



## Dr. Nicholas Neupauer Convocation Speech Fall 2011

8.18.2011

Welcome to the 2011-2012 academic year Convocation. We have a busy morning to kick off what promises to be another great year at the College.

My time will be spent covering the following:

My 2011-12 Presidential goals and objectives as assigned by the Board of Trustees.

An update on the "BC3 2010-2015 Strategic Plan: Focusing on Regional Educational Opportunities and Students' Success."

An update on "The College Report Card: Performance on College Goals."

An update on our recent submission of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Periodic Review.

A budget update and look back on how we strategically weathered the storm.

A unique view of BC3's stakeholders.

A brief word on our upcoming Collective Bargaining Unit negotiations.

Miscellaneous items.

Closing comments.

### **Presidents Goals and Objectives**

As approved by the College's Board of Trustees, here are my 2011-12 goals:

Direct the College in pursuing our "2010-2015 Strategic Plan: Focusing on Regional Educational Opportunities and Students' Success."

Expand statewide leadership role with the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges and, in turn, benefit BC3.

Work with Administrative Negotiating Team, Board of Trustees and appropriate BC3 Education Association/PSEA/NEA members to develop a new collective bargaining unit contract.

Maintain sound fiscal condition of the College during these unique economic times.

### **BC3 2010-2015 Strategic Plan: Focusing on Regional Educational Opportunities and Students' Success**

Our Strategic Plan is off to a GREAT start. Of course, we have four strategic initiatives. I hope you note my emails to the campus community that provide updates on these initiatives.

Our four strategic initiatives are as follows:

- Regionalization
- Beautification
- Academic Development
- Student Centeredness

As per any good strategic plan, as well as a requirement from Middle States, budgeted dollars are set aside for our strategic initiatives. A total of \$55,000 is designated each year. A sampling of what the College spent on these initiatives is as follows:

Marketing Plan in Mercer County	13,000	Regionalization
Projector system, ITV for Lawrence Crossing	18,000	Regionalization
Equip classrooms & labs in Cranberry	2,500	Regionalization
Lobby furniture & bench for Lawrence Crossing	2,800	Beautification
Bicycling exercise equipment	2,500	Beautification
Software to support physical facilities budget plan	5,000	Beautification
Signage for the Main Campus	5,000	Beautification
Personnel support & materials for Scholars Program	3,840	Academic Dev.
Personnel support for teaching professional development	1,500	Academic Dev.
Grant to support research based teaching & assessment	<u>1,000</u>	Academic Dev.
	\$55,140	

### **The College Report Card: Performance on College Goals**

In addition to the College moving forward on our Strategic Plan, we also assess The College's goals. I remind you this information is available on the College U:Drive (on your desktop).

Our assessment is presented in what we call the BC3 College Report Card. I would like to point out a few highlights from the final 2010-2011 report.

## **Middle States Commission on Higher Education Periodic Review**

You may recall that last year the College prepared for the submission of our five-year MSCHE Periodic Review Report. The purpose of the Report is to follow-up on any recommendations from our 10-year visit, which took place in 2006, and to ensure the reviewers the College is taking in the MSCHE Standards of Excellence seriously.

While this might seem like a slam dunk and/or just a rite of passage, that's the furthest from the truth. Accrediting agencies are all about accountability these days. And rightfully so – especially for an institution like BC3 that benefits from public support. As a matter of fact, one of our sister institutions in the state was just placed on probation by Middle States.

I am pleased to say the College received initial feedback from the reviewers and we aced our exam! The reviewers used words like “commendable,” “substantial,” “strong,” “effective,” and “exemplary.” We have an opportunity to respond to some questions raised by the reviewers by September 2. We will certainly do so. The Commission will issue its final verdict at a meeting later this fall in Philadelphia. Thanks to all of those who assisted during this important process.

## **Budget**

The year of 2010 will forever be remembered as a year of unprecedented budgetary constraints.

I am sure you read the headlines: layoffs, furloughs, pay freezes, etc. In a July 15 article in The Chronicle of Higher Education, only 10 percent of two-year public institutions planned for a pay raise and 30 percent of the two-years had either layoffs or furloughs.

I am so pleased to say BC3 weathered the storm. And not by accident. Our strategic approach to regionalization, cost-savings, utilization of the BC3 Education Foundation, Inc., and smart business practices saved us in the end.

