

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

Dear friends and colleagues,

*EGSC - Earn Graduation/Serve Community*

First, I apologize for not posting an update last week. My schedule has been even busier than usual and there simply has not a moment available to write. At present, I am en route to Swainsboro from the Board of Regents meeting in Savannah (Joyce is driving) and am taking a few minutes to collect my thoughts and provide you with this update.

As Joyce and I have travelled across the state over the last few weeks, I have seen firsthand many of the changes underway in the University System of Georgia and have reflected on the many opportunities now available to the college as well as the enormous potential of the college to grow and continue to improve. In this effort to grow and improve, it is evident to me that we have a major advantage due to the support of our local community. We cannot afford to take that support for granted. We must continually nurture that special relationship.

Seizing these opportunities will require us to be bold, imaginative and creative. We must embrace change. In this rapidly changing higher education environment, the price of failure to embrace change is irrelevance. My conversations with you cause me to conclude that both the college and the community understand and embrace this need for change. The result, I am confident, will be an improved educational and living environment.

Here are some of the more specific things on my mind today:

**East Georgia State College - Statesboro**

The College has not been authorized by the USG to offer degrees to students at EGSC Statesboro since the time courses were first offered in Statesboro in 1997. Recently, we requested and received approval from the USG to offer three associate degrees in Statesboro: General Studies, Psychology and Sociology. An additional and important step is required before we offer these degrees: approval of the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Since my last update, a formal document known as a prospectus was prepared and delivered to SACSCOC. This is an in-depth description of programs, services, faculty and staff at EGSC - Statesboro. For example, it includes vitae and transcripts of all faculty teaching at that location. We anticipate that the SACSCOC Trustees will consider this at their June 2013 meeting. If approved by SACSCOC, these degrees will be offered beginning in fall 2013.

I believe that this step will have a major and positive impact upon our ability to attain our retention and graduation goals as outlined in our Complete College Georgia plan. It is critical for our EGSC Statesboro students to have a tangible goal -- the attainment of an associates degree -- to inspire them to make continual academic progress.

## **East Georgia State College Programs in Augusta**

A great deal of work is now underway in anticipation of offering courses in Augusta in fall 2013. Final approval to take this major step has not yet been granted by the USG. However, we are moving forward at full speed in anticipation of this approval since it will not be possible to offer these courses in fall unless many key steps are completed promptly. For example, a director of EGSC Augusta must be selected; faculty must be identified; an Academic Center for Excellence must be established to provide advising and tutoring services; a budget must be put in place; a course schedule and calendar must be formulated; essential IT services must be put in place; office and classroom space must be identified and prepared for use; arrangements must be made for student services and activities; students must be admitted and oriented; .... The list goes on and on. Each item is a key component of the academic success of our Augusta students.

Getting all of this in place by fall is a daunting challenge. We will, however, meet the challenge and take advantage of this exciting opportunity to meet the college access needs of students in the Augusta area.

In anticipation of final approval of this program from the USG, we have already delivered a formal notice to SACSCOC advising SACSCOC of our plan to initiate course in Augusta in fall 2013 (less than 25% of the coursework to attain a degree in this first semester). Also, work has already begun on a SACSCOC prospectus to enable us to offer all of the courses necessary for students to attain associates degrees in Augusta.

Early next week, a team from the College will hold meetings in Augusta with GGeorgia Regents University leadership. GRU has been extremely supportive and I look forward to a long and successful partnership with GRU. I deeply appreciate this support and believe it is an excellent example of the manner in which USG institutions should work together to meet the educational needs of the state.

### **April BOR Meeting**

One of my favorite moments at the April Board of Regents meeting was the video shown to the Regents about Desire 2 Learn. This is, as most of you know, the online course management platform for USG institutions. The College is one of the early adopters of this platform and I was so proud to see two of our key faculty members - Dee McKinney and Kathy Whitaker --- prominently featured in the USG video.

The FY 13 and FY 14 budgets were another key topic of interest at this BOR meeting. Tuition is a major component of these budgets. For most USG institutions, including EGSC, tuition was increased 2.5 percent.

Another key revenue source in these budgets is state funding. Although we have a long way to go before the college's level of funding per FTE is on par with other institutions in our sector, the college's FY 21024 state allocation represents significant progress in that area.

In addition to D2L and budgets, our Augusta program was discussed as in information item in the Academic Affairs Committee meeting on Tuesday and in the full board meeting on Wednesday. We received highly favorable responses. A formal vote is anticipated in May.

### **University System of Georgia Institutions - Inaugurations**

In the recent past, Joyce and I have had the opportunity to attend the inaugurations of presidents at Gordon College, Savannah State and Valdosta State. In the near future, there will be inaugurations at Georgia College and State University as well as University of North Georgia. We have learned and will learn a great deal from these events.

