

1. Commencement Day — in the life of a college, the best day of the year. We are excited to celebrate with our students and their families the life changing and affirming accomplishments of our graduates. Commencement day is indeed the best day of the year!

**Several Commencement Festivities are scheduled for this year and we hope to see the Board and as many of our faculty and staff at these events as possible:**

- I. PVC Foundation Scholarship Awards Ceremony  
Thursday, May 23, 2024  
6:00 p.m.  
Francis “Ted” Arneson Fine and Performing Arts Theatre
- II. Needles Center Pinning/Graduation Ceremony  
Thursday, May 30, 2024  
1:00 PM  
Needles Educational Center
- III. COMMENCEMENT DAY SCHEDULE—JUNE 1, 2024  
Superintendent/President’s Breakfast – Board Members and our Commencement Speakers  
Saturday, June 1, 2024  
9:30 a.m.  
CS 123/124
- IV. Commencement Ceremony  
11:00 a.m.  
Clancy Osborne Physical Education Center
- V. IRONWOOD STATE PRISON COMMENCEMENT  
Tuesday, June 4, 2024  
9:00 a.m. and  
Wednesday, June 5, 2024  
9:00 a.m.

2. I am very pleased to introduce Dr. Alma Correa who is the college’s new Dean of Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness. Dr. Correa has her Ph.D. in Social Psychology with an emphasis in Ethnic Minority Health. Dr. Correa has over a decade of experience in institutional research and planning at the San Diego Community College District, College of the Desert, and Copper Mountain College. She comes to us with great

references from her colleagues and peers, has hit the ground running, and will help us to rebuild and strengthen our institutional research, planning and effectiveness unit. As you know, data informed decision making is paramount in all we do. I am very pleased to have this portion of the college's operations heading to the level we require. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Correa to the PVC family.

- 3. On the legislative front**, our college continues to make itself heard in Sacramento supporting various bills such as AB2104 and SB895 which would authorize up to 15 community college districts to offer baccalaureate degrees in nursing. In addition, we lent our support to the Community College League of California's opposition to SB1388 which would impose restrictions on community college district fund balances. Specifically, the bill would prohibit districts from maintaining reserve levels above 16.7% unless they meet certain obligations. The key point is protecting Districts local control autonomy and their ability to prudently manage their fiscal resources. We also continue to aggressively pursue support of our \$3 million request in support of our Child Development Center construction project by the Assembly Budget Committee and Assembly Budget Committee #3.

#### **4. Budget Update:**

Governor Newsom released the May Revision to his proposed fiscal year 2024-2025 budget last Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. The revised budget addresses a \$28 billion deficit though the figure grows significantly as discretionary decisions and future fiscal years are considered. This portends budget challenges for community colleges in the near-term, out -years.

While the legislature and Governor agreed upon a set of actions to reduce the budget deficit by \$17 billion, the remaining hole will require much more difficult decisions to fill. The May Revise largely adds new cuts, delays, and reserve withdrawals to the January budget plan. However, there are no additional reductions to Proposition 98 proposed. In fact, Proposition 98 is augmented to reflect the higher cost-of-living adjustment from the January budget proposal – now 1.07% as opposed to .76.%

The multi-year budget deficits consist of several competing state priorities including housing, homelessness, climate change, and expanded safety net programs. In January, the budget projected a \$37.9 billion shortfall. The Administration then worked with the Legislature to address approximately \$17 billion of that. As of the May Revise, there is an additional \$7 billion added to the shortfall. Thus, the budget released last Friday reflects a package that solves a \$27.6 billion shortfall.

### **Proposition 98 – Minimum K-14 Education Funding – Two Important and impactful Proposals**

- The Administration continues to assume the funding maneuver proposed in the Governor’s January Budget and **proposes \$8.8 billion in the 2022-23 fiscal year to be recorded in the out-years for the state’s budgetary and financial reporting purposes outside of Proposition 98.**
- The May Revision increases the withdrawals from the Public School System Stabilization Account from the Governor’s January budget, **and utilizes the entire reserve.**

**From the May 11th edition of the Los Angeles Times:**

**Under Proposition 98,** California has a minimum funding guarantee for schools and community colleges. Newsom is proposing an unusual maneuver to go back and lower the funding requirement for 2022-23 to reflect the lower-than-expected state revenues that came in late last year. The change could ultimately reduce funding for schools by tens of billions of dollars in future years and launch a monumental fight over education funding at the state Capitol.