For example, non-sponsored tuition from out-of-county students lessened the blow of state cuts and level county funding.

Those cost-cutting measures that we initiated, including suggestions from many people in this audience, generated a net savings of over \$180,000.

Health care savings. We budgeted an increase of 8 percent and the increase totaled just over 3 percent. Truly amazing in this day and age!

Based on a business plan initiated by Vice President O'Brien, the BC3 Foundation owns the LindenPointe building and property rather than the College. The Foundation also transferred the Succop Conservancy to the Audubon Society to ensure fulfilling its mission to the College while also protecting the integrity of the original Succop gift.

And with a huge project like a Datatel conversion staring us straight in the face – with a price tag of a million dollars – Vice President Hrabosky went forward with a bond refinance that yielded \$950,000 to make this much needed conversion from the APECS system happen!

All of these variables were factors when we discussed finances with our Board of Trustees. Frankly, they spoke loudly. We did not re-open any of our contracts like other educational institutions and full pay raises were approved, based on performance, for all groups including administrators.

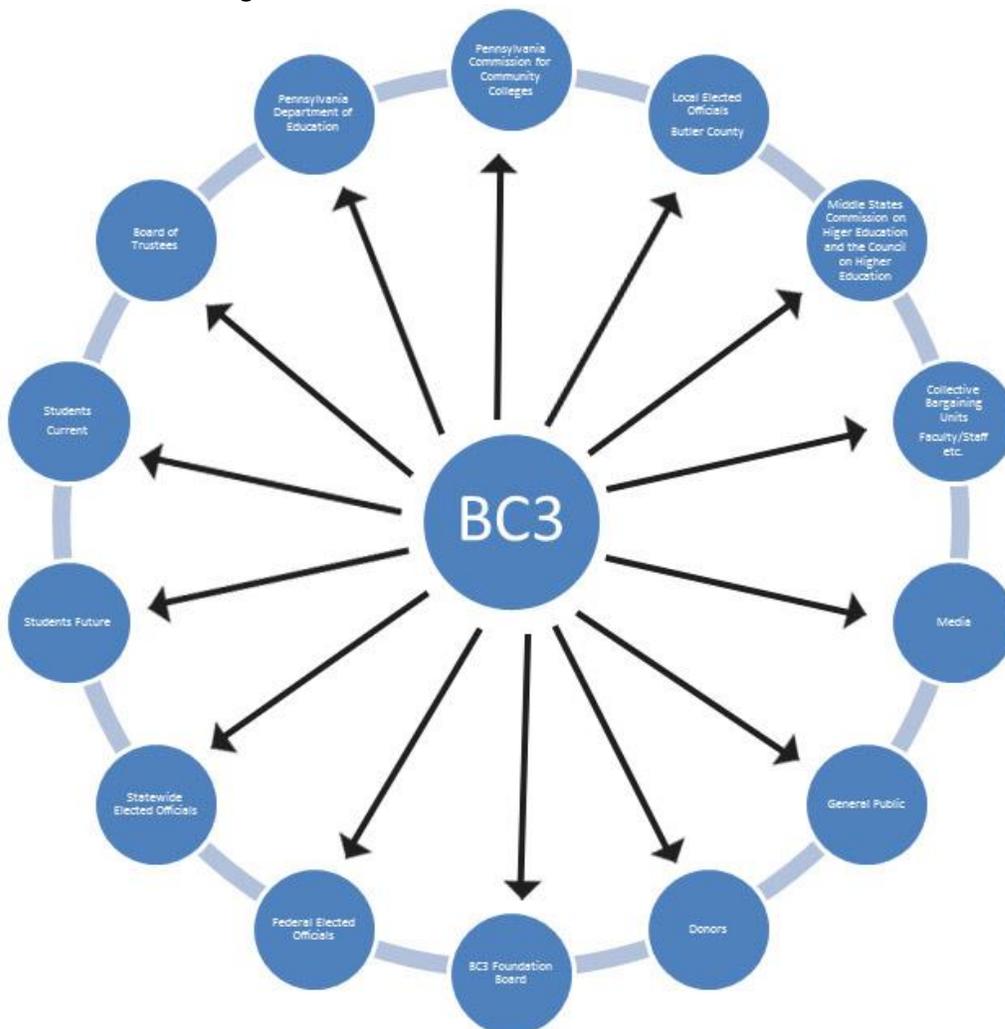
While we will continue to monitor our finances, we are confident that we are fiscally responsible. Middle States agrees, stating the following in its PRR response: “Many public community colleges in the Middle States region are subject to increasing financial pressures from limited governmental support and enrollment growth ... Butler County Community College appears to be positioned to weather financial challenges...”

