



WestWords

A bi-weekly communique from the Office of the President

ISSUE #6: March 8, 2017

Today is [International Women's Day](#), with a global focus on equity and celebration of “the social, cultural, economic, and political achievements of women” (as quoted from the movement’s website). On behalf of the entire West community, I want to recognize our outstanding women educators and staff whose commitment resonates throughout our campus and is evident in the quality and compassion of our services to and support for our students.

Thank you.

WLAC Colleagues:

Over the past few weeks, I have been delivering to shared governance entities across campus a presentation outlining the convergence of multiple factors that will affect significantly the future of our College (for those of you who haven’t yet heard it, the overview of factors affecting West’s future is provided on page 4).

This issue of WestWords is focused on concerns voiced in response to these presentations about the challenges and opportunities we face as a community of educators. As you review, please know that you are welcome to ask, either in person or via email, any additional questions that you might have. I want to be sure that everyone has a full understanding of the environment in which we are operating and what is expected from us, both from the District and from the State...and more importantly, from our students.

First, an announcement...

Effective Thursday, March 16, Ms. Helen Lin, financial analyst currently assigned to Academic Affairs and Workforce Education, will be assigned to Administrative Services. This move will allow the centralization and coordination of all major income/expenditure units and will allow for greater efficiencies in the management of multiple funding sources, including grants. This re-assignment has been made because my past experiences have convinced me that overall responsibilities for the effective management of all institutional budgets—including grants—must reside with the College’s fiscal officer.

As a result, this decision leads to the first concern that has surfaced...

The re-alignment of fiscal responsibilities means that Administrative Services is responsible for the College’s grant program.

Not at all. Mark Pracher, Vice President for Workforce Education, will continue to use his considerable talents in grantsmanship in working with faculty in the identification and procurement of grants and related activities, including building budgets and identifying areas of expenditure. Iris Ingram, as Vice President for Administrative Services, will be responsible for ensuring that all budgets are thoroughly vetted with regards to matching funds and expenditure of College dollars in support of grants (e.g., facilities, adjunct costs, technology capabilities, expectations of institutionalization of grant programs, etc.) as well as grant-related audits.

We will also be revising our grant review process to ensure more complete review by our shared governance system, especially as it relates to curricular proposals.

Please note that this re-assignment will not affect the responsibilities of the Academic Affairs units to build and manage their budgets.

Now, for other concerns generated as a result of my presentations...

You have said that we will have to look at academic programs and their viability within the context of community and regional needs. As a result, you are preparing to shut down academic programs.

No, I won't be arbitrarily closing programs. Far from it. Any decisions about academic programs in the future will be the result of comprehensive analysis of current data, trends, and institutional vision—all discussed at length within the contexts of shared governance and with full engagement of the faculty. My focus thus far has been to provide you a context for why any discussion of program expansion or discontinuance is an important component in responding to State expectations for innovation, creativity, and change. I have already scheduled a meeting with Dr. Adrienne Foster (Academic Senate) and Ms. Fran Leonard (College Council) to begin planning how we can hold these conversations in an open and transparent manner beginning in fall 2017.

In my presentations, I have mentioned a report that will be delivered to President's Cabinet on March 13 regarding the status of current programs. This report, to be presented by Mr. Sprague, Ms. Aguiar, and Dr. Jones, is exclusively a review of extant data on enrollment trends, graduation rates, course fill rates, etc., as related to every academic program. I have expressly stated that no recommendations will be made at the March 13 review regarding the future of any program. My priority is to establish a foundation of robust data that will inform all subsequent conversations. Additionally, the information presented will be made available through the aforementioned meetings held under the auspices of our shared governance system.

Please know that any process of program evaluation will include the following tenets:

- In order to allow for full engagement of the faculty, the process will take at least a year to complete;
- The process will respect existing procedures related to program viability, while ensuring that faculty have significant input into the establishment of any additional evaluation criteria;
- An integral component of the process will be multiple open meetings and forums in order to ensure transparent communication.

Our strategic planning process is going to be dismantled as a result of your initiatives.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. West already has a well-defined planning and comprehensive process—one of the best that I have ever worked with—that engages fully our shared governance system. I am recommending some slight refinements to the process to ensure that resource allocations are clearly aligned with planning priorities the QFE's Institutional Effectiveness Goal (b), "Conduct an effective, evidence-based annual evaluation of progress on every major College plan, and report the results to the College Council" and Goal (c) "Establish a systematic, evidence-based process for the evaluation and improvement of the major College operational processes and for dissemination of the results."

