RCU) held their quarterly Advisory Board Meeting. SBCJC representatives on the RCU Advisory Board include Dr. Debra West and Dr. Shawn Mackey. The mission of the RCU is to conduct activities such as curriculum development, personnel development, program improvement, and research to improve career and technical education and workforce development in Mississippi. We are proud to be a part of that Advisory Board. Each year, the SBCJC receives $15,000 in Carl D. Perkins money to fund projects that would increase the enrollment of students in non-traditional programs. In this case, the term non-traditional refers to programs that train students for occupations or fields of work in which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in that occupation or field of work. Non-traditional programs are federally defined by the Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code assigned to each program. This year we had six (6) institutions apply for the three $5000 grants. As a result of the strength and quality of the proposals, the selection committee had a difficult task selecting the three (3) winning recipients. The three highest scoring projects and 2009 Non-Traditional Recruiting and Retention Grant recipients, in alphabetical order are: Itawamba Community College, for their project “Career U”; Meridian Community College, for their project “Occupations Not Explored by Men (ONE)”; and MS Gulf Coast Community College, for their project “Welding Opportunities for Women” (WOW). Congratulations to those recipients and thanks to all of the institutions who submitted applications this year!

Athletics

By Jim Southward

Congratulations to the Jones County Junior College men and women for winning state championships in basketball. This does not happen often when the same school can lay claim to both titles. In Region XXIII Tournament action played at Mississippi College, Mississippi Gulf Coast men captured the title and the Lady Lions from East MS took honors in the women’s division. Both teams will advance to the NJCAA tournaments this week. We wish them the best of luck as they travel and know they will do a fantastic job of representing Region XXIII and the MACJC. Spring sports are under way with our state teams starting the baseball and women’s softball seasons. Golf and tennis seasons have also started and we are looking for some exciting action as spring weather starts to bloom.
Workforce Monitoring

By Joseph Larry

The State Board for Community and Junior Colleges conduct annual monitoring visits of workforce projects with the fifteen Community and Junior Colleges to check for compliance with the 2008 workforce policies. Ten of the fifteen colleges have been reviewed to date this fiscal year. The most recent visit was conducted at Pearl River Community College. Joseph Larry, Director of Monitoring, SBCJC; Mr. Scott Alsobrooks, Workforce Development Center Director; and Mrs. Lee Bell, Workforce Specialist at PRCC conducted an industry visit with the Kohler Company to acquire feedback on their level of satisfaction of the training provided by the college. Ms. Phyllis Bogan, Human Resource Manager, and Mr. Steve Travis, Facility Manager, coordinated this meeting and represented the Kohler Company.

Kohler provides engines to HOP, MTD, Toro, Home Depot, Lowes and Sears. The company representatives were very complimentary of their partnership with PRCC. It was stated that because of this relationship they have experienced consistent growth in Southeast Mississippi over the years. Their peak production time is October through May. The company is recognized as a key contributor to the economic development in the Hattiesburg community. It is noted that the average employee drives 60 miles one way to work from the surrounding area.

During this past fiscal year PRCC provided workforce training in computer operation including classes in Excel1 and 11. An assortment of additional training was provided by the workforce development center in the following topics: SPC, PLC, Shop Math, Quality Electric Motor, Motor Control and Soft Skills training. PRCC provided training as needed to the day and evening shifts. According to the facility manager there is a growing demand for Machine Shop classes in the Hattiesburg area, although the equipment and instructors are thirty miles away at the Poplarville Campus. This continues to be an ongoing challenge for the company. Salaries are determined by four work categories: Production Machine Operators and Set-Up level C, B, A Advanced levels.

Kohler’s Human Resource Manager expressed a high level of satisfaction with the training provided by PRCC. Their management is community oriented and understands and appreciates the role the workforce development center plays in moving the company to a higher level of competitiveness. Kohler’s headquarters is located in Kohler, Wisconsin.

The monitoring team has upcoming visits scheduled with Meridian (4-3-09) and Holmes (4-9-09). The SBCJC monitoring team is appreciative of the cooperation and professionalism shown by the workforce development center staff during the FY 08 monitoring cycle.

We look forward to opportunities in the future to share time and offer technical support to our community college partners.

Technology Division

By Tina Bradley

Another success for the Creating Futures Through Technology Conference! With approximately 400 in attendance, the enthusiasm this year from presenters, moderators, exhibitors, and participants over-all was evident. Evaluations collected were very positive, with many attendees asking for more. Mr. Raymond Hartfield from AT&T delivered a keynote address on “Mobility in Higher Education” that amazed the crowd with how universities are using mobile communication devices for student enrollment, delivery of instruction, and communication between faculty, staff and students. The Clarion-Ledger’s Editorial Cartoonist, Mr. Marshall Ramsey’s presentation humored the crowd as he shared some of his favorite political cartoons and explained how today’s advanced technologies have made cartoon development and publication much faster and more simplified. The SBCJC will be the lead agency in the planning and coordination of the 2010 conference. Contract negotiations for location are already in process for next year’s conference scheduled for March 3-5, 2010.

