

# **Chancellor Dr. Don Q. Griffin's Welcome Speech**

## **August 15, 2008**

### **Introduction**

I would like to welcome you back; you look very refreshed. I'm hoping your vacation was rewarding, you had some time to recharge your batteries, and you're ready for the new year.

I wish to extend a special welcome to new faculty and staff. Each of you will soon discover that you are employed at a very special and unique institution. In fact, your service here may very well be, as it has for so many of us, one of the most meaningful accomplishments of your life!

A long standing tradition of excellence and public service has always been a hallmark of this institution. Recently in an article in the June 6 issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education, City College of San Francisco was highlighted as an outstanding example of a thriving community college. We were the only community college in the nation to be so recognized. I think this is something of which we all should be proud.

Today, I would like to take the opportunity to give you my assessment of the State of the College and what we can expect this academic year, including some of the major initiatives the College will focus on. I will also update you on the Chancellor Search and my role relative to it.

### **State of the College**

First of all, let's talk about enrollment, because I think it's a symbol for our students' interest and what's happening on campus.

Last year's Fall and Spring Credit enrollment was the highest in the College's history. Even with a slight decline in non-credit enrollment, our overall enrollment was 2% greater than the year before, which is amazing. Very preliminary data indicate our Fall '08 enrollment in most credit programs will be unusually high, possibly setting a new record. So, we're in the Olympics and we're setting new records. Furthermore, we have seen a 22% increase in the international student enrollment.

I assure you that everything possible will be done to safeguard the Fall 08 and Spring 09 course offerings. If any adjustment is made in programs, it will be to the Summer 09 schedule. We are all determined to maintain the high standards of City College with minimal effects on the stability of our programs. Without these programs, the City and County of San Francisco and many other surrounding counties would have problems getting their young people the college education they deserve.

By now most of you are well aware of the financial situation all of us are facing throughout the State of California. In the midst of financial uncertainty, I'm proud to state that CCSF remains in a stable and safe position due to the collaborative relations among College constituents and careful fiscal planning and preparation. Under the leadership of Peter Goldstein, Vice

Chancellor of Finance and Administration and John Bilmont, our Chief Financial Officer, we managed last year's budget exceptionally well and we have put in place measures which will significantly reduce expenditures this year. As a result of the College's collective efforts we will continue our no "lay off" policy for all employees at CCSF.

In my July 24<sup>th</sup> memorandum to you in response to the Governor's threat to reduce public workers pay to minimum wage, I stated that "...I will not allow the state's ongoing budget drama to have an impact on the paychecks of our dedicated workforce." I again repeat the District's commitment to you receiving your paychecks on-time and in-full. Now this is very important, you have to understand, because if we are going to work for \$6.55 an hour, as much as we love this College, we would have to think about some alternatives, and we're not going to go that way.

I'm really proud of Peter Goldstein, and I'm really proud of John Bilmont, because they are 100% on top of this. Even if we were to have to borrow a few bucks, (we've done this in the past) we have already laid the plans to do so, there would be no interruption whatsoever, and that is really critical for us.

Another issue that we should discuss is Parking, because you know and I know that parking is at a premium on all campuses. I have been especially concerned about the potential loss of many parking spaces at the Ocean Campus. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to let you know that there will be an increase of 50 Faculty and Staff only designated spaces as compared to last semester.

## **Bond Projects**

Now in terms of the Bond Projects, under the leadership of our Board of Trustees and Chancellor, Dr. Philip R. Day, Jr., who were very wise in thinking about this, and with the strong continued support of the people of San Francisco, the College began a ¾ billion dollar building expansion and modernization. It may not seem like much today, but ¾ billion dollars is a lot of money. To date, this has led to four new Campus buildings – a Community Health and Wellness Center, a Child Development Center, a Student Health Center, and the new Mission Campus, as well as the remodeling of facilities at the John Adams Campus. The New Mission Campus increasingly has become a full-service campus, with credit enrollment going up by more than 100%. These new buildings have revitalized the look and feel of our College and engendered excitement and opportunity for our students. I hope that each of you has an opportunity to visit these new state-of-the-art facilities this semester and witness first-hand the great success our students derive from them.

## **Chinatown**

Also, I'm enormously pleased to announce that the College Board approved the final architectural designs for the Chinatown/North Beach campus buildings. The Trustees approved the design for the 14-story structure of the new Chinatown/North Beach Campus on April 23. The four-story building was approved by the Trustees on July 10.

