

State of College Spring 2016

Good morning and welcome to the start of the 2016 spring semester. It is so good to see you all, to be together again. This morning, I will visit several topics of interest.

50 Years

Many of you attended one or more events this last fall celebrating our 50 years of operation. The 50-Year Celebration Committee, ably co-chaired by Kathy Deahl and Doug Maughan, orchestrated events and many participants in developing a marvelous CSI float at the Western Days Parade, a well-attended birthday bash on campus featuring food, information, and entertainment. Dr. Jim Gentry completed his book, *A History of the College of Southern Idaho*, and a team of faculty and staff helped get that tome published. If you don't yet have your copy, the CSI bookstore has stock, and you can buy the book online as well.

This last fall, two proclamations were issued in honor of CSI's 50th. The first came from the mayors and county commissioners of the cities and counties of Twin Falls and Jerome. They proclaimed September 2nd as CSI Day, recognizing the positive impact of the college. The second is from Governor Otter and was read by President of the State Board of Education Don Soltman honoring CSI for its statewide impact and contributions to Idaho citizens. The Governor proclaimed December 10th as CSI Day.

Legislative Requests

Today, Governor Otter will give his State of the State address, and in it, he will clarify his support for our requests from his office. I and my administrative colleagues will travel to Boise at the end of the month for Education Week at the

legislature where we will present CSI's requests to the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC), the House Education Committee and the Senate Education Committee. The legislature's deliberations will conclude sometime this spring.

This year we are asking for support in the areas of dual credit, student success, instructional design, and institutional research. Dual credit enrollment accounts for more than 30% of our total headcount. This year Associate Dean Cesar Perez tells me we may have as many as 4,000 in duplicated dual credit headcount, a record high for the College of Southern Idaho. As you know, the legislature enacted the Fast Forward Program last year where the state pays dual credit costs for 3 credits for juniors and 6 credits for seniors. We anticipate that as more students and their parents are aware of this opportunity, dual credit numbers will continue to rise. As a result, we are asking for funding for four new positions in dual credit support to address clerical needs, record keeping, advising, and communications. This request serves the general reorganization and support needed in CSI's dual credit operations, now supervised by Cesar Perez and staff in conjunction with department chairs across campus.

In the area of student success, we are asking for funding to hire qualified students and adjunct faculty on an as-needed basis. These employees would provide additional and highly qualified tutoring and support to students in gateway courses in mathematics and the sciences. Not only are we focusing on data which indicates students who are successful in these gateway courses are also successful in persistence and completion generally, but we are also building components of an effective STEM curriculum, an area coordinated by Associate Dean of STEM Studies, Dr. Heidi Campbell. While we are not asking for distinctly funded

positions in this request, if granted, funding would be ongoing to support the part-time positions as described.

As I have mentioned before, data is king. Our ability to assess everything from course outcomes to institutional effectiveness hinges upon accurate data input, effective processes, data mining, and interpretive analytics. The new Office of Institutional Effectiveness, headed by Associate Dean Chris Bragg oversees a dedicated unit for institutional research staffed by Research Analyst Cate Collins and the amazing Dr. Ken Campbell. We are requesting funding for a new full-time position in institutional research to support the huge volume of requests and the college's need for predictive analysis of data.

Finally, we are asking for funding for another full-time instructional designer. Dr. Janea Triplett-Newell hit the ground running this last fall as she has been taking stock of instructional processes and practices. Moving forward she will collaborate with faculty to develop best practices and pedagogy training opportunities. There is much work to do ongoing as we seek to be exemplary in the classroom whether that classroom is synchronous or asynchronous, face-to-face or hybrid or online, on site or off. There is also much work to do in providing ample in-house opportunity for professional development to examine instructional models of inquiry-based teaching and contemporary classroom learning space and configuration. We believe the work is ongoing and vast, and therefore we are requesting a full-time position to join Dr. Triplett-Newell.

Health and Wellness

Our partnership with St. Luke's and SelectHealth continues. Many CSI employees participate in the "know your numbers" initiative each year where a basic health screening informs each person confidentially of his or her statistics in terms of A-

1-C levels, weight, BMI, blood pressure, and more. Then coaching and counseling are made available for anyone wishing to work toward healthier choices and lifestyle. Greatly enhancing this partnership, CSI's own very active Wellness Committee provides day-to-day opportunities and encouragement for healthy lifestyle and wellness choices in everything from exercise to eating to mental well-being. I cannot stress enough the importance of these two complimentary campaigns—one for information and health advice from professional medical support and one of the best internal health and wellness programs around. I urge you to take your health seriously, take time for your physical and mental health every day. I challenge each of you to find a colleague or a group of coworkers to work together on health, an exercise buddy, an eating conscience, a running partner, a yoga friend, a bicycle group, in all instances, a fun social recognition of general fitness.