The first meeting of the reorganized Community and Junior Colleges’ Technology Contacts has been scheduled. The reorganization of this group consists of a Strategic Technology Council and a Technology Operations Council. The Strategic Council will serve as the point where all fifteen individual college’s strategic focuses become a system focus, with the primary purpose being to ensure that system IT/IS investments are aligned with its strategic objectives. The Technology Operations Council will serve as the point where all fifteen individual college’s technologies work and operate in a cohesive manner. The group will utilize the sharing of ideas and best practices to facilitate better solutions to support the strategic objectives of each college and the system. The presidents approved this reorganization of the Technology Contacts group and agreed to appoint a “CIO” level person to represent that college. The Technology Contacts held their February meeting in conjunction with the Creating Futures Through Technology Conference where they were updated on the reorganization. The first meeting date for the Strategic Council is April 2, 2009.

Grants and Related Activities

By Jason Carter

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security has renewed the contract with the SBCJC to provide funding for the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) initiative. The previous contract allowed us to issue over 5,000 CRC’s to Mississippians across the state. The new contract will run from March 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010, and those funds are already being obligated to the colleges.
**ABE/GED**

*By Danny Seal*

New GED Examiner’s Training was conducted on February 10 here at our complex. In an effort to increase GED testing for this program year, several testing centers have added more Examiners in order to offer more testing dates. The following testing centers participated in the training: East Mississippi Community College, Grenada Public Schools, Northeast Mississippi Community College, Southwestern Mississippi Community College, Holmes Community College, and Meridian Community College.

The Adult Education department held the 2009 Fulltime Teacher Conference at Hinds Community College February 12 & 13. This is a Professional Development activity sponsored by the SBCJC as part of our on-going training support for the Adult Education instructors and programs. The Keynote Speakers were Neil Sturomski and Nan-cie Payne, both nationally known learning disability experts and educators. They spoke on Transitioning to the Workplace for Individuals with Disabilities. They also conducted breakout sessions on: Effective Instruction in Reading, Writing and Math; Building Critical Transition Competencies – Meta Cognitive Skills; and GED Accommodation Request. The Adult Education Training Team (trainers from various local programs) conducted the remainder of the break out sessions included: What’s in a Word (Math Word Problems), AEMS for Teachers, Science- Dare to Discover, Beyond the Four Letter Dilemma (Reading Instruction) and English as a Second Language Instruction. We had 129 participants from all 30 Adult Education programs. This was a great opportunity for fulltime Adult Education staff to share ideas and instructional strategies.

We also hosted a meeting with Education and Training Institute, Inc. (ETI) staff and some of our local ABE directors that are located in ETI’s areas of service. The meeting took place in our Board Room on February 25. At this meeting, we looked at better ways to partner and offer information on the goals and objectives of both programs so we can better serve out-of-school youth.

We are in the initial stages of planning a professional development opportunity for adult education and literacy professionals in May. The program focuses on how practitioners and program directors can become advocates for adult literacy. The one-day conference will also focus on the impact of low literacy on workforce competitiveness and how adult education can work with business to be partners in promoting and advocating for adult education/literacy. The Dollar General Literacy Foundation working with the National Coalition for Literacy will sponsor and fund the meeting. The Dollar General Literacy Foundation has always been generous and many of our local ABE programs have received small grants that they use to assist in their marketing efforts.

**MSVCC**

*By Terry Pollard*

This year, the State Board eLearning office and college distance learning coordinators prepared and presented the Creating Futures pre-conference events.

The events were tailored for virtual college faculty and administrators.

Over 100 faculty attended, and the evaluations were highly positive. Faculty told us they are eager for this kind of targeted training in the years to come. Some of the things that people learned included: the importance of creating online communities, as opposed to courses; key differences in the Blackboard and Desire2Learn platforms; the components of an engaging online course; how to effectively use the Blackboard Grade Center; and how online courses can benefit from video and audio with Wimba.

The lunch session featured grant winners from last year’s AT&T MSVCC Institute. Faculty from ICC, Holmes, MGCCC, Pearl River, and Jones County Junior College spoke about new curriculum materials and online courses. The materials they have built are now available to anyone teaching in the virtual college. Collaboration at its best!

During the afternoon keynote session, Dr. Steve Harmon, from Georgia State University, spoke on “The Changing Landscape of Learning (and Learners)”’. He spoke a familiar message: how today’s youth differ as learners of the past. What was unexpected, however, was his use of story-telling to impart a new spin on the theme. For example, he spoke of the stones on Easter Island and how deforestation brought about the demise of the islanders. The metaphor was understood by all; faculty cannot assume that the resources they use will always be effective with their students. He also spoke a good deal about the prevalence of gaming among today’s youth and expressed a desire that educational technologists could build better and more pedagogically-sound games.

The pre-conference was funded by the AT&T Institute for the MSVCC.

We wanted to thank those that presented and assisted in the conference: Jennifer Leimer, Buffy Matthews, Pam Ladner, Sharon Hudson, Elizabeth Spooner, George Pate, James Moore, Jenny Jones, Scott Smith and Jesse Girardi (from Wimba), Beth Maxfield, Chad Garick, Jodie Cummings, Lowell Golmon, and Sharon Gerald.

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