



Big Bend Community College

**Eleventh Annual
State of the College Address
June 1, 2006**

**“AN AGENDA OF
CHANGE”**

***Grant County Advanced
Technologies Education
Center
Building 1800***

Community College District No. 18

**7662 Chanute Street N.E.
Moses Lake, WA 98837**

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“AN AGENDA OF CHANGE”

Welcome to Big Bend Community College. It's nice to see so many familiar faces and some new ones as well. We've been doing this for 11 years now and tonight we have more great stories and information to share with you.

This is a report to the college community (our students and staff) as well as to our entire college district so I'd like to acknowledge all the college staff in attendance here tonight and personally thank them for making Big Bend the “people-centered” college it is known to be. Let me also introduce you to our trustees: Chairman Mr. Felix Ramon from Moses Lake; Vice-chair Ms. Cecilia Deluna-Gaeta of Othello; Trustee Katherine Kenison is from Ephrata as is Trustee Bob Holloway; Trustee Mike Blakely is from Quincy. We also have several board members of the Big Bend Community College Foundation, would you all please stand?

Big Bend is formally known as Washington Community College District # 18. As this chart (I call it our “Star Chart”) shows we serve all of Adams and Grant counties and the Odessa School District of Lincoln County. Our institutional research tells us we serve approximately 97,000 residents in 4600 square miles. And while we are clearly a state agency, i.e., our trustees are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the state senate and the legislature sets our tuition and capital budget, our overall financial picture sends a slightly different message.

COST

This chart is from last year's operating budget as approved by the Board of Trustees last July. Two things should jump out at you from this information, one is that our total budget is approximately \$25,000,000, and the other is that our source of funds to operate the college as it is presently configured is 50% derived from direct state appropriations and tuition, and the other half of the budget we raise ourselves through grants and contracts.

Three out of the last four years, the students' tuition has increased while the direct state appropriation has decreased. This next year we'll see another tuition increase of 5%. What is remarkable however is that the 2006 legislature increased state support by more than the tuition increase. While welcome I don't see this as a reversal of a trend. In other words I expect continued increases in tuition with diminishing direct state support. Under these circumstances not only are our students paying more in taxes, as we all are, they are also paying more in tuition as the state commits more tax revenue to other important services, rather than higher education.

So as I arrive at this point on my “...Agenda of Change,” college revenue is one of those

elements of change. The per capita income of Adams and Grant Counties is approximately \$22,000, some \$11,000 less than the state average, and as tuition increases put an increased burden on our students, I believe we are reaching the limits of what our residents can pay. In 1996 a credit cost \$46.70; this fall it will be \$77.30. A typical class will cost the student \$386.50.

These days most students require some form of financial assistance to attend college. For the last two years that figure has held around 73%. However in the past five years the amount of aid furnished per student has grown from about \$4300 to the current \$5300. And remember, this is just the average level of support. The point is, school is getting more costly every year and scholarships, grants, and loans are the only things keeping folks in school.

Oh, and by the way, did any of you fill your gas tanks on the way to Big Bend tonight? Think of the cost to travel from Washtucna, Lind, Ritzville, Othello, Odessa, Mattawa, Royal City, George, Quincy, the Grand Coulee communities, Coulee City, Soap Lake, Ephrata, Warden and Wilson Creek to the campus in Moses Lake. And what if you do this round trip once, twice, or four times a week? And keep in mind that more than 50% of our students also work? Is there any wonder as to why there is a growing apprehension of the multiple effects of rising fuel prices?

An example of the delicate balance between the cost of education and the benefits of training is seen in one of our newest and most successful programs. It is called **IBEST**, which stands for **I**ntegrated **B**asic **E**ducation **S**kills **T**raining. We have created an alternate track in our traditional Commercial Drivers License (CDL) program, the IBEST track. This is a modification to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) training integrated with the rules, regulations, and truck driving skills required to pass state commercial licensing requirements. Over a two-year period, there has been a 92% success rate in IBEST students obtaining their commercial driver's license. And while the students can take the examination in Spanish, all have chosen to take it in English. Upon successful completion of the program all who wish to work in the industry have a job. What about the delicate balance? The tuition for each student is almost \$2900 and these students are all working full time. Probably none of these students could take the class if it were not for financial aid. Does anyone doubt that these commercial truck drivers are providing more support for their families and paying more taxes because of their success? As I predicted earlier, tuition is likely to continue to increase and if we don't work to increase our sources and amounts of financial aid, this segment of the population of our communities will not be able to benefit from our efforts and resources.

