

College of the Redwoods Convocation Q&A

Notes from the Q&A session from Friday, August 21, can be found below, followed by the remaining questions and their answers on subsequent pages.

CONVOCATION – Fall 2009

Question & Answer Session

Panel

Rachel Anderson
Ruth Bettenhausen
Steve Brown
Marjorie Carson

Melissa Green
Jeff Marsee
Maggie McVay Lynch
Keith Snow-Flamer

Q: I want to take a swim class; what happened to our pool?

A (Dr. Marsee): The deferred maintenance on campus includes the pool. It's a "floater" – built on an underground stream. Repairs could be accomplished for \$1/2million but there is no guarantee of no leak. It will cost \$1.5 million or more to repair properly or \$2.5 million to go solar. The Facilities Master Plan committee needs to address the problem.

Q: How are we going to enhance the trust on campus?

A (Dr. Marsee); Representatives from the State Academic Senate and Community Colleges...will mediate, giving us an opportunity to talk through issues. Staff and faculty are working on the administrative leadership process. The Admin Team is in place to address any deadlines. "We're not the same organization we were last year". We hope to be released from probation when the Accreditation Team visits in January but it doesn't seem likely we will be released from probation until June because we let them down last time. They will likely want to see us working well for a longer period to be certain.

Q: From a new manager: How can I help to build school spirit among faculty and staff?

A (Snow-Flamer): We all have a roll to play to build bridges. It is our collective responsibility to hold the school together.

A (Rachel Anderson) Go out and ask. Talk to students. Mingle.

Q: With reductions in enrollment at USCs and CSUs, how do we show community colleges as worthy alternatives for students?

A (Marjorie Carson): Our faculty is nurturing. New programs contribute to the enthusiasm. Students come to community colleges in tough times. When we are all welcoming and enthusiastic, that makes a difference.

A (Melissa Green): CR advisors are placed in high schools again and will be meeting with students to discuss options.

A (Keith Snow-Flamer): Our classes are scheduled to guarantee access.

Q: Upon what data was the decision for the Southern Humboldt site based?

A (Ahn Fielding) There were community requests from a population base of eight thousand with only 22 of each 1000 residents attending CR – the state average is 67 or 1000. When that was applied to the “20-minute drive zone”, it showed that we are not providing access. We provide both retraining and personal enrichment opportunities.

A (Jeff Marsee): Comments were taken from the 20/20 report that Southern Humboldt was the worst represented. When considering what additional revenue could be generated, the decision to set up in Garberville made sense.

Q: With the resignation of Jason Leppaluoto as Library Director, will his position be filled?

A (Marjorie Carson): Paperwork has been filed to refill the position. Rachel Anderson will be filling the role as Acting Library Director. The permanent position will hopefully be filled by November.

Q: Will students and staff be trained in myCR?

A (Maggie Lynch): Many tutorials are available online. Advisor Barry Tucker has been assigned to help students and a short course may be possible as well. Tom Cossey in IT is also available for technical assistance. “Most of the time, students transition better than the faculty on these changes.”

Q Will Measure Q funds be available for the original intended purposes?

A (Jeff Marsee): When I came on board, 100% of the \$40 million bond money was already committed or spent. We saved \$10million by not tearing down the Student Union but it will still need some renovation. Construction costs accelerated by 20% and all State bonds were overpromised and under-delivered. Del Norte did not finish labs but that must be addressed. The forum building (main campus) will be vacated - we may spend some money to support and repurpose the building.

Measure Q had a shopping list without actual cost estimates. The language was not specific but only possibilities of what the bond money might be spent on. We must step back and see about State funding matches. We have a viable and strong Facilities Master Plan to go by.

Remaining Questions from Convocation Q&A

1. *Will regular meetings between the Senate co-presidents and the President be re-activated?*

[President's Response] Last week I requested that a semi-monthly meeting with the Senate co-presidents and the Vice President of Academic Affairs be scheduled. I believe that the primary administrative contact with the Academic Senate is the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Chief Instructional Officer (CIO). Protocol requires that the Vice President of Instruction be included in all conversations that include the President and Academic Senate Presidents. This helps to assure that the Vice President's role as CIO is not diminished and that the Senate always has an informed liaison with the Cabinet/President. In addition, President meets with the Academic Senate Co-Presidents and the Vice President when Senate related topics require his attention. The President is available to attend Academic Senate meetings when a specific topic calls for information or an explanation from the President.