First, even though events are steeped in academic tradition (e.g., academic regalia and processions), the messages conveyed by these events are extremely important to both the college community and the local community. The formality of the occasion provides an opportunity for the college and the local community to focus squarely on the important role the college plays in the community and the vision of the college president for the future of the college.

As you would suspect, there is a wide range among institutions in the length and formality of these events. It is very important to tailor each college's event to its unique culture. At some institutions, there is a full week of events. My opinion, however, is that a series of events over a three day period which places the inauguration in the context of other major college activities is a schedule which fits EGSC. Accordingly, we plan to begin on Thursday September 26 with convocation, continue on Friday September 27 with the inauguration, and conclude on Saturday September 28 with a 5K run, parents/family/alumni day, a 40th anniversary celebration and a capital campaign kickoff dinner.

Second, a great deal of advance planning is necessary to make an event of this type successful. The event provides an opportunity to showcase the excellence of the college and the community to visitors from across the state and country. It is critical for planning to begin at an early point in time. Now is that early point in time.

Third, although the stated purpose of the event is to formally inaugurate a president, the event should be designed to celebrate the accomplishments of the college and should make a clear statement about the future of the college. No one should leave the event without a sense of excitement and passion about the college's future.

### **Critical thinking conference at EGSCS**

Following the inauguration of President Cheryl Davenport Dozier as the president of Savannah State University, Joyce and I returned to EGSC Statesboro for the Critical Thinking Conference. I was honored to be invited to make closing comments at the conference. My only disappointment was to have missed the faculty presentations and student involvement which took place throughout the day before my arrival. I did, however, speak to many participants about the day and they were uniform in their praise about the organization and quality of the conference. Congratulations to Ken

Homer, Kathy Whitaker and the EGSC Faculty QEP Champions for this important work.

### **April 30th financial awareness event at EGSCS**

In the past, I have remarked about my concerns related to the student loan default rate. I mentioned this to John Barrow, our representative in Congress. Representative Barrow suggested that a step forward could be taken by holding an event at EGSC Statesboro focusing on financial awareness. This will be held on April 30th at 11am.

Please encourage students to attend. In addition to Congressman Barrow, a banker will speak with the students about financial responsibility. This information is very important for our students and I would like as many students as possible to take advantage of this opportunity.

### **Upcoming annual meeting of foundation (04/30/2013)**

The annual meeting of the trustees of the foundation will be held on the evening of April 30. This meeting will include, among other items on an ambitious agenda, the election of officers and the approval of scholarships for the coming year.

In addition to its regular meetings, the foundation will be kicking off a capital campaign in fall 2013. A great deal of work must precede that kickoff. For example, a key ingredient of this campaign will be the identification of a series of concrete projects which will move the college towards its strategic goals. These projects will then be presented to potential donors with a request to fund the proposals.

The success of this campaign is essential to the future of the college. Across the county, public institutions of higher education are receiving smaller and smaller portions of their total funding from state allocations. This trend will continue. If we are to prosper, we must have a stable source of additional funds from private donations. That is the purpose of the capital campaign.

### **Statesboro Farmers Market - East Georgia State College Day**

The Saturday following the Critical Thinking Conference was EGSC Day at the Statesboro Farmers Market. Joyce and I were honored to serve as honorary market managers that day. Thanks Statesboro!

I was so proud of the manner in which EGSC faculty, staff and students represented the college on that day. The college display was located in the center of the market and featured a new tent displaying the name, colors and message of the college. College representatives included faculty, Admissions Staff, the Bobcat and EGSC cheerleaders along with an impressive group of other EGSC staff. Visitors were treated to balloon sculptures, EGSC memorabilia and printed materials about college programs. A high demand item was the insulated EGSC market bag. At one point, virtually every person in the market was toting one of these great bags. I trust they will use these over and over and remember EGSC each time they do so.

### **Jimmy Wedincamp - alumni award from GaSoU**

Dr. Bob Brown and Martha Brown, along with Joyce and I, had the opportunity to go to the alumni dinner at Georgia Southern University. Dr Jimmy Wedincamp, head of biology at EGSC, was the recipient of the outstanding alumni award from the biology department at Georgia Southern. Dr. Wedincamp made all of us so proud at this prestigious event.

### **Annual evaluations**

I recently completed annual evaluation conferences with each individual reporting to me. A common theme emerged at these conferences: As EGSC has grown dramatically over the years; human resources have not kept up with student growth. Accordingly, many individuals have taken on multiple roles and have had to focus on putting out fires rather than on planning for the future. It is essential that we begin to reverse this trend in the coming year.