Those of you who have been closely following this drama know that this has not been an easy fight, because for some reason, which is inexplicable to me, some people may think we don't need to have a campus at this location, or maybe it should only be three stories instead of fourteen, and on, and on. The real issue behind this I always suspect is it's one of those "not in our neighborhood" kinds of situations. It is not because our campuses, when we build them, do not improve the neighborhoods, because they are exceptionally good at helping revitalize neighborhoods. If you witness what's going on with the Mission Campus and all of the excitement and energy that it is the hub of, or if you go to our new Health and Wellness Center which has opened up the campus, you see all of the energy that is coming in from the people in the surrounding areas, and how much our students are lifting up their heads and are encouraged by these situations. If we are experiencing success at these other campuses, then why not at the Chinatown/North Beach site which is actually in the community of the people we wish to serve. So this is a story that is not going to end, it is going to require a lot of support and energy from all of you, and I know that many of you are very engaged in supporting this effort.

In fact, last week I met with a group in one of our typical Chinatown/North Beach classrooms. In this amazing place where so many thousands of people have been given a hand-up in life, given language skills, citizenship skills, vocational skills, which have really helped them, you see our faculty toiling away in this terrible environment and yet delivering such a wonderful service to our community. My meeting was with a group of faculty, administrators, community activists, *Friends of the Chinatown/North Beach Campus*, and members of the *We Shall Not Be Moved Coalition*. I have never seen a higher level of unity or a coalition as ethnically diverse, broadly based and effective as that one. I think the community of City College is united on two issues regarding this campus: that the campus should have been constructed long ago, and the structure, like the New Mission Campus, will be magnificent, and will serve the needs of the Chinatown/North Beach community and all the people of San Francisco. I have no higher priority than making sure that the Chinatown/North Beach campus is completed in a timely manner.

## **Initiatives**

As we deal with these various issues, I think that it is important for me to mention several initiatives. Please keep in mind that there are actually hundreds of initiatives going on at City College at any moment. Any one of you could ask why did he choose to discuss this initiative versus that initiative. I have been here 40 years, the College is still so complex that I discover something new everyday, and that's what you're going to find as well. Yet I did want to highlight some initiatives that I think are important symbolically as well as actually.

**San Francisco Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLA) Program for SEIU Employees**  
An important initiative that I am proud to announce is the San Francisco Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLA). This is an important initiative designed for classified staff to participate in lifelong learning, upgrade skills, and qualify for higher level jobs.

The LiLA program at CCSF is offered to all SEIU members, with a special invitation/focus to staff ages 55 and above. City College has funded 65 LiLAs in partnership with SEIU and the Jewish Vocational Services. The combined funds are used to pay for a broad range of

educational and training activities. The program will be offered through September 2010. Informational sessions are currently underway and applications will be accepted until August 29. Clara Starr would be a contact person for any of you who are interested in getting involved in this important program.

## **CityBuild**

Another initiative which I want to talk about is CityBuild. CCSF's CityBuild Program is a partnership with the Mayor's Office, CBOs, AFT 2121, and other trade unions, and is housed at the Evans Campus. CityBuild targets the hardest to serve, most disconnected individuals, and provides them new ways to reconnect with their education, develop self confidence, build life and job skills and fundamentally change the opportunities available to them. Currently sixty students are enrolled in the 12-week program. Students successfully completing the CityBuild Collaborative are eligible for entry level jobs in the trades, including the College's Project Labor Agreement (PLA) program which was established to provide skilled labor for Bond projects.

This is a very exciting initiative, as a huge number of construction projects are going on in San Francisco and will continue to go on in San Francisco, and we are engaged in preparing students to get into entry level jobs. Most of you, as was the case for myself, started off in some entry level positions. They are a tremendous vocational ladder to get people started. These communities that we are trying to serve, many of them are the lowest income communities, Latino, African American and other groups that are living in very low income situations. Those are the people that could get a leg up through the CityBuild Program, and potentially we could bring in hundreds of persons into the labor market with this program.