The President encourages the Academic Senate Co-Presidents to take CR issues to the College Council for discussion and input. This open forum of representatives from all constituency groups, including the President meets semi-monthly. Discussion of district issues at the College Council helps to assure that information and solutions to problems are transparent to all constituencies. The open discussion of issues helps assure that there are no special "deals" or institutional secrets that can potentially result in an atmosphere of distrust.

2. *Will the Senate Brief continue as a primary vehicle of communication with the Board of Trustees?*

[President's Response] The Senate Brief is one of the vehicles of communication between the Academic Senate and the Board of Trustees. In addition to the Senate Brief, the senior Academic Co-President sits at the Board of Trustee table and gives verbal presentations/reports at the monthly meeting. The Vice President of Instruction also presents a report to the Board which may include issues and events that are impacting the curriculum, faculty and Academic Senate. The Board also has access to the minutes of the Academic Senate's meetings if posted on the CR website.

3. *Why did we fix the parking lot before the swimming pool?*

[President's Response] The parking lot had deteriorated to the point that subterranean erosion was causing substantial damage that was accelerating repair costs. In addition, the parking lot is our "front door" and projects an image of the campus; the condition of the parking lot impacts everyone who enters on the campus. There was never a decision to fix the parking lot or fix the pool. Until the actual damage to the pool can be assessed, and thus the final repair cost of the swimming pool can be determined, it will not be possible to go out for a bid for repair. The Facilities Department is trying to secure the services of a "non-destructive" testing company to help determine the actual nature and location of the pool's leak. Once the cost to correct the problem can be determined the pool repair priority will be considered by the Master Facilities Planning Committee.

4. ***Why did this administration decide to invest huge amounts of money into the purchase of a Garberville site and new furniture/carpet for the Arcata and McKinleyville sites when our main campus is in dire need of new furniture/carpet? Shouldn't we provide quality classrooms/fields for our main population?***

[President's Response] The decision to place instructional sites in communities was driven by information provided in the 2020 Report (2005), the district's strategic initiatives that were developed in April 2008 and the Education Master Plan (2009). The changing demographics (older population) and the lower penetration rates for the 18 and older students residing more than twenty minutes from the Eureka campus calls for an outreach program, already in place in Arcata, Klamath-Trinity and Eureka Downtown. Garberville and McKinleyville sites are a continuation of an existing strategy.

The condition of the furniture or carpet on the main campus, while not new, does not appear to be affecting the quality of education that our students are receiving. It would not be a fiscally sound decision to replace carpet in classrooms that are scheduled to be vacated. The need for new furniture and carpet on the main campus should be largely addressed when the \$48 million in new classrooms and offices space is completed. This year's budget includes \$250,000 for replacement of computers, the first year of a five year replacement cycle, and an additional \$50,000 has been placed in reserve to repair or replace any existing instructional equipment.

5. ***Why did printing costs double over the summer? Will the printing component of budgets double? And what monies will be available to lower income students to offset increased costs for printed materials?***

[President's Response] The college has been subsidizing the copier production. The cut in state funding now makes it impossible to continue this practice. The current rate reflects actual production costs. All departments were aware of the increased cost prior to developing their budget. Some areas did double their allocations while others made the decision to reduce printing usage. To assist students, many faculty are making materials available to students on their web instructional sites.

6. ***What data is there to support the Garberville site? Have past years enrollment been looked at when we did have a site? Why not look at a smaller facility with less overhead and less long-term commitment?***

[President's Response] Ahn Fielding addressed this question at the Convocation for a written response please refer to the President's Newsletter (July/August) on the web site

[Trustee Truett's Response, as written in an email sent to several community members]

Dear Concerned Community Members,

Dean Geisce Ly shared with me at the CR board meeting the letters he had received regarding the science labs at the CR Mendocino Coast Campus and the Garberville site purchase, and I am sending a general reply to all who were concerned.

