

## Fall In-Service State of the College Convocation

Welcome to the new school year! Thank you all for being here today. I'd like to recognize several CSI Board of Trustee members who are here today. Could I ask them to stand? These volunteers have committed so much time and energy to our school, its mission, each of us, and our students. Please join me in thanking them for their selfless service. I would also note that today will be the 35<sup>th</sup> and last time Dr. Thad Scholes will be here as a trustee for the start of a new school year.

It hardly seems as though the school year ended last spring for this summer has been one of the busiest I can remember. CSI hosted several notable events, all state-wide gatherings where several hundred educators and students came to this marvelous campus for training and education. There were more than 200 students and advisors at the Hispanic Youth Symposium, more than 700 at the CTE Summer Conference, and the over 650 at the P20 Conference. Additionally, CSI hosted numerous opportunities for the community of young learners including Dance Camp, Theater Camp, Jazz Camp, and Science Camp. This summer also saw a successful pilot program in the Student Success Center called the Bridge Program. We held an in-house Effective Teaching Workshop for new and returning employees. We had SOAR orientation events it seems every week. Student services, thank you.

We lost some friends this year, people who helped build this college. I'd like to take a moment to remember Marilyn Blackburn, Lavar Steel, Don Stephenson, Song Phenemony, Ben Bartlett,

Jane Idso. We miss them. Some people in the community who also helped build this college—David Meade, Harry Brumbach, Lex Kuneau, Tom High.

This past several semesters, the college has been focusing on recruitment. We talked about this as part of our two-year plan two years ago, and how we are going to bring students who should be going to college to college. Because Idaho has a relatively low go-on rate, the dropout rate between high school and college is pretty big in this state. That's one of the reasons we have, perhaps, the ripple effect like low wages, jobs that are not career-oriented, where people have to work two or three to make a minimum wage, a living wage. We have had a lot of time to talk about how we, CSI, can be part of the change and turn that a little bit. And so our transition coordinators and the improvements in advising coupled with orientation are paying off.

Our mandatory orientation, Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR), has been very successful. I think faculty will see new students on day one who are fully ready to be in college, for in their orientation, they enrolled, were advised, given information about resources, and in many new ways, personally connected to our campus. Many of you out there today will remember a time not so long ago when we promoted access and initial numbers above all, often at the sacrifice of student success. There was a time we allowed students to arrive in classes as late as the third week. Now students are in class on day one, armed with the tools they will need to be successful.

Next up is retention. Now that we have students here, our task is to continue student engagement through education and campus life. The vibrant and challenging education students will receive

in our classrooms is certainly the key piece here, but as important will be the opportunity to engage students to see this physical campus with all its resources for learning and leisure to be the center. To that end, I encourage all of you, faculty and staff, to also engage in campus life—attend some of our amazing athletic events, enjoy incredible performing arts presentations, visit visual arts exhibitions, take advantage of auctions put on by our woodworking and welding programs. Attend lectures, presentations, shows, and exhibits at the Herrett Center for the Arts and Science. Attend Arts on Tour and Stage Door performances. I say this not only for your enjoyment and edification, but I charge you to bring a student or two along with you. Encourage your students to expand their horizons by connecting with campus life. Students who see you will see an example of how to be educated beyond the classroom. They will see a value in the life of the mind, and this will inspire them to stay in school and complete their studies.

#### Legislative Line Item Requests

- Center for Education Innovation Planning Support (one time, joint request with ISU)
- Summer Bridge (ongoing 1.0 FTE and operating costs)
- CSI Center in Idaho Falls support (ongoing 1.0 FTE faculty in English and 1.0 FTE faculty in mathematics)
- Dual Credit CSI faculty (ongoing 1.0 FTE faculty in Business and 1.0 FTE faculty in Computer Science) to be placed directly within those schools with an established pathway to Associate Degrees which are in turn articulated with Idaho State University and other Idaho public colleges and universities

### PACE Advancement

One of the projects that is finally coming to fruition is the PACE advancement process. For several years now, PACE representatives Ansina Durham, Larissa Alexander, Cindy Flowers, Dennis Brauer, Dawn Wendland, the Business Office, HR (Eric Nielson and Judy Heatwole) and administration have been developing an advancement process for professional and classified employees, and the initial stages of that will hopefully roll out this fall. More information will be forthcoming at the PACE meetings this fall.

