

Successes past, present and on horizon

Aug. 24, 2017

(Butler, PA) In his 11th State of the College address, Butler County Community College President Dr. Nick Neupauer attributed BC3's success to its agility and adaptability, Dr. Belinda Richardson introduced herself to a crowd of nearly 100 as the school's new vice president for academic affairs, and Brian Opitz presented a vision for the college facilities master plan, one buoyed by a number of physical improvements in the past 10 years.

Stephen Joseph's presentation centered on the importance of general education, which, the interim dean of humanities and social sciences said, produces better citizens, provides students with a richer life and helps to foster change; and Dr. Case Willoughby, vice president for student affairs and enrollment management, lauded faculty for their interactions with students.

Dr. Joshua Novak, dean of student development, and Amy Pignatore, director of records and registration, discussed cross-functional student planning with the audience inside Succop Theater.

"There is an old Africa proverb," Richardson said. "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

BC3 has gone far since his first State of the College address in 2007, Neupauer said.

"If someone would have offered a bet that 10 years later that I would still be the president and that BC3 would be so strong, I would have taken that bet," Neupauer said, referencing this unique period in higher education in the commonwealth.

"But based on very smart decisions that we have made along the years, that is the shape that BC3 is in."

The future of higher education, Neupauer said, is in its decentralization.

"It is focusing on local connections and local boards that respond to local community needs," he said. "That is what we are about. We are the community's college. We don't have multiple layers. We can adapt quickly. We are agile. We meet high-priority occupation needs." BC3 will go farther, as Richardson would say, through its 2017-2022 strategic plan, "A Clear Path Forward."

The "streamlined" strategic plan, Neupauer said, has four pathways, each with its own focus – students, communities, resources and excellence – and each with its own objectives.

The goal of Pathway 1 is to improve learning, success and completion; of Pathway 2, to build relationships to advance economic development and quality of life; of Pathway 3 to optimize the

use of financial resources and improve infrastructure and operations; and of Pathway 4, to provide enhancement opportunities to better the college and the individual.

Leading BC3 in the pursuit of the 2017-22 strategic plan is foremost among his 2017-18 presidential goals, Neupauer said.

He also intends to refresh and move BC3 forward as he enters his second decade as the college's president; to continue to fill vacant positions while pursuing new organizational structural models during BC3's "reset" period; and to foster a positive collaboration between BC3 and The BC3 Education Association – and the Pennsylvania State Education Association and the National Education Association during upcoming collective bargaining negotiations.

Neupauer discussed college reset, and new hires as of Jan. 1, following the retirements of Donna Pallone, bookstore manager; Kevin Fish, information technology client support specialist; Alex Gladis, director of BC3 @ Cranberry; Bill O'Brien, vice president for continuing education and off-campus sites; Natalie Price, coordinator of science and technology labs; Dr. Steve Catt, director of event management; Linda Dodd, executive director of human resources and Equal Opportunity compliance officer; Dr. Sunday Faseyitan, dean of assessment, research and planning; William Miller, dean, and Dr. David Anderson, professor, of humanities and social sciences; Mary Ann Hiser and Sherri Neely, professors of nursing and allied health; and Dr. Jim Morrow, associate professor of STEM.

Those holding interim positions are Richard Benko, bookstore manager; Lisa Campbell, director of workforce development; William Foley, coordinator of communications; Jerry Johnston, admissions representative and business relations; Christine Cleary, coordinator of science and technology; Tina Fleeger, executive director of human resources and Equal Opportunity compliance officer; Joseph, dean, and Dr. Nichol Murray, assistant dean, of humanities and social sciences; Martin Miller, dean of library services; and Karen Zapp, director of BC3 @ Armstrong.

As part of the reset following O'Brien's retirement, the vice president for student affairs and enrollment management will supervise Lifelong Learning, Kids on Campus and off-campus sites; and the vice president for academic affairs, Workforce Development. Event management and theater were moved under the BC3 Education Foundation Inc., and the position of vice president for continuing education and off-campus sites was eliminated.

Academic affairs

Within academic affairs, the EMS specialist position was changed to temporary full time from part time; and the position of dean of assessment, research and planning was eliminated. Sharla Anke was appointed assistant dean of institutional research and Scott Campbell, as assistant dean of academic assessment. Marie Bellis' status as assessment secretary was changed from part time to full time.