What are we doing about this? College staff are focusing on additional grant opportunities to provide student assistance, both financially and academically. Our major area of grant focus is the various sections or titles of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which obviously has been reauthorized several times. We have renewed our successful College Bound, and Student Support Services programs (Title IV) and partnered with Heritage University to secure a Title V - Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions grant. We are currently working with the Lumina Foundation to secure a grant called

“Achieving the Dream,” Community Colleges Count, to enhance the success, persistence and retention of all students. As an active partner of the state system of community and technical colleges we work to increase our funding while at the same time increasing our efficiency of operation, thus allowing our funds to stretch further.

OUTREACH

Tonight we meet on the campus of Big Bend Community College, not Moses Lake Community College. This difference in identity comes with the Community College Act of 1967 which gave to the state, control of all the public two-year colleges in Washington and established service boundaries. As noted earlier, we have a large geographic region to serve. One measure of success in our rural district efforts is to note more enrollments from outside of the Moses Lake zip code. Our annual monitoring report on access shows that we are moving in this direction.

Commuting has always been a way of life for community college students because of location and for most colleges a lack of dormitories. Well, we are one of only four community colleges in the state with residence halls and we are working on planned improvements to make them more attractive to students who don't live in Moses Lake. Unlike most of our other Air Force facilities, the dorms were built for that purpose. These buildings age and deteriorate as do all others and the military model of shared common showers and lavatory facilities isn't exactly what modern students have come to expect or accept. We have a ways to go before our student housing will be as attractive as apartments or rental houses. But we have made major upgrades and each room has broadband computer access, cable television, and telephone service. Continued work on the dorms will provide support for students who can benefit from resident housing.

This fall, for the first time dormitory residents will not be required to purchase a food plan. Our dining commons will provide a retail food service for students and community members alike. This should reduce dorm students' costs. Plans will be finalized to provide in the future for some rooms with a private bathroom. Of course if fuel costs continue to rise the dorms will become a more attractive alternative.

We also believe that the model that best serves our large, sparsely populated college district is one that includes a growing commitment to distance learning. The cost of establishing a growing capability in on-line and live interactive video instruction isn't cheap, but once set up, we have classrooms wherever there is a computer or a video classroom. This could be a school, a community building or even a home.

We have seen our on-line course enrollments grow, which is a testimony to the usefulness of this approach to distance learning. We are also encouraging faculty to develop more on-line classes. Since last year, interactive video sites have opened in Soap Lake and Mattawa, and will soon be in operation in Royal City and Warden. We will once again seek the support of a grant from the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Services. Our intent in this new grant will be interactive video service to support education and medical services in Washtucna, Lind, and Ritzville.

Another reason to more fully develop our distance learning capabilities is the recent concern of an avian influenza pandemic. Should that tragedy occur, it is speculated that schools, including Big Bend could be closed for as long as a month. The more instruction and student support services we can deliver at a distance utilizing our investment in technology, the better the chance we could continue to operate even though the campus could essentially be closed.

STUDENT SUCCESS

You may recall that I've spoken to you in prior years about the successful student support efforts in our English As A Second Language (ESL), College Bound, and Student Support Services programs. What characterizes each of these programs is the intense student/staff interaction with these students. Every day access to advice, counseling, coaching and encouragement is the key to helping students persist to the end of the class and to stay in school from quarter to quarter.

Our State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) recently reported on a study supported by the Ford Foundation that focused on the relationship between success in employment and success in college. This state-wide study noted that students who complete less than a year of college and who fail to earn a certificate or a degree, are likely to get a job, but in a low wage occupation that may be of limited duration. However, if students complete at least a year of college, achieving a certificate or degree, they tend to be employed in a higher wage position with possibilities for advancement. The criteria of a full year of college, with the attainment of some sort of certification, is the difference or "tipping point" that a successful college experience can make.

Obviously student persistence and retention is critical to reaching the "tipping point" and therefore critical to student success at Big Bend. To that end, as I noted previously, we have partnered with Heritage University to apply for and receive a Title V grant. This grant funding allows Big Bend to focus resources on the recruitment and success of our Hispanic population which is 36% of our district population, with a goal of passing on these successful students to Heritage University and other baccalaureate colleges. We are also using a planning grant from the Lumina Foundation to research and establish a college-wide effort in student persistence and retention.

