

Weekly Notes by East Georgia State College President

January 25, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Here are some of the things on my mind this week.

Dr. David Bartram

Dr. Bartram, as you know, passed away during the holidays while spending time with family in Michigan. Dr. Bartram served as chair of the Social Science Division. He was a friend, a trusted colleague and a College leader. He is greatly missed. Contributions to a scholarship fund in his honor may be made through the EGSC Foundation by contacting the Office of External Affairs.

SACSCOC Level Change Visit

The College's accreditation was reaffirmed by SACSCOC in December 2011. This followed a visit by a SACSCOC team. Another team will be visiting the College **February 5-7, 2012**. The reason for this additional visit is the College's new mission as a state college and the initiation of a bachelor's degree program (biology). I consider SACSCOC visits to be an opportunity to engage in conversations with colleagues from other institutions about ways to continually improve.

It is likely that we will have another SACSCOC visit in the relatively near future. Since we will be offering associate degrees in Statesboro soon, the offering of these degrees constitutes a SACSCOC "substantive change." We will file a prospectus with SACSCOC as the next step in this process before 03/01/2013.

Each substantive change of this type means a great deal of work by many people - but each presents us with a new opportunity for growth and improvement.

Faculty and Staff Compensation

Some of you may have watched the Chancellor's testimony before the Appropriations Committee earlier this week. As you know, salaries for USG personnel were a major component of that testimony. For example, the Chancellor emphasized the length of time since raises have been given (5 years); and the fact

that raises are not in the budget for the coming fiscal year (FY 2014). He, however, made a compelling argument to the legislature about the importance of assuring that the University System of Georgia remains competitive with other states in this critical area. I predict that the manner in which this message was presented will ultimately bring results in future fiscal years.

This issue of compensation for our talented and committed faculty and staff is a high priority for me as well. Budget realities do not provide me with the tools to address this in the coming fiscal year. However, I am doing everything possible to lay the foundation for longer term improvements in this area.

College's Budget Hearing with the Chancellor (02/20/2013)

A team from the College will be going to Atlanta to make a budget presentation on **February 20, 2013**. This hearing will provide the basis for the allocation to the College by the USG for FY 2014 to be made later this spring.

Following last year's budget meeting, the College received an allocation which made it possible (among other things) to establish the Academic Center for Excellence. One of the primary arguments we will make at this year's hearing is based on the successes already achieved by the ACE. If we are to improve retention and graduation at the rate stated in our Complete College Georgia plan, it is imperative that additional targeted funds be devoted to academic support activities such as advising and tutoring.

Spring 2013 Enrollment

Currently, it looks as if enrollment for spring 2013 will be about 15% below enrollment for spring 2012. One step we will be taking to address this enrollment decline is to focus attention on the high schools in the "golden triangle" this spring (the area inside the Macon, Savannah, and Augusta triangle). It is essential that a personal recruiting contact with the counselors in each high school be made and that a focused follow up visit take place at each high school. Due to the number of high schools in the region, this will require involvement by many beyond our hard-working admissions staff. We plan to use some of our coaches in making these follow up calls. In addition, we will be asking faculty and staff to assist in making calls upon schools at which they have established contacts.

Climate for Higher Education in the United States

The following are a few of the items I have been reading this week as I give thought to how to position the College to meet the needs of a dramatically changing environment.

- *An Open Letter to the People of Purdue, 01/18/2013 by Mitchell D Daniels, Jr., President of Purdue University*

This letter has received a great deal of national attention this week. I recommend this to you if you have not read it already. Two of the things which really hit home with me in this letter are: (1) **Stewardship** – President Daniels comments about the many articles and reports now taking the position that the educational model employed by most U.S. universities is antiquated and soon to be displaced. He says “Presented with such a possibility, we have a duty to seize it. We would fail our duty of stewardship either to ignore the danger signs around us, or to indulge in denial and the hubris that says we are somehow uniquely superb and immune.” (2) **Shared governance, Engagement, Open Inquiry and Common Purpose** are key elements of an institution’s response to these trends.

- *Moody’s – US Higher Education Outlook Negative in 2013*
 - *Moody’s Report Calls into Question All Traditional University Revenue Sources, Inside Higher Ed, 01/17/2013*

Moody’s revised its outlook for the entire higher education sector to negative. This is not a cause for panic. It is, however, a wake-up call and “... requires bolder actions by university leaders to reduce costs and operating efficiencies.”

- *To Raise Graduation Rate, Colleges Are Urged to Help a Changing Student Body, NY Times, 01/24/2013*
 - *National Commission on Higher Education Attainment Releases Final Report, Inside Higher Ed, 01/24/2013*
 - *An Open Letter to College and University Leaders: College Completion Must Be Our Priority, National Commission on Higher Education Attainment (January 2013)*

The National Commission on Higher Education Attainment released its final report. The Commission is a group of college presidents convened by the President. Among the recommendations of the Commission designed to increase retention and graduation rates are flexible schedules for non-traditional students, increased on-line options, classes at night and other unusual hours, and prior learning assessment.