Whether or not you agree with the CR board's action to purchase the Garberville site out of that \$12 million, here are some facts. I encourage you to check them out:

- MEASURE Q was passed in 2004 in a CR **district-wide election** (Humboldt, Mendocino, Del Norte, and a part of Trinity counties). No single part of the district owns the money. No regular CR employee gets paid through bond funds. It's for facilities. Student success, access, and developed priorities drive many of the allocations for facilities, as long as they were part of the bond language. As reviewed by legal counsel, the Garberville purchase does fall within the language of the bond Measure Q:

"To strengthen local job and vocational training programs, and increase academic classes for students with 2-year and 4-year college goals by:

- **Adding classrooms** and tech labs ;
- Renovating unsafe and deteriorating campus buildings;
- Repairing, **acquiring**, constructing, furnishing and equipping **college facilities**.

"VIII. **Add classrooms** to allow for more students to take the classes they need to transfer to a 4-year university" <http://www.redwoods.edu/Bond/ft.asp>

1. **TAXPAYERS:** Southern Humboldt taxpayers have been paying taxes to support Measure Q expenditures for all the campuses and sites, including Mendocino, and have yet to see a single penny in improvements from Measure Q or any other fund. Until this fall, classes weren't even offered in Southern Humboldt, though in spring 1984 over 23 courses were offered and filled by local students. (It's a long story.) If the full amount mentioned (up to \$1 million) is ever spent on the Garberville site, it would take about 40% of the estimated \$2.5 million that is the portion of Measure Q money that Southern Humboldt taxpayers will pay for.
2. **PROCESS:** The CR board approved the purchase of the Garberville site and will use Measure Q funds to do it, assuming the building meets code. There will be thorough inspections, and if there's a significant problem, the president of the college will report to the board before the purchase becomes final. If no significant problems surface from the inspections, the purchase is final and CR will spend up to \$350,000 from Measure Q to get four classrooms ready for fall 2010. With the purchase price included, the approved expenditure up to fall 2010 is \$550,000. I'll let you figure the percentages.

The Garberville site will not be an "educational center," like in Fort Bragg or Del Norte where there is a full-time dean, support staff, counseling, student services, and a library. An "educational **site**" such as Garberville could be, or Arcata and Downtown Eureka are, simply holds classes and can have one CR person to be there--not necessarily full time--to take care of details like opening and closing the building and paperwork. A clear and documented need exists for classes in a central and convenient location to serve Southern Humboldt and very northern Mendocino students and taxpayers, whatever their ages.

7. *What will be the college's recommendations and policies regarding the likely swine flu epidemic?*

[President's Response] CR will follow the guidelines and direction of the County Health Department regarding any potential swine flu epidemic outbreaks. Updates are available on CR's home page.

8. *How does administration plan to demonstrate respect for faculty concerns and faculty governance? Words are great, but actions that support the words are more important and meaningful!*

[President's Response] I have always respected the concerns of all the college constituent groups. Last year when there was a question of the parameters of shared governance a former state Academic Senate President led discussions with the faculty, Trustees, and the management team. I have expanded and changed the scope and structure of the College Council to include all constituent groups. The Council is now a venue for all concerns to be voiced, solutions discussed and action plans developed.

All members of the CR community are concerned about mutual respect and clarity related to governance and responsibility for operations. The administrative team is committed to working with all groups to create a culture of respect and trust. But please keep in mind that we can not "dance" alone. There must be mutual respect and trust. Everyone has responsibility for resolving the issues identified by the Commission relating to long-standing behavior that is counterproductive to CR's success.

9. *Access is more than more sections at more times. What support services are planned for evening, online, and off-site students?*

[President's Response] I agree with that statement 100%. The Student Services Division has increased staff substantially to address retention issues. Four academic advisors and two academic counselors have been added. Each advisor has been assigned to groups of day and evening students for monitoring and early intervention when needed. One advisor is assigned only to on-line students. The Honors students have also been assigned a faculty advisor. Thirty-two first-year community learning groups have been established for fall 2009. Each group has been assigned a faculty or staff mentor. A very proactive advising program has been implemented to more quickly identify and work with "at risk" students.