This has been an amazing collaborative project because the program is very complex and to put it together we had to rely very heavily on our own internal people to help us do this. When you are working with the Mayor's office, and you're working with Trade Unions, and the community, you must deliver. I especially want to thank Gus Goldstein who is the president of AFT 2121 for all of her dedication in helping us make this work because there were scary moments when we thought we would not be able to make it work. She was able to connect with the Mayor's office, the Trade Unions and connect with us to make sure that we stayed on course with this important initiative. I also want to thank Bill Shields who quickly gave me a tutorial and said; "this is what you need to know, and these are the things that are important, and if you could just deal with this, it would be great." He was great, and I certainly want to thank him for his hard work as well. This is a tremendous program.

## **High School to College Programs**

There are a couple of high school initiatives that I want to talk about because one of the things that I am very interested in is the whole ladder as far as education is concerned. We all know that in our classes we are encountering students who at the middle school and high school level have not mastered some of the skills they need to attend college. We pride ourselves on our ability to provide remedial education, we adapt, and we get people up to the college level. It is a bit of a challenge, so a lot of us think "wouldn't it be a great idea to involve some of these students with our College earlier?", and that's what we're trying to do as much as is feasible.

Currently, we have only about 500-600 concurrently enrolled high school students. We have more than 30 programs that deal with our relationship with Unified regarding concurrently enrolled high school students. I think we could accommodate a few more concurrently enrolled students, but that is not what I want to emphasize today. What I want to talk about is two model high school programs. One of these programs is the Glide Memorial YouthBuild Program.

CCSF is looking closely at Glide Memorial YouthBuild and other models that are successful in bringing the most challenged high school aged students to college. We have found high school outreach continues to be one of the major components. An essential feature of outreach is to introduce high school students to the College prior to high school graduation. The Glide Memorial's YouthBuild Program rescues homeless youth, provides them with housing and a full-spectrum of support services while they attend high school. The kind of wrap-around services that it provides reminds me a lot of what we try to do in our retention programs here. We formed a partnership with the Glide Memorial group because we are both interested in the same things in terms of getting students off the street, back into school, and into college. We have found that an important component to making this work is to smooth out the entry of students into the college community. You may look at the College and think it is very familiar and not overwhelming, but I have to tell you the first time I came here nearly 40 years ago, I thought this place was very overwhelming, and I had gone through some pretty good colleges and other experiences. You could imagine how a student might feel who is coming in and thinking "what do I do next?" We are very fortunate because we have created through the Outreach and Recruitment Office an Ambassador program. Ambassadors are students nearly the same age, or maybe a little older, than those they assist.

CCSF's Outreach and Recruitment Ambassadors provide the YouthBuild students a comprehensive introduction to CCSF support services; connect them to counselors, and are available to them to smooth their entry and retention at the College. Since the program started last Fall, its college bound rate is 95 percent, with 90 percent of the graduates currently enrolled or planning to attend City College. I think this is a very good success story and if we can multiply it across high schools, just think of the impact on the problems that exist in San Francisco and in other neighborhoods.

### **Gateway to College**

As CCSF continues to build partnerships with Glide Memorial, a series of events have placed CCSF in the enviable position of being asked by the Gates Foundation to submit an application for a Planning Grant to participate in the Gateway to College Network. This program would be housed at the Southeast Campus, and administered with the support of Dr. Veronica Hunicutt. It is modeled after a program started by Portland Community College and targets 16-21 year old high school drop-outs. Many of you may have seen the article in the Chronicle that talks about the high school drop-out rates, not just for San Francisco, but for other areas as well. We have a 24% drop-out rate in San Francisco and in some of the school districts it's 40% - and one of the things discussed is a methodology that enables researchers to accurately track high school students' drop-out rates. Schools that have been reporting low drop-out rates now have to come to grips with the fact that we do have a huge problem in this country in terms of students

dropping out. This is what the Gateway program is all about; re-engagement of high school students, comprehensive “wrap-around” services, and a mentored college level experience paid for by the Gates Foundation and the Mayor’s office. We would collect the ADA; a win-win situation for everyone!

I think this could be an incredible opportunity for CCSF. No matter the outcome, such an invitation is a reflection of the good work and strong partnerships being developed by faculty, staff and administrators at CCSF, SFUSD, and the Mayor’s Office. I think this is a great collaborative.

### **Sustainability Report, Bank of America Green Initiative, Southeast’s Green Program**

Over the past year, I have also been moved by the collaborative work of our community, faculty, staff, and students on the issue of sustainability.

