

From: BC3 President <BC3.President@bc3.edu>
Sent: Friday, May 1, 2020 6:24 PM
To: All Employees <allemployees@bc3.edu>
Subject: Message from the President

Greetings, BC3 colleagues,

I hope this email finds you and your families safe and well.

It's been seven weeks since our college responded to the COVID-19 situation. We did so keeping the safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors at the forefront of our decisions.

Our college has navigated difficult times in our history – during crises on scales both international and national: The Vietnam War. The economic downturn in 1987. September 11. The commercial banking collapse of 2008 and its ensuing recession.

Not one has been as difficult as COVID-19.

The worldwide disruption presents challenges unlike any of our time, challenges that are disquieting to chief executive officers in higher education nationwide.

In a March 27 article, Inside Higher Ed reported the results of a survey of 172 campus leaders across the country by Hanover Research. The survey found that these leaders share concerns about the mental well-being of students, faculty and staff; student engagement; remote learning; and resuming in-person classes for the fall semester.

Most concerning to college and university presidents, however, are potential long-term issues with regard to COVID-19: Overall financial stability, decline in overall future student enrollment and ability to afford to employ staff and faculty.

Historically, when the economy dives, community colleges thrive. Unemployed workers register for academic courses in community colleges as do a greater number of traditional-aged students whose families simply don't have the resources to send children "away" to study.

Following the recession that began in 2008, BC3 experienced enrollment gains through 2012 – including one academic year in which enrollment increased by 15 percent.

COVID-19 is different.

Our economy is suffering and although our summer numbers have inched upward, credit count has decreased 6.26 percent compared with this time last year. Our fall credit count is down 14.79 percent.

Fall credit enrollment is a factor when Jim Hrabosky, our college's vice president for administration and finance, and I work with the board of trustees' Finance Committee to create a balanced 2020-21 budget. Other variables include noncredit enrollment, state funding and the

implementation of the higher education emergency relief fund portion of the 2020 **Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act.**

While there are still many unknowns for the future, one constant each and every day is persevering – regardless of COVID-19 constraints.

Our college has been intentional, strategic and calculating since 2007 with finances, so much so that our fiscal management has been described by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education as “sound.”

We continue to garner financial support from individuals and organizations who believe in BC3. These dollars allow us to move forward with capital projects and initiatives that preserve our operating budget. These dollars are often leveraged as a match for commonwealth funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

We are anticipating another significant commitment designated to fund the proposed Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health Building, adding to the \$3 million in private gifts that are helping us to remain “all-in” for the Shaffer School of Nursing and Allied Health. We are also planning for another match from the commonwealth for this project.

Our Strategic Enrollment Management Committee (SEMC) is working diligently on new strategies for fall recruitment. The ideas are creative and aggressive while remaining respectful and mindful of our nation’s current plight.

My Cabinet collaborates with internal stakeholders to develop initiatives directing strategies for success with students, enrollment and finances. Those members share suggestions with me. I share my direction for the college with the board of trustees and appropriate governmental agencies.

I am so “Pioneer Proud” of how well each of you has responded during this unique time, and never more convinced that our students are benefiting from the same quality, affordable and accessible education that we’ve consistently offered since our opening in September 1966.

This, BC3 colleagues, is a unique time. The long-term issues most concerning to the 172 campus leaders across the nation -- financial stability, enrollment and employment -- are also mine.

I will do everything in my power as president to confront the challenge of navigating the difficult times that may lie ahead for our college. That is my commitment.

I remain so “Pioneer Proud” of each of you.

Sincerely,

President Neupauer