It is important to note that CR is not implementing its new student retention program in response to its growth. CR is ranked 16th from the bottom out of 110 community colleges in California for persistence of student, first year to second year retention. We are attempting to address a long standing retention issue at CR that is not related to growth.

[VP Student Services' Response] We have expanded operational hours for advising, testing, and library access to into the evening and committed an advisor to online students. We're also working hard to develop a campus life program that will help students (both traditional, non-traditional, and dorm residents) stay engaged in the campus life.

10. With regard to the latest accreditation warning status, President Marsee has publicly stated the "need to sort out the roles and responsibilities of various constituency groups." How, beyond role clarification, does the plan to address what the report stated were "issues of communication, lack of trust, and mutual respect"? Please answer this question with specificity.

[President's Response] As noted in the convocation presentation, the California Academic Senate President and the California Community College League President will jointly work with CR's faculty, administration and Trustees to help us jointly address our concerns related to, "issues of communication, lack of trust, and mutual respect."

Whether the dialogue will lead to a better understanding of roles and responsibilities, and whether that understanding will lead to mutual respect and trust is something that only time and the willingness of all involved will determine.

[VP Instruction's Response] We all share in the desire to have a harmonious, respectful working environment where we work together, each in our various roles, in addressing the needs of our students. On each project and in all of our interactions with each other, we each strive to achieve that goal. Together, we do that one day and one project and one interaction at a time.

We have added important support to the staff as a whole to provide more services and assistance through the addition of more counselors, advisors, deans, and a VP of Instruction. Together, we have achieved more clarity and more compensation for the important work of area coordinators, and we are working to provide more CR "train the trainer opportunities" for assessment. Throughout all of this, we are all working together to keep our college fiscally sound and admit as many students as we can so that students are not turned away during these challenging times of high unemployment and financial challenge.

We are striving to celebrate our successes and change our culture by focusing on the achievements and outstanding contributions of each other. The Cabinet is committed to listening carefully and reporting back to the CR community to increase communication and "close informational loops" in integrated planning and in all things of interest and importance to our CR community whenever possible. We join you in being convinced that as long as we share that dream and goal of a harmonious, respectful culture and live it on a daily basis, we will nurture it, build upon it and achieve it.

Our Accreditation Follow-Up Report writing team is drafting our response to the two recommendations CR received from ACCJC. We have posted our work for the CR community to note and follow; and we have invited comment, direction, and contributions to assist us in addressing these responses. The evidences and the draft language that is being written in the current draft edition of that report addresses many aspects of what all of us are engaged to doing to address issues of communication, trust, and mutual respect with specificity. The link to the CR site for that draft was sent out to "All" and will be updated often as the draft work continues.

11. *We want some Macs!*

[President's Response] We are staffed and equipped to only service PCs. This is a long standing position of the college district.

12. *Faculty and staff put many hours of work in the Sabbatical Leave Committee, the Distance Education Committee, the Basic Skills Initiative, program reviews, course and curriculum updating, SLO's, accreditation, assessment, hiring panels, course scheduling, and kept the administrative functions operating. You threw all that work away, apparently without even looking at it, insulted all the faculty and staff who had worked so hard, and took over everything. Within days of destroying their work, you brought out completely different plans or pursued completely different actions, with no rationale, justification, presentation of data or evidence, other than "My Vision," "My passions." "My idea," and without even a nod of acknowledgement to established procedures and policies, laws, or the norms of common courtesy. Why should we listen to anything you say when your actions are so egregious?*

[President's Response] It is difficult to address this question because I find the tone to be inflammatory; particularly since the accusations are not based on fact. Let's take a look at the Sabbatical Leave as an example.

I followed the Sabbatical Leave Committee's recommendations. The list, as presented to me by the Sabbatical Committee, was accepted and the four top recommendations were given to the Board for approval. Prior to making my recommendation to the Board I met with each nominee so that I could understand the project proposals. As AR 322.01 "Sabbatical Leave" states, "The Board has the right to reject any and all sabbatical applications." The administrative regulation also states, "The President shall review the list and submit his/her recommendations for approval and disapproval to the Board for its action at the first Board meeting in February." I made recommendations for strengthening the proposals given my responsibility to the Board of Trustees.