Therefore, over the next year I will work with the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Committee (PIE) to establish key performance indicators for every existing goal; i.e., quantifiable outcomes that can be measured and that can further contribute to efficiencies in resource allocation. These efforts are focused on further strengthening the planning process and to prepare for campus-wide discussions beginning in the fall of 2017 to introduce the concept of strategic positioning and in 2018 to initiate the dialogues leading to the establishment of an updated strategic plan (the current version is in effect through 2020).

There is confusion regarding the purpose of the special-topic campus-wide luncheons and the "Dessert and Discussion" events.

I believe it is important that we all have a better understanding, not only about the multiple programs and services we offer, but also about how these programs and services must be integrated in order to maximize our efforts in student success. This is of particular importance to me because, after four months on campus, I realized that we needed to

expand our comprehension of significant initiatives so that we are better prepared to hold future conversations about how to meet the challenges facing us. Additionally, I want to provide opportunities for you to broaden your knowledge of our campus programs in preparation for the introduction of some slight modifications to our strategic planning process (more on that in a following question). Further, educating ourselves about our College programs and services will be invaluable in our efforts to position the institution in a creative and proactive way to meet additional accountability expectations for the use of State funds.

As a result, I decided to develop opportunities for members of the West community—both faculty and staff—to engage in cross-disciplinary discussions about topics of mutual interest. To that end, the February luncheon on the Strong Workforce Program was held as an experiment to see if this delivery format was effective. The positive response I received led to the decision to hold two more campus-wide luncheons. On March 14, we will discuss SSSP, Student Equity, and Basic Skills to be sure that more individuals have an understanding of the impact of and importance of these categorical programs (by the way, if you are interested in attending and haven't yet RSVP'd, please do so with Vicky Nesia).

The April luncheon focuses on community outreach, because we have multiple offices that purport to engage in community outreach...but each does something a little different. Given State Chancellor Oakley's emphasis on community engagement, we need the opportunity to better understand what we do—and to identify any conflicts or areas in need of attention.

Finally, the "Desserts and Discussion" series provides a venue to discuss education from a more philosophical viewpoint and how these viewpoints should inform our future direction as an institution. The first session addressed the question "What does it mean to be a social justice institution?" Almost thirty members of the West community gathered to hold a vibrant discussion that led to the recommendation that we develop a definition for what social justice means at West and the agreement to re-convene to consider recommendations on how to "operationalize" concepts. These strategies will be presented to the campus over the coming several months as part of a broader discussion about the strategic positioning of our institution.

Our next session, scheduled for Monday, March 27, will discuss educational pathways, because significant confusion seems to exist as to what the concept of pathways actually means. I encourage each of you to attend as your schedule allows because the conversations are vibrant and you have the additional benefit of meeting more of your West colleagues.

I believe that the more information the you have about issues, challenges, and opportunities, the more we will all be able to work together to fulfill our vision of providing "a gateway to success for every student." You're always welcome to contact me with additional questions or concerns.

Cordially,

Jim Limbaugh

Jim Limbaugh
President, West Los Angeles College

Factors Affecting the Future of West Los Angeles College

UPDATED March 1, 2017

Several factors have converged within the last several months that demand that we consider the future of West Los Angeles College within the context of significant trends:

- There is an inexorable shift in the function of community colleges to focus on two tracks:
 - ADTs (Associate Degrees for Transfer)
 - CTE (Career and Technical Education: “More and better leading to gainful employment in support of industry sectors”)
- The expectation of continued growth will be of paramount concern for the immediate future.
- Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley (chancellor of the California Community College system) has established clear expectations regarding the necessity of change (and expectations of same), active engagement with the communities we serve, increased accountability, and further infusion of technology into the learning process (including a focus on professional development).
- There is a burgeoning expectation that colleges will engage in the program viability process, especially as related to existing associate-degree programs. This expectation is part of the rationale for the early retirement incentive; i.e., that each college look creatively at staffing.
- The attainment of new buildings under Measure CC will be evaluated on several factors:
 - Proof that current facilities are being used effectively;
 - Evidence that programmatic emphases have been discussed and identified;
 - Clear alignment with programs that promote and produce student success;
 - Consideration first of older buildings that must be replaced, as per the State’s Facility Condition Index (FCI).
- The concept of strategic positioning of West Los Angeles College has been introduced to identify particular “market niches” that West can explore to its advantage.

HOW DO WE ADDRESS ALL THESE ISSUES/OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGES?

-  Introduction of concepts in spring 2017 to major campus entities is underway now.
-  Over the summer, “action schedules” will be developed for implementation in fall 2017, focusing on campus-wide conversations and full engagement through the shared governance process
-  Also introduced in the fall will be slight revisions to the strategic planning process that will lead us toward the concept of strategic positioning.