

1. Commencement is in the air! Many thanks to Staci Lee, her team, and the many other PVC Blythe and Needles staff for their hard work in creating the best experience possible for our Main Campus, the Needles Center, and the Ironwood State Prison students and their families and friends. You will be hearing more about these celebrations in the coming weeks, and we hope you can join us at as many of the ceremonies as your schedules allow.
2. As you may recall from our last two Board meetings, I reported on the urgency associated with the college creating an updated Educational Master Plan that will drive program planning and resource allocation for the next 6 to ten years.

I am pleased to report that later in this meeting you will be asked to approve two agreements that will facilitate this work guided and led internally by Clint Cowden, our Asst. Supt/VP of Instruction and Student Services.

As an introduction to this work and the EMP development support proposal, I shared the following memo with the College Council and now with you tonight:

It continues to be an honor and pleasure to serve as your interim Superintendent/President. During this time together, college faculty, classified professionals, administrators, and our Board of Trustees, have made great strides in working through the challenges the college faces and identifying the opportunities that lie ahead. Throughout this period of reflection and action, it has become clear that the District is lacking its “NorthStar” -- a planning and resource allocation guide that focuses on the next decade. With the support of the Board of Trustees we have determined that the best course of action is to create an updated Educational Master Plan that guides our future in support of our students and the local communities and employers served.

The primary deliverables for this project are:

1. a comprehensive Educational Master Plan (EMP)
2. a Planning and Outcomes Report template, and
3. a five-year Integrated Planning Calendar

We will use the services of a highly regarded and experienced higher education consulting team who specialize in rural colleges to facilitate the work of an ad hoc College EMP Task Force which includes 15 members -- four faculty, four classified professionals, four administrators, and three students. These individuals will serve as a working group to develop the Educational Master Plan with significant input and guidance from their constituents and the community at large. The Task Force will provide input and feedback throughout the plan's development and serve as the primary communication body to the college and greater community.

Palo Verde College is a beacon of educational, workforce, and economic development opportunity and must play a critical role in the quality of life and employment in our region. The college is central to the region's economic vitality and helps to assure the quality of services and life for all who live and work in the area. From employers to employees and all others who reside in our service area, our college plays a vital role in the lives of thousands. To assume this enormous responsibility, we must have our NorthStar planning and resource allocation guide, our Educational Master Plan.

The Educational Master Plan development proposal outlines what together we will accomplish over the next year and how we will go about this effort and exploit this considerable opportunity. The proposal is comprehensive and representative of the meaningful opportunities that lie ahead as we plan for a bright and productive future in support of students and the communities the Palo Verde Community College District serves and supports.

I am pleased to report that this proposal, provided in its entirety in your BoardDocs agenda packets, was unanimously approved by our College Council. We look forward to your approval this evening.

3. You will also note within your BoardDocs agenda, a request for your approval of a staff recommendation to hire our new Dean of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. After an exhaustive search, interview process, and extensive reference checks, we are very pleased with our recommendation and look forward to the new Dean beginning her tenure on April 22nd. There is much work to do, and her appointment could not be timed better as we prepare for and engage in our extensive Educational Master Planning process.
4. You may recall from our last Board meeting, that the Nursing Student FastTrack Cohort appeared and registered serious concerns about funding they were promised to receive by the college that suddenly was not to be forthcoming leaving many of these 13 students in great financial distress. I apologized on behalf of our staff and promised we would investigate the matter and work as hard as we could to find the needed solutions.

I am pleased to report that funding has been secured thanks to the diligent efforts of Asst. Supt./VP of Administrative Services Stephanie Slagan and her team. After digging through and piecing together the issues, Stephanie located the funding, worked with our auditors and Financial Aid team, researched IRS advisories, and determined the funding source found would not compromise the student's ability to collect future PELL and other financial aid funds. In other words, the solution provided for the short-term need would not be found to be the problem associated with eligibility requirements for longer-term aid. Great work Stephanie and team.

A further shout-out to Vice President Cowden who worked very closely with the impacted 13 students by visiting their cohort on three occasions to help them understand the importance and need to "do this right". The goal was to not cause future financial or other consequences, while being empathetic and supportive. Finally, a shout out to our Nursing Dean Dr.

Theresa Becker, and Nursing/Instructional Technician III, Sylvia Lainez, for facilitating rapid payment once the checks were expedited and obtained from the County. Overall, this was a great team effort, and I am very appreciative to all.

5. Budget Update

The Administration came to an agreement with the Senate and the Assembly on an early action budget package that will reduce the looming deficit in advance of the release of the May Revision on May 14th.

It is anticipated that the two Houses will vote on the agreement this week with the Governor signing the package of bills shortly after they get to his desk.

Overall, the action will reduce the deficit by approximately \$17.3 billion. The agreement contains a mix of solutions, including:

- \$3.6 billion of reductions
- \$5.2 billion of increased revenues/borrowing
- \$3.1 billion in delays – Projects to be funded in 24/25 presumably funded in out years
- \$3.4 billion in fund shifts
- \$2.1 billion in deferrals

The package includes the Administration’s proposed deferrals for UC and CSU but does not contain any proposed changes to Proposition 98 funding for schools and community colleges. The Senate, Assembly, and Administration have all indicated that they want to see what the minimum guarantee comes in at with the release of the May Revision prior to making agreements on any solutions to Proposition 98. This essentially means that K-14 is not yet out of the 24/25 funding woods.

6. Two short items to conclude my report this evening. The first... At your desk are two letters co-developed by staff and our Government Relations advocate, Sacramento based Mark MacDonald, with MGI Advocacy, Inc. One pertains to a \$3 million dollar request of the Assembly Budget

Committee and Assembly Budget Committee #3, prepared for submission by Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia in support of our CDC Construction effort. Assemblymember Garcia has been a strong advocate and friend of our college and this project. The other is in support of SB 895 (Roth), Community Colleges: Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program. They are both provided as examples of our government relations activities and the great work Mark continues to do for the District. Mark will be joining us via ZOOM tonight to provide a 2024/25 Budget and Legislative Bills update.

7. And finally, a big shout out to the City of Blythe and all other entities that sponsor the annual Community Outlook. The 66th Annual event occurred here at our college last Thursday, April 4th. It's my understanding we have hosted the event for the past four or five years in our Performing Arts Center – a perfect venue for this type of gathering. Simply put, it was a well-executed event featuring informative and important presentations from the County, the City, the County District Attorney, Palo Verde Transit, the Chamber, and highlights of a Riverside County – Blythe Region Economic Overview. Our college was recognized and appreciated if not slightly chastised by our County Supervisor for not inviting faculty and students to attend. Perhaps a bit pointed in his remarks, but spot-on in his message. We should extend the invitation going forward. Democracy, government, and private-public partnerships in action. All good things for our students to hear. Perhaps a great extra credit attendance opportunity. Again, well done.

Thank you for your attention. As usual, this report will be posted on the Superintendent/President's web page for public information purposes.