### **Annual budget conferences**

In addition to these evaluation conferences, Cliff Gay (chief financial officer) and I recently completed annual budget conferences with all EGSC units. In this coming year and future year, budgets cannot simply be a function of the prior year's budget. Accordingly, these conferences focused on aligning resource allocation with institutional priorities.

### **Changes to office space in JAM Center**

We will be making changes to the Jean Anderson Morgan Student Activities Center this summer. As we strive to continually improve, there is simply not sufficient work space in the JAM Center to enable us to meet student needs. In order to provide more work space for current staff and provide some additional space for new staff, we will be making changes in the JAM Center.

For example, Admissions will move across the hall. This will provide a badly needed "front door" location for Admissions. As potential students and their families visit campus, this will provide a significantly enhanced level of visibility and will enable us to provide a more welcoming entry area. This move by Admissions will, in turn, free up space to enable Financial Aid, the Registrar, and Business Services to have more work space.

Change of space is always difficult. However, I am confident that everyone will cooperate to enable us to get this done before fall semester begins to enable us to serve students better.

### **AAMI grant award**

I am pleased to let you know that East Georgia State College's application for funding by the African American Male Initiative was approved. In combination with funds from private donors, this will enable us to initiate a program designed to improve the retention and graduation rate of African American males.

### **Vision Series Trip to Sapelo Island**

The Vision Series will be visiting Sapelo Island this Sunday. The trip will be led by Dr. John Derden and will include East Georgia State College students, staff, faculty and community members. Joyce and I are pleased to be able to be a part of this tour,

### **Jimmy Morgan's 100th Birthday Celebration**

One of Swainsboro/Emanuel County's great leaders will turn 100 on April 26, 2013 -- - Mr. Jimmy Morgan. We will be hosting a celebration in the JAM Center this Sunday and I hope to see many of you there. The Swainsboro Kiwanis, the Emanuel Arts Council, and the Forest Blade are co-hosting this event with us.

### **Art on Campus - next steps**

I hope you have noticed the growing volume of artwork created by EGSC faculty, staff and students on display across campus. This trend will continue. The next major step will be to significantly expand the art displayed at EGSC - Statesboro.

### **Associate Vice-Chancellor for PPVs to visit EGSC**

The USG has appointed an associate vice-chancellor for public-private ventures (e.g., our residence halls). She will be making a visit to EGSC Swainsboro this week. Our discussions will focus on EGSC proposals to expand the number of beds available for students in Swainsboro. If we are to grow, residential capacity must expand. The purpose of the associate vice-chancellor's visit is to discuss the concrete steps that may be taken to increase student enrollment.

### **Complete College Pledge (05/01/2013)**

The EGSC chapter of Phi Theta Kappa is planning an event on May 1<sup>st</sup> at which students will be asked to sign a college completion pledge and will be provided with information about the steps necessary to carry out that pledge. Please encourage all to attend.

### **Booth at Pine Tree Festival**

The College will be hosting a booth at the Pine Tree Festival. This booth will be in an excellent location and presents a great opportunity for the College to reach many prospective students. I hope the entire college community will come out in impressive numbers to support this booth and to send a message to the community that EGSC is their college and that it is a college on the move.

### **Ga Southern String Ensemble (05/03/2013)**

We are honored that the string ensemble will present a concert at EGSC in the auditorium on May 3rd. This will be followed by a wine and cheese reception for faculty and staff at the Fulford Center. I treasure opportunities such as this to meet with faculty and staff in a social setting to celebrate the vibrant, intellectual and

cultural lives of EGSC. I look forward to seeing you at the concert and the reception following the concert.

### **Graduation on May 10, 2013**

Graduation is the most exciting day of the academic year. This spring, Dr. John Derden will be the graduation speaker. Following the release of his new book about Camp Lawton, this is a most appropriate time to have an inaugural member of the faculty speak to the students.

### **Who Should We Target with Student Recruiting Efforts**

One final thought today -- a thought about our student recruiting efforts. What comes to your mind immediately when I say "student recruiting?" Is it a 17-18 year old recent high school graduate?

Does EGSC's student recruiting message also speak to the over 1.2 million Georgians who have some college credit --- yet no degree? Envision a newspaper ad showing two students: an 18 year old carrying an iPhone and a 35 year old carrying a two year old. Which one of the two should we target? The answer is both. Are we reaching both?

As I think about this question, it is apparent to me that we need to do even more to reach out to those in the workforce, who often have some college credit – but no degree; and to those who have served our county in the military and are now preparing for a return to the private sector.

I hope your week is a good one.

Bob Boehmer