



Dr. Nicholas Neupauer Inauguration Speech

4.11.2008

Deputy Secretary, Congressman, Commissioners, Representatives, Trustees, Fellow Presidents, Foundation Board Members, Faculty, Staff, Students, Friends and Family...

Thank-you for your greetings, well-wishes and the efforts you have made to attend today.

But enough about Nick Neupauer already; let's talk Pioneer Pride and more about Butler County Community College.

A friend of mine once said it is not about the names on the back of the Pittsburgh Steelers' uniforms - it's all about the uniform.

Borrowing from my friend's statement, today's presidential inauguration is not about the name in your program. It's about BC3.

The word inauguration is rooted in religious ritual. Today's ritual is meant to celebrate the past but more importantly to move ahead as we "break new ground."

As anyone who knows me can attest, I realize the importance of remembering, understanding and learning from the past.

The story of the inception of Butler County Community College is one worth repeating.

With the passage of the Community College Act of 1963, Butler County Commissioners Green, Bachman and McCune unanimously resolved for Butler County to become a local sponsor of the College in March of 1965.

Several months later, a local County resident filed suit to block the development of the College. In October of 1965, a temporary injunction was issued to the County Commissioners to halt all work on BC3.

After a court hearing in January of 1966, a decision was rendered to dissolve the injunction of the County Commissioners. Not only did the County Commissioners stand tall during this debate, so did Trustees members such as Brown, Rose, Beck, Wise, Harriger, Halstead, Uram and others.

On September 26, 1966, 241 day students and 190 evening students enrolled at BC3, under the direction of Dr. James Lawson.

Since that day, 11,702 students have graduated from BC3. More than 67,535 students have enrolled in credit programs and 107,354 have taken non-credit classes.

Eighty-five percent of our alumni have stayed in Pennsylvania. Sixty seven percent, or 8,800 of our alumni, have stayed in Butler County.

The Presidents before me - Lawson, Ten Hoeve, Woodward, Price, Penar, Bartok and Azari - leave a daunting legacy and high standards to live up to. But it is the excellence of our faculty, staff, students, Trustees and Foundation Board members who connect the generations and keep the Oak Hills humming as we move toward - get this - our silver anniversary.

All along, this institution has arguably remained the County's finest asset. And in return, BC3: generates a 33 percent rate of return on government investments; returns \$8.44 on every taxpayer dollar; increases students' earning potential by \$117 annually for every credit completed; and students who earn a degree have increased job satisfaction, better health and much lower rates of incarceration and dependence on social assistance.

Today, you heard from three phenomenal BC3 alumni - a traditional student, a non-traditional student and a student with a disability. Day-in, day-out we touch the lives of people like Maggie, Conne and Mike.

Firefighters, nurses, teachers, physical therapists, biologists. The list goes on. Thousands and thousands can tell the same story.

The story as we move toward the silver anniversary I referenced earlier continues to be strategically planning for the future.

Such college initiatives include:

Continued excellence in the classroom with additional full-time hires, a revised tenure process that includes formal mentoring, and planning for a Center for Excellence in Teaching Center that can serve as a resource for senior, junior and adjunct faculty.

Campus beautification that will emphasize a new Campus Quadrangle anchored by a new Student Success Center and an updated Beck Library along with renovations to the Pioneer Café, existing buildings, the Field House and roadways.

Campus safety initiatives that include appropriate use of technology, human resources, emergency stansions and proactive planning.

Currency in technology with updated approaches to educational technology, labs, desktop PCs, classroom technology, our college website and data bases. Our strategic planning extends beyond our campus. We are proactive in dealing with revenue and funding; we respond to statewide calls for high priority occupations; we partner with county organizations like USIS to provide educational opportunities for its staff; and we collaborate with four-year institutions to ensure viable transfer options for our students.

Communication is the key to moving the College along. Our first emphasis is on the various BC3 internal publics. However, our role externally as a COMMUNITY college is also important.

As a board member of the Butler County Chamber, Butler Community Health Clinic, the Community Development Corporation of Butler County and member of the Butler PM Rotary, Butler United Way Red Apple Award, I am proud to represent BC3.

I am equally proud of the fact that I have remained in the classroom over the years. Robert Berdahl, former Chancellor of Cal Berkeley, said it best:

"Teaching a class each year can put you in touch with students and sustain your contact with your academic roots. It will help you maintain perspective on your work as a president."

To the students of my Communication 230, Introduction to Public Relations, class: thank-you. You have no idea what it means to me to address you as your professor each Wednesday from 3:30-6:15. God willing, I will continue in such a role during all my days at BC3.

Such experiece in the classroom has allowed me to stay in touch with today's student. Undoubtedly, students have changed over the years since I began teaching in 1993. But change is not bad.

Today's student thinks differently than those before them. Active rather than passive learners, I suggest we embrace this net generation instead of fighting it. Allow these students to demonstrate creativity, embrace the benefits of technology and follow them on their process-oriented journeys.

All the while by maintaining the integrity of instruction, competencies and learning outcomes.

Yes, the beauty of teaching is the ever-evolving methodologies we use in the classroom.

As a student-centered institution, we will continue to base decisions on what is best for our students. Our responsibility is to "shape the lives of our students." As President, every decision I make will be what I deem as best for the College and, ultimately, our students.

From the Oak Hill to Cranberry Township, to Union Township, Hermitage, the state of Pennsylvania and beyond, my charge is to lead BC3 to continued excellence as a force in higher education.

Rituals seem far and few between nowadays. But I believe we made the most of this three-day campus celebration.

A great number of people helped prepare for these events. I would like to acknowledge the inauguration committee for its hard work, dedication and commitment to the College. Thank-you.

Thank-you to the students who participated in the BC3 Party with the President; the faculty who participated in the Faculty Showcase; the students who contributed to the art exhibit; and the Pioneer Players for their poetry readings and monologues.

A sincere appreciation to the state and county commissioners who helped make yesterday's groundbreaking ceremony for the Student Success Center possible.

My sincerest gratitude to the delegates, friends of the College and personal friends for traveling and joining us today at BC3.

But before I accept this invitation, I would be remiss if I didn't draw attention to our symbol, the Butler County Community College seal, and its significance to me.

It represents the diversity of our County; a history in steel, oil and agriculture serving as key underpinnings to make higher education possible for its citizens.

You see, I come from steel workers, farmers and coal miners.

Neupauer's, Nativio's, Martucci's, Kiblebek's and now Humphreys and Rupe's.

I stand before you today as the College's eighth President as a result of these hard-working people.

To my family, thank-you from the bottom-of-my-heart. Mom, Dad and all of my grandparents, your sacrifices seem to have paid off.

My mom and late father can attest that I have always been a planner, committed to carrying out the goals I have set.

I can remember the day as if it were yesterday. It was a cold, snowy January evening in 1993. I was jogging on a snow covered track at Clarion University with a young lady named Tamatha Humphreys.

I distinctly remember my thoughts as I watched her jog in perfect form as I trudged along some 20 yards behind.

"I'm going to marry this young lady and have children together. She will be by my side when I earn a doctorate and someday, someday, be there when I achieve the ultimate goal of a college presidency."

Well, that day is today.

To my wife, Tammy, and children, Paige and Meredith: You are my motivation, passion and driving force. Thank-you for sharing in this journey with me.

Finally, I am honored and humbled to accept the Butler County Community College Presidential Medallion and pledge my commitment to lead this institution.

