

Good morning and welcome to 2017! We're off to kind of a strange start...I saw Doug Maughan wading over this morning in his shirtsleeves and last week it was 10 below and a whiteout. It's not great out there, but it would be so much worse if it weren't for our maintenance people. It's incredible what they've done for us the past week. Thank you!

The complete inservice schedule for this week is available online. The address should be easy to remember, since it starts with "ice." [Ice.csi.edu/iaa](http://Ice.csi.edu/iaa). You may need to log in, depending on where you are, but look for a link to the Inservice Events Schedule for a complete calendar. A few highlights include Whitney Smith and a discussion of General Education Assessment tomorrow at 9:00; an Edutainment experience presented by student services Thursday afternoon; and the Administration is pleased to serve breakfast on Friday morning.

Just before the new year, I seemed to be reading a lot of "end of the year" articles and how 2016 might have been the "worst year ever." There have been some pretty bad years (the Middle Ages come to mind), so I don't think it was the worst ever. But I admit, it wasn't much of a feel-good year: regardless of whichever side of the house you reside in politically, this election and election year was nothing short of vicious. It was hard to watch, hard to hear, and hard to participate in. So there was the election, but it also seemed like 2016 marked the end of the lives of many people we admired. What are we going to do without Glenn Frey? Or Lavar Steel? And so many others.

Maybe we were the anomaly, because for all its faults, let's not forget what 2016 saw happening here at CSI:

- Right out of the gate, the legislature elected to *exceed* the Governor's recommendation for an increase in our base funding and allowed us to hire five new staff members, mostly in support

of dual credit. We were also able to move our math lab coordinator to full time (congratulations Susan!).

- Dual credit enrollment increased by almost 800 students during the 2016 academic year to nearly 4,000 and that made up 36% of our headcount. By all accounts, that number will grow this year. Thanks are in order for all of you who are involved in our dual credit operation (which might be *most* of you), but especially to Cindy, Cesar and their team who have made great strides in the quality control aspects of the operation.
- We've reorganized community education and added continuing education to our workforce training operation. Brandi and her growing team increased workforce training enrollments from around 4,300 to almost 9,500 with a lot of good press along the way. Thanks to Stacey, Ashley, Camille, and Diane for their patience as we work through this ongoing transition.
- After many fits and starts over the past 20 years, the faculty adopted a new general education core that includes wellness and a significant ability to innovate within our core *topically*. For example, when have we ever been able to offer *Popcorn for the Apocalypse* as general education? Thank you Tracey and Chris for that course, and thank you General Education Steering Committee for your leadership and to Janea for providing invaluable instructional design assistance for these courses.
- For the first time in all my years at CSI, new degree seeking students were required to attend an orientation activity. The outcomes are striking, with a significant increase in semester retention and maybe more importantly, these students averaged taking 11.6 credits, compared with 7.4 credits in prior years. Think about that: the *average* load met the definition of full time. This

was risky, but it's working. Thank you to all those involved with SOAR design and implementation and kudos to Michelle Schutt who was asked to present the SOAR story at the *Entering Student Success Institute* in San Antonio this past November.

- Our transition coordinator team completed its first year of operation, and data suggest that they helped move the enrollment needle for our freshman class. This model promises to have more of an impact as time goes on. And they had great teammates in the Admissions office...speaking of which, the rock wall in the Taylor lobby has been replaced by our new Welcome Center which is the new home for our Admissions people.
- The Board of Trustees authorized a major renovation to our internal and external web sites and I'm told the project is on time for summer completion...complete with mobile support and a new student portal. Thanks to our ITS team for keeping the project on track. You can hear more about that at a special session on Friday afternoon.
- After a long hiatus, we received a Federal Title III grant worth \$2.2 million over five years that will allow us to make significant investments in our wireless systems, improve the digital experience of our students, expand some technical programs, add bandwidth, and hire a new Multicultural Student Coordinator. Congrats to our grant writer, Matt English and thank you to everyone who worked on that grant.
- For all the success our athletic teams have experienced on the field or floor, what we might be most proud of is their academic accomplishments: seven individual academic All Americans and three NJCAA Academic All American teams.

I could go on and on, but I'm not going to...I'm not so sure I didn't just ruin President Fox's speech. [sorry] And unfortunately, there are some of you out there who are going to be disappointed that I didn't mention some of many other great things what we can point to in what made 2016 a great year for CSI. The point is that CSI continues to excel, we continue to get better, and what I'm most proud of I think is *how* we go about doing this: *together*. And more importantly, *why* we do this. I'm so grateful to work with so many of you who *get* this: that our students not only *pay* for our best, but they *deserve* our best. I am continuously moved by your commitment to them, to our community, and to each other. It's a great mission. It's a great place to go to college. And it's a great place to work.

I can't wait to see what 2017 brings...except maybe more snow. Remember that our maintenance people got some practice with flood control last spring, so I'm confident we'll all stay dry this week.

In the midst of all this excellence and success, we do want to single out a few of you who have demonstrated exemplary contributions to this mission over the past year. Last May we recognized two of our best instructors from our excellent body of faculty. In case you missed it, please join me in congratulating Kory Lloyd and Jeff Cooper.

Now we'd like to honor two of our outstanding staff members. To present these PACE Outstanding Employee Awards, please join me in welcoming the one and only, President Jeff Fox.