Innovation Circle Grants

This year I received some exciting project proposals, and I am pleased to note I am funding three. The guidelines for an Open Innovation Grant Proposal are found on the Grants website. In brief, an interdisciplinary team of four faculty are involved. Last year, Brenda Larsen, Jim Irons, Mike Youngman and RD Van Noy collaborated on an innovation project on the *Iliad*. For spring 2016, a team comprised of Beth Hewes, Mary Feis-Christy, Tonja Bowcut, and Steve Irons is working on “Sharing the Dream of Service Learning.” For fall 2016, a team made up of Candace Boesiger, John Brannen, Shane Brown, and Jan Carpenter will conduct a meta-analysis on the general topic of “developing positive relationships through student engagement.” In each case, though there is a general concept, the teams are free to explore the many aspects of their chosen topic. A “finished

product” is not the goal; rather, the objective is the time spent by four creative faculty colleagues in innovative discussion and planning.

For the 2016 Focused Innovation Circle Grant, I have selected a group of faculty to engage in a specific project. You’ll recall last year’s Focused Innovation Grant topic was planning for the Frost Property in Hagerman. This year, the topic is examining development of an amphitheater on the main campus. I will announce the participants later this week.

Poised for Future

The educational impact CSI has had over these five decades is mostly unknown. Certainly we can get quantifiable information such as numbers of graduates and degrees, but so much of what we do as educators is only thinly seen through numbers alone. Yet some impact information is useful as a part of the grand puzzle of the ongoing and evolving effect of education. The college recently commissioned EMSI to conduct a financial impact study to help provide clarity to the notion that CSI has a great monetary and social impact. In the study year of 2013-14, EMSI’s analysis indicates CSI generated over a quarter of a billion dollars in positive economic impact in the Magic Valley. That report will be available on the college IE website in the near future.

The counties of Jerome and Twin Falls had a combined population of roughly 53,500 people in 1970. In 2014, that figure nearly doubled at 104,000 citizens. Population growth in our region is projected to continue for the foreseeable future. CSI has grown along with Jerome and Twin Falls, and will continue to grow, possibly rapidly if projections for growth in the area are accurate. We are partnering with our K-12 and university sister institutions to provide advanced opportunities in education across the educational spectrum. We partner with

business and industry, and we are a major part of the economic and workforce success of this Magic Valley.

In partial response to this growth trend and mostly because long-range planning for the future was overdue, the college contracted with CTI to create a new master plan, one that could serve as a blueprint for growth and a roadmap to the future. That plan is the result of broad input encompassing students, faculty, staff, and community. The plan has been reviewed by the Board of Trustees and will be available on the college website soon.

Conclusion

It seems CSI has always been growing. It's simply a matter of fact. However, for all the numbers and proclamations and impact studies, there remains something at the core of our being. Here it is.

I'm looking at a page from the Sunday, August 23, 1970 Times-News. It features an aerial photograph of the budding campus and a few closer shots of a building or two. Sponsors on the page are merchants in the Blue Lakes Shopping Center and Buttreys. It's a page from a scrapbook, and there is handwriting around the edges, so I have to rotate the page to read it all.

Hello! This is your teacher-daughter speaking. I don't feel very dignified yet however, but I do know that I'm really going to like it here. The staff is very friendly and very young. There are several other girls like myself in Eng[lish] and home ec. We are frantically hunting an apartment for I am presently sleeping on the floor. It is horribly cramped, dusty and dilapidated. The fridge is an antique, impossible to open without pliers and the oven doesn't work. Doris doesn't have enough room to put her things much less

mine. Surprisingly there are several people from ISU here plus one meets people very quickly. As soon as we find a decent apartment, I'm sure the year will be a happy one. [There is a star marking the then-new Gym Building] The star-enclosed building is mine. It is very near completion now, so we shall be moving in in 3 weeks. The admin. is so proud of this addition and gung-ho physical ed. It's a very nice start! I miss you and shall be looking forward to seeing you, if not this week then next. Love and Prayers, Janice [our Jan Mittleider]

I was moved reading this touching letter to home from a young new faculty member who is today still connected to the college (hopefully the fridge and oven issues are long past). The letter is from a very excited employee about to embark on the career of a lifetime. I imagine many of us can tell similar stories about our beginnings here at CSI.

Why does Jan's letter home pull a little at our heartstrings? Part of it certainly is that beautiful connection between a daughter and mother. I can see a mother reading this bit of news, holding it close as a ward against misfortune, a tear or two perhaps, as she, from the core of her being, wishes for only good things for her daughter. It is also a record of the passionate and unassailable conviction that all of us at some point in our lives feel--the world is our oyster and, as Falstaff in jaunty confidence declares, we "with sword will open." The words are full of expectation and optimism for a future yet unknown but hoped for.

I also connect the letter from the young, new faculty member to what our students today might possibly think as they come to CSI for the first time. I would guess their experiences can be summed up much the same as Jan's, though updated for 2016—"fridge and microwave don't work, cramped, dusty. WiFi is terrible. Like

the people, though, ‘cause they seem nice and caring and friendly. Might work out really well here.” I hope each one of them finds what Jan and many others have found at CSI.

As we embark on a new semester in 2016, I have this same feeling. I am inspired by this place of magic. For many of us, working at CSI is the tangible heart of our commitment to service through education. For many of us, this is the career of a lifetime.

I close with best wishes for a joyful semester, rich with the manna that comes from service to others and being part of this grand adventure called the College of Southern Idaho.