Seminole State College

CAMPUSS MEMO
From Dr. Jim Utterback – President
June 23, 2011

I hope your summer is going well. I would like to inform the campus community of several items of interest including some important actions taken during the Seminole State College Board of Regents meeting held this afternoon.

BUDGET APPROVED
The institutional budget for FY 2012 was approved by the SSC Board of Regents today. As everyone is aware, higher education has taken major cuts in state funding. The State Appropriation for SSC for FY-12 is significantly less than it was in FY-07. The difference is that during the five years since FY-07, the College’s enrollment has increased 20% and mandatory costs have increased approximately 30%. This makes the budget process particularly challenging. The administrative team, led in a significant manner by the efforts of Vice President Katherine Benton and her staff, has worked arduously to find ways to reduce costs and stretch resources. As always, throughout our budget process and as part of all important decisions made by the administration and the Board of Regents - our first priority will continue to be protecting our academic mission and maintaining a high level of service to our students.

Having anticipated and planned for these difficult times, we were able to report to the Board that SSC will have a cash reserve balance of approximately $900,000 at the end of this fiscal year. The budget approved today uses $300,000 of this cash reserve for priorities in the coming year, primarily personnel initiatives. For the third year in a row, due to reductions in state appropriations, we will not be giving across-the-board increases. I am pleased to report, however, that through careful planning and temporarily freezing several open positions on campus, we have been able to take positive actions on behalf of our employees.

- **Academic Rank**
  We are instituting a new academic ranking system, recommended by the consultant evaluators of the Higher Learning Commission, to establish “Professor,” “Associate Professor,” “Assistant Professor” and “Instructor” titles on campus. These titles, awarded based on the completion of the tenure process, longevity at the college and merit, will be accompanied by salary increases.

- **Stipends Made Permanent**
  In the past, we have awarded one-time stipends based on availability of funds, enrollment numbers and other variables. This year, we are making a positive move to make the FY11 stipend of $500 and a planned FY12 stipend of $500 a permanent part of our employees’ base salaries.
• **Living Wage**
  Many of our full-time classified staff, while making more than minimum wage, do not draw a large enough salary to keep in step with the “cost of living.” The budget reflects a concerted effort to bring those salaries up to a “living wage” of a minimum of $10.50 per hour.

Through these and various other changes, including longevity increases, everyone on campus will receive a minimum increase in salary of 2%. With the living wage changes, classified staff raises will average 6.6%. Faculty and professional staff increases will average 3.8%. Administrative increases average 2%. Campus-wide, the salary changes average 4.3%, again largely due to the living wage commitment. It is hoped that these changes demonstrate a commitment to support our employees – our most valuable resources.

**TUITION INCREASE**
The Board approved modest increases in tuition and two fees at today’s meeting. Resident tuition will be increased from $62.55 to $68.55 and nonresident tuition from $134.00 to $146.45 per credit hour. The Assessment Fee will increase from $2.00 to $3.00 per credit hour. The Student Facility Fee from $8.30 to $9.00 per credit hour. This will result in an increase of 7.7% in tuition and mandatory fees. Raising tuition and these two fees will help offset our reduction in state funding and allow us to continue to provide necessary services to students.

**PERSONNEL NEWS**
We have several new appointments – and some new faces on campus. **Dr. Noble Jobe** has been hired as a biology instructor; **Melissa Bryant** as a math instructor; and **Michael Hanson** as Maintenance Coordinator. Mr. Hanson is being shown around campus this week by **Kelly Chastain**, whose last day before beginning retirement is June 30. **Jamie Mills** has been transferred from Student Support Services to serve as a math instructor; and, **Damaris Haney** has been transferred from the Gear Up program to serve as an adviser for the Talent Search program. As previously announced, **Dr. Mark Ames**, formerly of Tulsa Community College, will be joining our staff as Dean of Students. He will begin at SSC next Monday. **Dr. Ames** brings a wealth of experience in higher education and student services to this position. **Pam Koenig**, former Chair of the Social Sciences Division will assume the title of Dean of Instructional Compliance. Ms. Koenig, who recently led us successfully through the accreditation process, has been handling a number of assessment and reporting responsibilities on a part-time basis for the past year. All of these individuals will be great additions to their respective areas on campus.
NORTH POND PROJECT
We have had some exciting news regarding our efforts to further improve our campus grounds with the development of the north pond area. Several donors have stepped forward to assist with this project of the SSC Educational Foundation. Foundation Trustee Darlene Wallace and her company, Columbus Oil, made a major lead gift to get the project underway. The old pond has been cleaned out and expanded. A new drainage system and irrigation water well have been installed. Thanks to the generosity of SSC Regent Kenneth Henderson and his wife Rose, several other improvements have been made to the area including the purchase of a 12-foot bronze statue of a Trojan warrior. The statue should be on campus in the next couple of weeks. Also, Founder’s Award Recipients Ben and Bonnie Walkingstick generously made a substantial gift to erect a 24-foot, octagon-shaped, Victorian style gazebo in the north park area. The gazebo is scheduled to be shipped and erected on-site in late August. Future plans include sidewalks, lighting and a garden area. The generous gifts provided by these long-time friends and donors to Seminole State College, as well as the success of our recent Spring Banquet and other Foundation fund-raisers, have made this project possible. We appreciate the Foundation leading this effort to help beautify our campus. Foundation Executive Committee Members Chairman Kenny Pryor, Vice Chair Mark Schell, Vice Chair Bob Swearingen and RBRC Director Larry Smith deserve special thanks for their continuing efforts in support of Seminole State College.

Fall In-Service dates have been set for August 10-12, 2011. The In-Service Committee, under the leadership of Faculty Senate President Dr. Steve Bolin, has met and started planning for this official start of the fall term. Please mark your calendars for these dates. A detailed agenda will be provided to you as an insert with your July paycheck.

Even during difficult times, Seminole State College is moving forward in a very positive manner. Thank you all for your dedicated hard work on behalf of our students. I hope that everyone has an opportunity for some fun and relaxation this summer. I look forward to an exciting year ahead for Seminole State College!