- *Public Universities Move to Offer MOOCs for Credit, Inside Higher Ed, 01/23/2013*

Massive open online courses seemed too many, only a few months ago, to be the wild idea of a few futurists. This week, new reports bring MOOCs into our backyard right now. “Two announcements this week suggest that MOOCs – massive open online courses – will increasingly include a route for student to receive academic credit.” Georgia State University, for example, announced that it will start to review MOOCs for credit.

Student Loan Default Rates

- *The American Dream 2.0*

The American Dream Report was just issued by a group of higher education advocates. It raises major concerns about the financial burden placed on students who take on large student loan debt and, then, fail to graduate. This is an area of particular concern to me because our student loan default rate exceeds the state and national average substantially. I will be meeting next week for the first time with a task force I have created to address this challenging issue.

Food Services

The decision was made shortly before the start of fall semester to bring our food services in house. Food services encompass the dining hall in the JAM Center, the Campus Café in the JAM Center, Common Grounds I and II in the Luck Flanders Gambrell Building and at Statesboro, and catering for various campus events. Taking over this operation on a fast track timeline presented a major challenge. A new director of auxiliary services was hired to manage this process. It has been a remarkable success.

I have noticed that some members of the community do not realize that all campus food services, including the dining hall, are open to faculty/staff and the public. You don't need an EGSC card to use any of these facilities. In addition to being open to all, the prices are reasonable, a la carte ordering is possible, the quality is high, and the staff is friendly.

**Magnolia Midlands Georgia Youth Science and Technology Center
(MMGYSTC)**

Georgia Youth Science and Technology Center, Inc. (GYSTC) is headquartered at Kennesaw State University. It is a statewide organization focused on science and technology education in our high schools. There are separately incorporated regional centers located throughout the state. One of these regional centers is the Magnolia Midlands GYSTC, Inc. MMGYSTC is located at East Georgia State College. Its funding comes partially from GYSTC and, largely, from membership fees paid by high schools.

Last year, MMGYSTC faced serious budgetary challenges. In large part, this was due to declining high school memberships. This forced us to rethink its structure. The decision was made to move from a full-time to a part-time director. That new director is now in place and reports to the Director of the Fulford Center. In addition, MMGYSTC now has an administrative assistant shared with the Fulford Center. With these changes and the excellent people hired to fill these positions, MMGYSTC is now positioned to respond to the needs of the high schools in our region.

In addition to these structural changes, MMGYSTC has moved its offices. MMGYSTC was for many years located in the lower level of the Academic Building in Swainsboro. It recently move to the Fulford Center where it will have a higher profile, be more accessible to teachers in the region, and have a synergistic relationship with the Fulford Center. I hope that those with interest and expertise in science and math will stop by the Fulford Center, meet with the new MMGYSTC personnel and find ways to collaborate.

Auditor

Until recently, EGSC was one of a few USG institutions without an office of internal audit. We were able to combine with Savannah State University to jointly hire an internal auditor and create an office of internal audit. A highly experienced and capable Director of Internal Auditor has been hired. The director is headquartered at EGSC and spends half-time at EGSC and half-time at SSU. Most importantly, please understand that the role of an internal auditor is to help us find ways to continually improve. The focus is improvement --- not finding mistakes. I urge the entire college community to work with our internal auditor in that spirit.

Basketball Teams

Joyce and I spent a most enjoyable evening watching the excellent women's and men's basketball teams compete with Chattahoochee Tech this week in Swainsboro. There was an excellent turnout of community members, students, faculty and staff. Both teams represented the college admirably. The women's team, with only 7 players available, lost a heartbreaker in double overtime. The effort and excellence made us all proud. The men's team kept its undefeated conference record intact and scored over 100 points. The entire game seemed to be played six inches above the rim – a part of the gym I have never personally visited. All of this is to say that I hope you will come out and watch these students as they continue to represent EGSC so well.

Investiture, Bobcat Dash, 40th Anniversary Celebration, Capital Campaign Kickoff (09/27-28/2013)

We are planning a series of events over a two day period to celebrate the College's history and future. The Chancellor will be here for an investiture ceremony on Friday, 09/27/2013 at 11am. The following morning, we will hold the annual Bobcat Dash on campus (5K). During the middle of the day, we will celebrate the College's 40th. We will wrap up this celebration with a kickoff of our capital campaign in the evening.

USG General Education Council

I accepted a role as chairman of the USG General Education Council. This will be time intensive. However, it is extremely important for the College to be well-

represented on all of the USG academic and administrative advisory committees. I will soon be posting a list on the president's website of all of EGSC's representatives on these committees. I hope you will regularly provide these EGSC representatives with feedback concerning their committee's area of responsibility so that EGSC is at all times a strong voice in the statewide discussions.

Thanks for all you do for the College and the community.

Sincerely,

Bob Boehmer

President

East Georgia State College