It is important for all of us to acknowledge the positive achievements this institution has made over the past year. These successes were not a result of "throwing everything away." They would not have been possible without building on a strong foundation and without the hard work and dedication of the faculty, staff, and management team.

13. *Since 20% enrollment growth will put us above our funding Cap and new facilities are expensive to establish and maintain, what sustainable funding has been identified to maintain these growth efforts?*

[President's Response] Great question! Our budget model is designed to fund sections, not FTES. Our long-term ability to manage our unprecedented new enrollment level will dependent on effective scheduling, maximizing fill rate, program review, efficient use of support staff and how effective we will be in reducing operational costs. The budget model forces a series of questions to be addressed during the budget development process so that we will identify what level of enrollment we can serve without damaging the supporting services and activities.

It is important to remember that our state appropriation is 9% higher this year (2009-10) because of last year's growth. We have been able to absorb additional students this year because we are operating at a higher funding level than during the previous year. This is not to diminish the negative impact of our financial situation. It is intended to note that for this year, and perhaps next year, CR will be able to meet the incredible demands of our community's students.

14. *The governance policies of the current administration have placed CR's accreditation in serious jeopardy and have driven morale on the campus to an all-time low. What does the Cabinet plan to do this fall to remedy these devastating problems?*

[President's Response] CR's accreditation status was in serious jeopardy since 2006 when the institution was first placed on sanctions long before this current administration was in place. In January 2006 the college was placed on warning as a result of four unresolved issues from 1999, and four additional recommendations were added. In 2007 the college's level of sanction progressed to probation because of a lack of progress. In fall 2007 leaders came forward to address many of the accreditation-related recommendations; under the current administration and after long hours and hard work by the Educational Master Planning Committee and the administrative team the remaining sanctions were removed in January, 2009. The commission placed sanctions back on the college and noted in July, 2009 ". . . that while College of the Redwoods had appeared to make substantial progress resolving its deficiencies in the fall semester, 2008, the College appears to have slowed or reversed its direction."

This is not a problem the Cabinet can just push a button and "fix"; everyone in the institution must be involved. That being said, the Cabinet is committed to working with and supporting all constituent groups in improving both the communication and operations of the college. The discussion concerning the review of roles and responsibilities of each group will be facilitated by the Presidents of the California Academic Senate and the California Community College League to insure the outcome of the process will develop trust and respect among the groups.

On the morale issue, each of us needs to take personal responsibility for our positive outlooks. In this way we each take responsibility not only for ourselves, but also for building a CR culture of positive ways to address opportunities and challenges. The district has undergone many changes since being placed on warning in 2006: despite experiencing four presidents in four years, the institution conducted program review for the first time in many years, updated curriculum (in some cases, for the first time in decades), learned the importance of having and assessing student learning outcomes in courses and programs, and conducted planning on many levels (educational, financial, technical, and facilities). In any attempt to realign a college to better serve the needs of the students in the community it serves, change must be embraced. Each of us must determine for ourselves how best to manage change and view our future with all of its potential.

[VP Instruction's Response] See #10, above.

15. Please explain what steps have been taken to initiate mediation for the college?

[President's Response] See #10 above.

[VP Instruction's Response] Dr. Jane Patton, President of the Statewide Academic Senate and Dr. Scott Lay, CEO of the Community College League will be assisting us not only in the clarification of our various roles, but also with guidance about how our roles interact in addressing issues. They were contacted and have agreed to come to CR on September 28 at 4:00 pm in the Forum Theater and all day on September 29 with specific times of the day and location of the all day workshop to be announced.

16. Student enrollment is up 20%. In the past head-count was done day-by-day and final statements about head-count were made at the end of the semester to get a more accurate count. How is the head-count measured?

[President's Response] It has been measured daily and is being compared to the same respective date for the previous year. The official number is determined on census day.

[Vice President, Student Services' Response] The college submits a "320 report" in January, April, and July to the state. The report provides a district summary of enrollment, section enrollment report, basic skills/ESL reports. The 320 also reports distance education, work experience, and daily attendance classes by location.