### Update Innovation Circle Grants

This summer a group of us visited Gordon Jones, Dean of Boise State University's College of Innovation and Design. Mr. Jones is an outside-the-box thinker, and we were all inspired by our talk with him. We also visited Dr. Anthony Ellerston who is heading up the GIMM Project (Gaming, Interactive Media & Mobile Technology) and had fun watching Dean Cindy Bond through shapes around in virtual reality. Finally, we visited a Make Space in the BSU Library with Dr. Amy Vecchione. It was a great chance for several CSI faculty and administrators to see how BS is reaching to the future of education. Prior to our visit, there had been talk of Maker Spaces as a possible part of our classroom or educational space design here at CSI. I am so excited by this concept that I am asking for submissions for two Innovation Circle Grants this year, both on a general topic of educational space redesign, considering the application of innovative concepts like Maker Spaces and more. As usual, the proposals must have five participants from different disciplines. More information will be on the website in the next few weeks—stay tuned!

AAWCC

I am so pleased that CSI started a chapter of the American Association of Women in Community Colleges last year. After several CSI leaders attended the national conference in Salt Lake City two years ago and the national conference in New Jersey this year, we have about 40 members signed up for CSI's chapter. Among other things, this group will be exploring education and leadership. It is my sincere hope that future leaders here at CSI and elsewhere come from this endeavor. Keep your eyes open for information from Larissa Alexander and others for the chapter's activities and meetings this year.

I would end today's remarks with a recognition of our unique moment in history, the 2016 presidential elections. When I was teaching, the election years always provided a boiling crucible of teaching opportunities. It was as if curriculum was being generated daily, and it was a chance to teach truly contemporary history, political science, rhetoric, communication, and more. It was also a chance to engage students and the CSI educational community in reasoned discussions. And so it is with this election. However, I think we can all agree there is a flavor to this election. Amidst the challenges brought on by the immediacy of media coverage and the need to slow down enough to ponder our truths, I remind us all that what we do here in educating our students and each other is vital. In his remarks to Vanderbilt University students in 1963, President Kennedy said,

He [the educated citizen] knows that "knowledge is power," more so today than ever before. He knows that only an educated and informed people will be a free people, that the ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all, and that if we can, as Jefferson put it, "enlighten the people generally ... tyranny and the oppressions of mind

and body will vanish, like evil spirits at the dawn of day." And, therefore, the educated citizen has a special obligation to encourage the pursuit of learning, to promote exploration of the unknown, to preserve the freedom of inquiry, to support the advancement of research, and to assist at every level of government the improvement of education for all Americans, from grade school to graduate school.

*Remarks in Nashville at the 90th Anniversary Convocation of Vanderbilt University, May 18, 1963*

Kennedy's words touch us on several levels. That education is the passport to an enlightened citizenry is not a new idea to the any of us. We understand the pursuit of knowledge and the consequent enrichment of our lives and the lives of our students. We believe learning and cultivating the habit of informed living are foundational to responsible citizenship. Kennedy reaches back to the words of Thomas Jefferson to extend the impact and import of the connection between education and responsible citizenship. He is reminding us about citizenship, civility, engagement.

On another level, Kennedy identifies the value of those who engage learners, who foster education. He is talking about us. He is challenging us all as we begin a new year as teachers, mentors, advisors who are all engaged in this vital endeavor.

I am so proud of this institution and all of you who are the engine of its success. With joy and courage, here's to another successful chapter in our amazing story that is the College of Southern Idaho.