Other appointments under academic affairs include that of Elaine Chuba, to a new combined position as secretary for educational technology and nursing and allied health; of Tina Odonnell, as a regular full-time secretary of industrial safety; of Diana Kaufman, as a regular full-time secretary for public safety; and of Tina Hack, to the newly created position of coordinator of community leadership initiatives.

Vacancies also existed for a biology laboratory technician, for a part-time, grant-funded BC3 @ Brockway biology/chemistry laboratory technician and for a business division secretary. New hires under academic affairs include Kristine Allen and Jolene Stieb as regular, full-time humanities and social sciences instructors; Ramin Hajave, as a temporary full-time business and computer information system instructor; and Heather Darrington and Aaron Schlott as temporary full-time nursing and allied health instructors.

Student affairs and enrollment management

Scott Richardson was hired as director of campus police and security, and Jared Kepple and Collin Lawson's positions as campus police officers were moved from temporary part time to regular part time under student affairs and enrollment management. Garrett Logan moved from Lawrence Crossing to Cranberry, where he will serve as BC3 @ Cranberry's student services and technology support specialist.

New hires under student affairs and enrollment management include Mary Jo Deep, as a part-time secretary at BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing; John Felczak, to the grant-funded, part-time position of BC3 @ Brockway secretary; and Francesca Varischetti, to the grant-funded BC3 @ Brockway student services specialist; Amy Gallagher, as career development coordinator-academic adviser; Lauren Buchanan, as BC3 @ Cranberry director; and Tavia Sinicki, to the part-time position of assistant preschool teacher-assistant group supervisor of the Creative Children's Learning Center.

Mary McGinnis was appointed transfer coordinator-academic adviser, and Jean Peters' position as BC3 @ Armstong secretary was changed from temporary full time to regular full time.

The position of BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing specialist was changed from full time to part time.

Administration and finance

Michael Fabian was hired to the temporary full-time position of technical support specialist under administration and finance.

Convocation also included general education work sessions for faculty; division and general education council meetings.

The master plan

BC3's facilities master plan – a “road map” of where the college wants to go and what it wants to accomplish with its physical campus – is a fluid document, said Opitz, BC3's executive director of operations.

“It helps us set goals, organize our direction and allows us to measure our progress,” he said.

BC3's achievements in the past 10 years include the construction of the Student Success Center, Shaffer Walking Trail and Heaton Family Learning Commons; the expansion of the Amy Wise Children's Creative Learning Center and its connector in the Arts and Humanities building; a renovation of the Pioneer Café and of the Humanities and Education building, which also incorporates a connector; roof refurbishment on classroom buildings and the acquisition of the Bennitt property.

The master plan project list included a relocation of College Services to the Bennitt property; a relocation of the maintenance facility; the creation of an Allied Health building and health clinic; an expansion of the Public Safety Training Facility and renovation of the Business and Health Professions building; and the removal of the Continuing Education building to provide for a clean approach to future buildings.

General education: Not Frequently Enough Asked Questions

The Faculty Organization in December 2016 established a new general education program after an intense, faculty-driven review process, said Joseph, one that included a philosophy of general education and nine competencies that each BC3 graduate is to achieve: oral, and written communication; quantitative, and scientific reasoning; wellness; information literacy; critical thinking; technological competence; and values, ethics and diverse perspectives.

BC3 also created a General Education Council, which provides an advisory role to the college's governance process. It is composed of 13 employees: nine faculty members, with each representing a competency; the vice president for academic affairs; the assistant dean for assessment; the director of records and registration and the chair of the academic affairs committee.

The importance of general education, Joseph said, is that it produces better citizens, provides students with a richer life and helps to foster change. The skills helpful in negotiating these changes, Joseph said, are reflected in the nine competencies.

“When faced with adapting to a changing job, or loss of a job, a person who can speak and write clearly, think critically, find and use information, think mathematically and scientifically, relate to diverse others and keep themselves well, has a much better chance of success,” he said.

All programs must meet all nine competencies by Feb. 28, 2018, Joseph said.

Student affairs

Willoughby congratulated faculty members for their work with students, and sought volunteers to assist students in helping them to find their classrooms during Student Welcome Day tours.

“Findings,” he said, “are clear in that student-faculty interaction, beyond what just happens in the classroom, makes a difference in terms of students’ grades, the likelihood of graduation and in enjoying college.”