Semino State College

CAMPUS MEMO

From Dr. Jim Utterback – President

July 1, 2009

I would like to inform the campus community of several important events that occurred during the Seminole State College Board of Regents meeting held last week.

BUDGET APPROVED

During our preparations of the budget for the coming year, we have had to deal with a decrease of $234,343 in state funding. In light of this, Vice President Katherine Benton and her staff have done a stellar job of finding ways to pinch every penny twice and stretch our resources to come out with a balanced budget. As a result of the poor economy and a decrease in state funding, for the first time in many years, we did not recommend initial across-the-board raises for faculty and staff at the present time. To be prudent, we are delaying any decisions on raises until later this fall – dependent on student enrollment numbers. While I wish the situation were different, I am pleased that we are not in the position of some of our sister institutions that are laying off employees or enforcing unpaid furloughs. Summer enrollment, which is usually a good indicator of fall enrollment, appears to be up at this time. However, we are seeing that a larger number of our students are having a harder time paying their bills. As our enrollment goes up, the amount of tuition and fees which we have been unable to collect is also going up. The college has received federal stimulus money to help offset the decreases in state funding, as well as increases in mandatory costs. These funding cuts and increases in costs would be devastating without the stimulus funding.

TUITION FREEZE

Also during the June Board meeting, the Regents voted to freeze tuition and mandatory fees at the current rates for the coming year. This action reflects our commitment to support requests from Legislative leaders that colleges and universities in Oklahoma try not to raise tuition and mandatory fees. The tuition freeze for all state campuses is the first since 2001. It is intended to help families struggling in the down economy.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

The Board approved an expenditure for some great new instructional technology utilizing funds from our Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) federal grant. The classroom video capture system will improve educational experiences for our students and faculty. This technological equipment will allow video streaming of class lectures and activities, as well a method of recording classes to be catalogued for later viewing online.

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FAREWELL
The Board offered their gratitude and best wishes to Chairman Roger Nansel as he presided over his last meeting after serving as a Regent for the past seven years. Regent Nansel has served during one of the most exciting times in our institution’s history. He has been a voice of reason, provided sound advice and supported the growth and development of Seminole State College. We offer our most sincere appreciation for a job well done.

SYMPATHY
Funeral services for long-time Seminole State College business instructor Dr. Joy Epperley were held yesterday in Holdenville. Dr. Epperley passed away last weekend at the OU Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City. After several years teaching in area public high schools, she joined the faculty of then Seminole Junior College in 1969 – the year the college broke away from Seminole High School to become an independent two-year community college. She retired in 1987, but continued to teach on a part-time basis for the Business and Information Systems Division. Her association with this college spanned over four decades – possibly the longest of any employee. She loved this institution, her colleagues and especially her students. She will be greatly missed.

As a final note, Fall In-Service dates have been set for August 12-14, 2009. The In-Service Committee, under the leadership of Faculty Senate President Kelli McBride, 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.

Best wishes for a restful and fun summer!