PERSONNEL TURNOVER

There are more than 3000 community and technical colleges in the US and this truly American contribution to higher education is catching on world-wide. Around the world community college experts are providing consultation with foreign governments to help them establish their own version of our dynamic contribution to post-secondary education.

The decades of the 60's and the 70's experienced the most rapid development of community colleges in almost every state in the nation (recall that BBCC was formally chartered in 1961). Staff turnover in most of these colleges and certainly at Big Bend has been modest. However we predicted 10 years ago we would see increased staff turnover near the turn of the century. This has happened across the country and while some

departures represent a search for better job fit, many more are actual retirements.

College staff retiring or moving on to other challenges this past year include: Patricia Nobach – Office Information Technology; Linda Wrynn – Director of Nursing; Richard Larson – Dean of Professional/Technical Programs; Loretta Nickel, Director of Student Support Services; and Linda Brown – Nursing.

Newly hired staff include Jerry Workman – Director of Student Support Services (replacement); Clyde Rasmussen – Dean of Professional/Technical Programs (replacement); Dr. Emery Smith – Sociology Instructor (replacement); Dr. Ryann Haw – Psychology and Criminal Justice Instructor (new position); Title V Director Terry Kinzel (new position); Title V Bridge Coordinator Cristina Rangel (new position); Title V Student Outreach Advisor Frank Salinas (new position).

EVENTS

Part of the fun of talking about challenges and change is that I can also mention success! We can't be as busy as we've been without some accomplishments. The image many folks recall from their own college days are long lines and closed classes. Most registration now is done on-line from home or in the library, or over coffee in ATEC, using the wireless network, so the lines are not usually seen unless it is for one of the student body sponsored noon-time food events. Registration for the fall begins during spring quarter with appointment times determined by the number of credits earned. As a result, fewer closed classes are encountered by our second year students.

Two of our premier technical programs are aviation and nursing and both have been prominent in college and community support this past year. The 2005 legislature provided the first step in the replacement of our fleet of primary training aircraft. When completed, 15 primary trainers out of our 25 aircraft will have been replaced, two additional twin engine airplanes will have been purchased, and a jet simulator will have been acquired. Early this spring we took delivery of the first two replacement airplanes, the Piper Warrior III has full glass cockpit display.

Most of our graduates in aviation set their sights on flying for one of the major airlines. To be hired they must not only have our pilot training, but they also need to graduate with a bachelor's degree. And while the degree doesn't need to be in aviation, most of our students desire to continue in that discipline. Our goal is to have a bachelor's degree program right here in Moses Lake so that our graduates can remain on campus, help us in our program, and pick up their degree at the same time. Currently Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University offers on-line classes for those who want to earn the bachelors degree. Just recently Central Washington University and Big Bend jointly announced an aviation management degree, the first CWU degree ever offered in Moses Lake. There will be a full time CWU faculty member housed in the BBCC Flight Training Center to support this new degree, beginning this fall.

Heritage University, our other baccalaureate partner for more than 12 years, continues its successful Bachelor's in Education program. Their Master's in Education program also continues, and this fall they will add a Bachelor's degree in Social Work.

Last year our nursing program became a fully accredited associate degree program. To accommodate the increased interest in the profession and the need for new nurses, the college remodeled the space of our old library to provide additional classroom and laboratory space.

If you've not visited the new facility in the 1700 building you are welcome to do so. This increased visibility has helped create interest in additional financial support of the program. As noted previously, we have been actively involved in seeking additional funds to support our students and programs. One result is the "Access to Good Health" campaign of the BBCC Foundation. Chaired by Howard Skaug, the effort so far has resulted in funds (\$60,000) to acquire two computerized manikins known as "SimMan and SimBaby" for highly realistic training scenarios in the laboratory setting.

"Access to Good Health" targets equipment purchases (another set of the computerized manikins is needed), scholarship assistance for our student nurses, and equally important, scholarship support for our nursing instructors who must earn a Master's degree in Nursing to remain certified to teach in the program. There is currently a waiting list of 27 students for the program and one of our instructors recently completed her master's degree with assistance from this foundation campaign. This scholarship and equipment support is essential as our costs continue to rise faster than does state support.

We've been in the new library and ATEC for a year and a half and both facilities are meeting our every expectation. First, and you've probably heard me say this before, the final project looks exactly like our vision and the utilization has exceeded our expectations. We are meeting the needs of our students, those of our partners, and residents throughout our district. Baccalaureate enrollments are strong for both Heritage and Central Washington Universities, testimony to the success of the Paul Lauzier University Center.