### **Our Green Initiatives**

Sustainability is one of the most significant issues facing our world today. Both the public and private sectors are changing the way they do business—developing new technology, implementing new standards and laws, training the workforce, and financing these changes— all to lower their carbon footprint, increase their competitiveness, and build a healthier, more sustainable future. In Sacramento, the policymakers are looking to the infusion of environmentally sound policies throughout California to create economic development across all industry sectors. Mayor Newsom wants to cement San Francisco’s reputation as the most environmentally progressive city in the United States. All are turning to the community colleges because we have the infrastructure in place to prepare a highly skilled workforce in Clean/Green/Sustainable technology. What I mean by this is that, if you look at our curriculum, we have to do very little tweaking to be able to get people trained, who have the skills, knowledge and ability to work in this industry. This is one of the things that we have to start looking at – this is not something that has to come from the administration down. The faculty has to engage in this.

I did not do any traveling for many years, but when I decided to retire, I thought this would be a great time to do some traveling. I stayed a month in China, including Beijing, so when they show the pictures of the Olympics, I go wow, I know that place and that’s really cool. When you go across the world, you see that everybody seems to be paying more attention than we are to the problem of sustainability. I know that we are all very smart and we’re going to catch up and do better than the rest of the world, like we usually do. To be sure, we must get the attention of the right people on this issue. I think our College is saying that and I’m saying to you, we need to start to focus and pay more attention to sustainability.

I know that our Board is; it has called on us to develop a plan to make City College of San Francisco green and sustainable, and, we are establishing ourselves as a leader in the State. All of our new buildings, thanks to our Board and Associate Vice Chancellor Jim Blomquist, will meet the gold star standard in green building. We are greening all of our operations, reducing waste, and many of you have already started working on greening your curriculum. I want to

thank everyone who has been participating in a variety of shared governance activities to begin to bring these goals to fruition.

In the area of curriculum, we also have some very exciting new green initiatives. We are establishing a great partnership with the City in the area of solar roof installation. This summer, San Francisco passed an ordinance that gives \$6,000 rebates to homeowners if the installers have been educated through the City's workforce development system. We are currently working with the City to have City College defined as that workforce development system, so that any employer or homeowner hiring **our** students will be at a distinct advantage. We are hoping to have a Solar Roof Installation course in place this fall to meet the immediate needs of San Francisco homeowners and to provide excellent employment opportunities for our students.

We are also working very closely with the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce to provide help to small and medium size business owners and employees so that they are green from start to finish. In exchange, local businesses will sit on our advisory committees and help our students find internships and employment opportunities.

Finally, at the request of the Bank of America, we submitted a proposal to green our course offerings by providing curriculum development release time for faculty, internships for students, and the equipment needed to provide our programs with the most up-to-date technology. This is not an off to the side effort for just a few students, this is a proposal to integrate clean, green, and sustainable practices into our regular curriculum as appropriate, to give our faculty a chance to teach the most cutting edge programs, to give our students the best education possible, and to support our community to the fullest extent possible. We know this cannot happen overnight, but it is quite exciting just thinking about the important role City College has in creating a green, clean, and sustainable future for our society based on the education we provide our students.

As you can tell from this update, CCSF is entering the 2008-2009 academic year in a strong and exciting position. We are looking forward to (1) continued financial stability, (2) new education initiatives, (3) enhanced community partnerships, and (4) growth of campus facilities throughout the next year.

I think that's a mouthful. The words are simple, but those are really great accomplishments when you look around and see what other colleges are doing at this time. I think you should all congratulate yourselves on a great, great job because it was you who've accomplished this. I'm just the guy that's kind of counting the numbers and saying "Hey, what a great group of people that we have, who are delivering so much to our students." And I think that we are very fortunate that we have in place such great teams, such great faculty, such great classified, and terrific students. And don't forget, administrators are good too.

## **Closing**

Finally, I would like to address the search process for a new Chancellor. The target date for the submission of applications is September 10. Shortly after that date, members of the search committee will begin their work. They expect a final selection to be made no later than January 1, 2009.

There have been many inquiries regarding my intention to pursue the permanent Chancellor position. It has been a great honor and responsibility to serve as Interim Chancellor for nearly 6 months and I have enjoyed working with you in this capacity. In evaluating my future and measuring the benefits and liabilities of this office, the deciding factor came down to one basic question – How do I feel about the students? The answer was simple. I am as energized and excited about our students and their dreams as I was as a young psychology instructor so many years ago. Therefore, I have decided to seek the permanent Chancellor position.

I look forward to working with you and believe we will have a productive year.

Thank you.