### **Will prisons lose funding?**

“Among Newsom’s proposal includes savings from the newly announced deactivation of 46 housing units at 13 state prisons, which would save \$80.6 million. This comes as California’s prison population has declined by nearly 25% since 2019 and as the state prepares for the closure of its third prison, which Newsom said is now planned to close as early as November, five months ahead of schedule.” **This is our own Chuckwalla State Prison which was scheduled to close in March,2025.**

**“The governor said that, while he is interested in further reducing “the larger footprint” of the prison system, “we want to be mindful of labor concerns, community concerns and trends. He also expressed concern about the possibility of unanticipated increases in prison populations under efforts to roll back Proposition 47.”**

The 24/25 budget must be signed into law by June 15<sup>th</sup>. That leaves roughly five weeks to review the Governor's May Revise budget and negotiate a deal. The Governor, Assembly Speaker, and Senate Pro Tem are the principal negotiators. It should be remembered, there may be further impact on the community college system's budget beyond what is posed in the Governor's May revise budget. The 25/26 and 26/27 budget years could be tenuous for K-14 education due to several factors including the \$8.8 billion in the 22/23 fiscal year being recorded in the out-years and the possibility the economy and state revenue do not recover as hoped.

**It is important to end this budget update by stating the sky is not falling. Yes, we do need to be vigilant and aware of the fiscal challenges that lie ahead, and plan accordingly. We must, however, plan for the future, spend wisely, and maintain the positive course the college is on. Our students and the communities we serve deserve nothing less.**

**5. Let me end with some very positive news which is due to the great work of our faculty and staff...**

**A few years back, the California Community College Chancellor's Office established the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative which provided colleges with significant challenges to apply for funds that would support Partnership Resource Teams (PRT) and help colleges resolve weighty and systemic challenges.**

**Given the many challenges the college was experiencing, two years ago PVC applied for and was awarded a PRT project grant leading to the development of a **Innovation and Effectiveness Plan**. The first year was challenging. A Partnership Resource Team made up of highly skilled and successful faculty and administrators from peer colleges was assigned. They quickly determined there were significant and systemic issues at PVC that required**

deep interrogation and intervention. Three visits are normally made; in our case four were needed.

I am very proud to share some of the results of the work of our faculty and staff to date and the pride the PRT team feels in relation to the progress we have made and the trajectory we are on. Many thanks to our Academic Senate and faculty under the leadership of Sarah Frid and her Officers, the Office of Instruction and Students Services under the leadership of Terri Long and now Clint Cowden, and all our faculty and staff for their commitment to improving our college in support of our students and community.

### **Progress**

Palo Verde College has made noteworthy progress since Visit #3, which occurred on December 5, 2023. The interim Superintendent-President has created and fostered a truly engaging, inclusive, and dialogue-rich ambience that encourages inquiry and the exchange of ideas for all faculty, classified staff professionals, and administrators. The IEPI PRT team noted demonstrable enthusiasm, the establishment of trust, a sense of re-engagement, and a willingness to lead while encouraging transformational change on the part of district members present during the Visit #4 interviews on April 29, 2024.

### **Significant progress made by the district during this time period includes:**

- the hiring of a permanent Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Instruction & Student Services as well as a Dean of Institutional Research
- the selection of consultants to support the formulation of a Comprehensive Educational Plan
- the creation of positions with reassigned time for two faculty members across Instruction and Student Services to further bridge the gap between the two areas
- a commitment to develop increased distance education opportunities for students and professional development for faculty while delimiting correspondence education to justice-involved students, thus eliminating

**enrollment competition between Rising Scholars students and community students**

- **the creation of a scheduling guide that addresses block scheduling patterns, investing in guaranteed courses offered to students across the district that will not be cancelled, improved efficiency or productivity measures aimed at enhancing the classroom experience for students, and more using a Guided Pathways framework designed to support best scheduling practices**
- **scheduled site visits to the correctional facilities served in order to assess and correct logistical hurdles such as access to textbooks**
- **recognition that there is a need to change the narrative about the benefits of attending Palo Verde College while examining opportunities in areas such as dual enrollment and noncredit instruction**
- **a relaunch of the college’s Guided Pathways efforts with faculty leadership**
- **a commitment to ensuring equitable access to and support for technology and modernized facilities for students and staff across both Blythe and Needles sites, and**
- **a pledge to continually improve the district website.**

**Areas of Focus Include:**

- A. Enrollment Management**
- B. Rising Scholars Program**
- C. Distance Education**
- D. Non-Credit Education and Pathways**
- E. Community Education, and to**
- F. Assess and scope critical website improvements to remove functional and informational barriers to students.**

### **Conclusion**

**The district has achieved major milestones in its work on this Innovation and Effectiveness Plan and is to be commended for making remarkable progress in all of its objectives. The rebuilding of trust and rapport among the various constituents is clearly palpable, and this cultivated, pioneering spirit will surely propel the college into the future, as higher education continues to adapt to ever-changing economic and technological landscapes.**

**All in all – very positive news as the college continues its laser focus on improving student completion and success. Again, many thanks to our faculty and staff for their relentless efforts to improve all that we do. The full PRT Team Summary will be posted along with this report on the Superintendent/Presidents website page as is usual and customary.**

**Thank you for your attention.**