Almost weekly someone who has never been on our campus attends one or more meetings in ATEC. Local school district superintendents and the Grant County Economic Development Council meets regularly in ATEC. I want to show you a short video demonstrating the drawing power of ATEC and its contribution to economic development in the region.

Recently we accepted a bid to make improvements in the lighting, heating, and air conditioning in Wallenstien Theatre. That work will begin immediately. This fall we will go to bid for our new Fine Arts building which will be located just off Randolph Road next to the Math/Science building (#1200). Just to the west of the Fine Arts building we have plans for our new formal entrance to the campus and this is the representation of that project. We are actively seeking partners to help construct this highly visible campus entrance.

PEOPLE

We've been fortunate to hire quality staff over the years, and these folks come and go, leaving behind a positive mark, many friends, and many, many grateful students and

staff. For twenty-five years Linda Wrynn has tirelessly given to students and the college as a nurse educator, and later as the director of nurses. In addition to the many graduated nurses, Linda led our program through its conversion from a one-year to a full two year associate degree program. She provided the guidance and strength to secure specialized accreditation of this new program from the National League for Nursing, and she helped to design the new nursing facility, actually getting to work out of it during her last year with the college. She will be sorely missed.

Once again we've been privileged to nominate two outstanding students to the All-Washington Academic Team. Cody Spradlin chose to attend BBCC to extend his high school baseball career. As a BBCC student his instructors describe him as motivated, determined, a leader, caring and responsible.

Since coming to Big Bend Cody has experienced challenges and success on the baseball field, in the classroom and in the community. During his sophomore year at Big Bend Cody earned a 3.95 GPA, served as team captain for the Viking baseball team, and volunteered as tutor and playground supervisor at Peninsula Elementary. Later this year Cody will take part in the 2006 International Scholar Laureate Program Delegation on Engineering in China.

Tonight he had a choice: to attend State of the College with all of us, or attend the Northwest Athletic Association of Community Colleges Commission banquet where he will receive the Red Lion Hotels and Inns Scholarship which is awarded to one female and one male student-athlete in the NWAAC, which will allow him to complete his education at a baccalaureate institution. Guess where he is tonight?

Brian Williams is described by his instructors as academically gifted, intuitive, hard working and an exceptional mathematician. In fact, chemistry instructor John Peterson wrote in a letter of recommendation that Brian "...achieved one of the highest cumulative scores in General Chemistry that I have ever seen." Brian's grades for three quarters in General Chemistry were 4.0, 3.9, and 4.0, and he ranked second in his class with his score on the American Chemical Society standardized test.

These comments are in stark contrast to Brian's thoughts on the future just two years ago. He enrolled at Big Bend in the fall of 2003 with the goal of completing a certificate in drafting to help him get a job that paid more than minimum wage. He earned a 3.99 GPA and realized he had potential for much more. Today Brian is aiming for a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering. Brian has earned a scholarship to WSU Tri-Cities. Brian, will you please stand up?

Last summer Felix Castellanos was 19 years old, had limited English, very few workplace skills and was working in the local fields and orchards. Through the Opportunities Industrial Center (OIC) he heard about the IBEST CDL program that I mentioned to you earlier. He enrolled with OIC support in the fall of 2005. During his training, Felix improved his English speaking and reading skills, learned to drive various commercial vehicles and ultimately earned his commercial driver's license. Today he is

employed full time by Odom Corporation with benefits, attends Big Bend as an automotive student, and his success is so good that he finally moved out of his mother's home!

William Schwartz has a new job in California when he graduates next week. He had spent the previous 15 years working in restaurants and was looking for a career change to better support his family. Electricity had always intrigued him and the potential income for electrical workers was attractive.

He enrolled in the industrial electrical technology program at BBCC. As a part of a classroom assignment, Schwartz phoned Monier Lifetile in California to inquire about job openings, education and experience needed and salary and benefit information. During the conversation, company executives invited Schwartz and IET instructor Steve Mattern to the California plant for a tour. Schwartz will make \$20 to \$29 per hour as an electrical maintenance technician.

Well, it has been another interesting year hasn't it? With Microsoft, Yahoo, coming to the area, and Genie and REC Silicon expanding, our challenges and opportunities await us.

Once again let me thank you for joining with me to experience a year in the life of this dynamic institution. Believe me each year gets more exciting and more challenging. It's a joy to come to campus every day and work with this wonderful staff. I hope you will join me next year to hear more stories and share our excitement and analysis of the challenges that await us. Please drive safely, Good Night!