17. If there is a budget that is stable why has the library book budget been cut? Why is the funding for database resources almost \$0? Students need these resources. What is proposed to provide resources and access to resources for students?

[President's Response] The library book budget has not been cut. There have been more "discretionary" funds appropriated to this year's budget than for last year's budget. Please review your budget with the appropriate administrator.

[VP Instruction's Response] In addition to addressing a security system need, we addressed access to library materials through budget transfers totaling \$13,700, specifically as follows:

\$ 258 – security system
\$4,810 – licenses
\$6,200 – Periodicals, EKA
\$1,752 – Periodicals, Mendocino
\$ 680 – Periodicals, Del Norte

18. What is happening with the Obama plan to provide \$12 billion to community colleges?

[President's Response] It was allocated to the state to help mitigate budget cuts. Nothing, as of this date, is reaching the community college campus level. Stimulus funding for the K-12 system is being directed to the districts and is being handled differently.

19. Will instructional block grants be continued?

[VP Instruction's Response] It is not anticipated that block grants will be continued in the foreseeable future.

20. *Who are the members of the Skunk-Works?*

[President's Response] Various researchers, business persons, faculty, government and nonprofit employees living and working in Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. Approximately twenty-five persons have met twice this past year.

21. *What can be done to make processes more transparent at CR?*

[President's Response] The expansion of members, change in scope of responsibilities and increased frequency meetings of the College Council is intended to address the some of the issues related to "transparency" at CR. The formation of the Classified Staff Council and the Management/Confidential group has also increased participatory opportunities. Both groups are represented at the College Council. The activities of a number of committees and groups can be followed on the web, and minutes from these meetings are also available.

22. *How will the library director position be taken care of?*

[President's Response] Through the normal HR process – the position has been advertised, applications have been received, and a committee is being formed.

23. *Are we going to fix the swimming pool?*

[President's Response] That can be answered when we know what is broken, how much it will cost to be repaired, and what priority the Facilities Master Planning Committee places the pool as compared to other district-wide facility needs. See item #3 above.

24. *Please respond: In the North Coast Journal article, Board of Trustees President George Truett publicly announced the Board's full support and delegated authority to Dr. Marsee. Given the poor track record of CR administrators and now a free rein to Dr. Marsee, who has the responsibility to ensure checks and balances in a system like CR-littered with controversy and mismanagement? In simple words - who has oversight to address issues coming out against Jeff Marsee?*

[President's Response] The President reports to the Board of Trustees.

25. *Can you expand a little about the budget situation in light of the tremendous FTE growth? Yet the state will not be paying for growth? So how do we fund this growth?*

[President's Response] See item #13 above. The President met with the college in an open meeting forum on September 18th to explain the budget parameters. The final budget and supporting assumptions (footnotes) has been posted on the college web site.

26. *How are we going to be able to sustain current growth with the budget situation (staffing etc.)?*

[President's Response] See item #13 and #25 above.

27. *What is the status of new construction at the Eureka Campus?*

[President's Response] We are waiting for approval from the Department of State Architects (DSA). Review of plans for the Academic Building will be reviewed upon approval of the plan from DSA.

28. *What is the point of color-coded cards for our questions?*

[President's Response] The color coding was used to facilitate quick separation during the break. A representative from each constituent group sorted the cards they received from their constituents and read questions to the panel.

29. *What survey? I don't know of anyone who was surveyed?*

[President's Response] If this question is referring to the Bond Survey it was conducted by Dale Scott and Company.

30. *Will more ESL classes be offered in order to provide access to that population?*

[President's Response] ESL could be offered under community education and we currently have Basic Skills Course that have been approved through the curriculum review process.

[VP Instruction's Response] We are anticipating a slight reduction in the number of course sections offered in Spring Semester, 2010 as compared to the number of course sections offered this Fall 2009 Semester. Overall, we also anticipate the same approximate student enrollment District wide. While there could be a shift of what is offered resulting in more sections of ESL, that will depend on availability of rooms, times of day/evening/weekends, faculty, and overall needs for sections in the various disciplines throughout the overall district.

31. *What about the pool?*

[President's Response] See item # 3 and #23 above.

32. *Can we fix the pool?*

[President's Response] See item # 3 and #23 above.