### BC3 Stakeholders

I’ve said this numerous times before, but my biggest responsibility at the College is to ensure its sustainability for tomorrow, a year from now, five years from now and well beyond.

A big surprise to me is just how many stakeholders have a say – or offer their opinions – with any decision I make. This is especially the case when money is tight like it is now.

Please consider following:



Again, I applaud our Board of Trustees for making courageous decisions in such a climate.

### **College Negotiations with the BC3 Education Association/PSEA/NEA Collective Bargaining Unit.**

I think it is appropriate to discuss these negotiations after the last slide. There will be lots of key stakeholders weighing in with their opinions during such negotiations – especially those who contribute funding to the College.

Negotiations have already commenced. While a delicate fine line to satisfy all of the stakeholders, I understand the importance of doing so (as evidenced by this as a separate goal for me this year). We, of course, will work toward another fair contract.

### **Miscellaneous**

In no particular order:

#### **Safety**

This was an area I immediately emphasize when taking office in 2007. It is also prominently mentioned in our Strategic Plan and College Goals as mentioned earlier.

Some areas we bolstered include: emergency stanchions, video surveillance, public address system, e2campus cell alerts (please register), etc. We will continue to make this a priority at the College.

#### **Reorganization**

I stated last year that as a cost-cutting measure, we would go forward with internal reorganization moves. That, along with a voluntary unpaid leave program, generated over \$70,000 in savings.

While most were announced moves, a copy of the College's organization chart appears on the College U:Drive.

#### **Housing**

As I mentioned previously, moving the College forward is my main objective as President. To this end, and as identified in the strategic plan, we are looking closely into introducing student housing.

We know the College cannot own such units – it either needs to be owned by our Foundation or a private, third party. We also know there are risks with such a project – i.e. funding new positions to accommodate these students, new processes and procedures, and potential objections from surrounding neighbors.

But there is also great reward – new student populations such as international students, tremendous academic and student life possibilities, retention, etc.

We will be using this year to explore this as a possibility with pertinent college stakeholders as well as both Boards.

#### **Parking**

Our Master Plan does call for a new parking lot to be located near new student housing. Obviously, we are not there yet. Work by Brian Opitz indicates a new parking lot would cost upwards of \$500,000 to do as soon as possible.

We continue to push BC3's rideshare program. But we also added roughly 60 new spaces by going from angled parking spaces to straight ones.

We will be proactively monitoring the parking situation the first three weeks of classes. We have also taken steps with our Public Safety Department to park cars on its site.

### **Enrollment**

The College's enrollment is consistent with what is going on across the state – we are actually down a bit. Our latest report indicates we are down 2.8 percent in headcount. We are flat in Butler County, down 8 percent in Lawrence County and up 3 percent in Mercer County.

### **In Closing**

One of my favorite authors is Malcom Gladwell. His 2002 book entitled "The Tipping Point" is a fabulous read.

In the book he discusses a variety of situations that ultimately lead to a "tipping point" – a time where the scale can either tip in favor of or against a person and/or an organization.

Our institution has been in a number of tipping points over the years. The founding of our college was one. Circa 1990 was another. Battles with elected officials have been most recent.

I hope you consider the following events that have just taken place within the last six months:

--Recent success and what I believe will be recognition from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education with our PRR.

--Another stellar annual audit.

--A recent rating of "A" from Moody's on not only the state of the College's current finances but our business model going forward.

--An outstanding review of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Civil Rights Review

The scale is tipping in our favor! Simply put, we are doing things right. I will continue to go forward with what I told you Day One of my Presidency – doing what I deem best for our students and institution as a whole.

While others might be passive during this time of economic uncertainty, we will continue to be aggressive in shaping the future of our institution. We will do so by making calculated risks and by doing our homework in the process.

THANK-YOU for your efforts in making BC3 a leader in providing affordable, accessible and quality education across the region! Have a great academic year.