

## **FINAL Chancellor's Circle Comments**

**October 26, 2013**

**Updated 5:10 p.m. 10/26/13**

Good evening ladies and gentlemen! It is a pleasure to be here with you at our 24th annual Chancellor's Circle Dinner. This celebration is designed to honor **you**: our patrons, business partners, alumni, faculty and staff; those who continue to help us accomplish great things for our students and the community year after year as well as thank those who believe in what we have yet to do.

On evenings such as this, where generous, focused and ambitious individuals join together with purpose in mind, I cannot help but be reminded of a favorite passage by author Mary Anne Radmacher. She says, "Live with intention. Walk to the edge. Listen hard. Practice wellness. Play with abandon. Laugh. Choose with no regret. Appreciate your friends. Continue to learn. Do what you love. Live as if this is all there is."

These words continually remind me that life is **not** a dress rehearsal. I always look forward to this event, because it consistently brings together a group of inspirational people who **are** living life to the fullest. People at COC are full of desire and *desire* makes people and places happy. Desire is life. It is being eager to see the next sunrise or sunset. It is listening to others' hopes and dreams and reaching out to make a positive difference in their lives and, the next day, wanting to do it all over again. This vibrant group is the embodiment of Benjamin Mays' challenge to reach for your goals, to do your best every chance you have. As he states, "The tragedy in life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach."

At COC, if there's one thing we have, it is GOALS! And with you on our team, we know there that we can accomplish whatever we aim to do. We believe that we become what we think.

And when we dream to do big things, we change our thoughts and then we change our perspective of the possibilities and our goals. You help us do that in ever so many ways.

If you could see what I see from this vantage point, you'd know that, as I glance around the room, I see wonderful partners who helped launch so much that has made a substantial impact on our college district and our students! From the Gardens project that has brought peaceful retreats to our busy campuses; patrons without whom the Performing Arts Center would not be thriving as it is; community volunteers who wholeheartedly threw themselves into fundraising campaigns for athletics, the University Center and the Culinary Capital campaign, while still others lent their expertise to the College to help us in countless other ways. You make the most of opportunities to partner, to innovate, to serve. And without your talent, generosity, connections, time and confidence in us, we would not be the high-performing institution that we are recognized as today.

If you have been around us for any amount of time, you already know that College of the Canyons **is not like** other two-year colleges. Instead of being content to serve as only a “transfer station” to four-year universities, COC has staked a claim in new territory.

- ✓ We have the facilities to offer advanced degrees, right here on campus;
- ✓ We are the hub of innovative new programs that bring well-trained employees to area businesses;
- ✓ We train the local workforce; and
- ✓ We give high school students a jump start on their higher education.

Because we are located in this great community, every day, we have the chance to look out onto the horizon where dreams can be built.

And we can do that because **we have the right team.**

Each year at the college, we create a theme to keep us focused through the forthcoming academic year. This year we selected: “**Teamwork Makes Dreams Work.**” Four simple words put to work time and again by those of us who have the privilege to work here and by our extended COC family. Four simple words brought to life every time you visit one of our campuses.

The group gathered tonight is, indeed, a living tableau of this year’s theme. **TEAMWORK MAKES DREAMS WORK.** While we are unique and diverse individuals, we work together as one: community and college, instructors and donors, administrators and volunteers, students and support staff. It’s a no-fail recipe that continues to perfect itself through each and every project. No matter the challenge or task, we rise to the occasion as one.

And together, we accomplish the impossible! This is a strong team because it is filled with unique people:

- People who are filled with passion and compassion.
- People who have big ideas, an eye to the future and the courage to share ideas with others and work to make them a reality.
- People who are resilient and understand that personal, selfless involvement has an impact that is lasting and matters.
- People who are focused on results!

In other words, people like you!

Those of you who have been with us for a number of years have seen the College grow. That growth symbolizes the impact that you in Chancellor's Circle and those who built our Foundation have had in helping us move forward with our dreams, and in building capacity for the future.

As a result of your confidence in us, COC continues to be a place of high standards, integrity and results as evidenced by what you see around you. COC is an **aspirational** place and we are living the promises we make to our community in ever so many ways...because of our **TEAM**.

Our community, our partners, our volunteers, our Foundation Board and donors, our administrators, our faculty, our staff, and our Board of Trustees share a passion for supporting our college. The collective willingness of individuals to invest time, energy, talents and resources makes a difference in what we ultimately accomplish for our students as we connect on multiple levels:

- ✓ Some of you have been friends of the college for years, your ties stretching back to when you were a student here. (over 50% of our full-time staff were our students!)
- ✓ Many of you went on to have your own children who attended COC and;

- ✓ Others among you helped us build more than 70 active partnerships with our businesses and nonprofits.
- ✓ Thousands of local employees from your companies have gone through training, and then retraining as markets and technology shifted.
- ✓ And, yet others are new to our team!

No matter what your relationship with us looks like, your shared passion for supporting the college will forever be appreciated. Without people like you, who continue to inspire those of us at COC day after day, year after year to cultivate and care for the reputation of this institution as the most progressive, **can-do** community college in California, we wouldn't be able to achieve our dreams and continue to create new aspirations.



## **Our Teamwork Makes Dreams Work**

**There is a certain genius in teamwork.** It is the rarest, most exhilarating and most productive human activity possible.

- ✓ A real team is made up of people who may be different in experience, talent and education – but equal in their commitment to working together to achieve goals and the greater good.
- ✓ A team is a collection of people who look at the bigger picture and commit to work together in ways that they never have before.
- ✓ A team happens when people come together and, instead of working to make themselves stand out, look to make stars of others and produce results that could never be achieved by working alone.

## And, **Our Team Works! The evidence is all around us:**

Since we last gathered, we:

- Sent five students to Nicaragua, where they provided supplies to an elementary school, and provided the funds to purchase a new water tank, all with the help of instructors Miriam Golbert and Claudia Acosta. Thank you!
- Generated \$2.4 million in revenue used to provide training and instruction for thousands of employees at hundreds of local companies (Thank you Joe, Pete, Steve and John!)
- Grew our year-over-year Foundation revenue for the fourth consecutive year. (Yeah, Foundation staff!)
- Continued a successful Culinary Arts Capital Campaign with the leadership of Diana Cusumano and Blair Salisbury, who pushed forward even in the face of a recession.
- Launched the Upward Bound program for first-generation college students. (that's to Dean Omar Torres, Barry Gribbons and the faculty of the Math, Science and Engineering division);

- Augmented our state revenue by applying for and receiving more than \$5 million in new grant funds (Terrific job Barry and team!)
- Won a **sixth** state title in Men's Golf, thanks to the coaching and leadership of Gary Peterson.
- Received a presidential award for our Center for International Trade Development (CITD). Thanks to the work of Steve and Pete.
- Cheered the success of the 1,317 graduates in the Class of 2013, our largest group ever, which included 39 veterans (encouraged by Renard Thomas!)
- Expanded Math 075, a pre-statistics math program that led to a five-fold increase in student completion of statistics coursework (from 13 percent to 78 percent), for students with initial elementary algebra placement. Thanks to Joe Gerda, Ana Palmer and that group!
- Developed English 096, which advances students through two freshman composition pre-requisites in one course, reducing the time students spend in developmental English by one semester.

- Opened the Athletic Hall of Fame in the lobby of the Main Gym (Thank you to Lenny and the committee; Jim Schrage and team for construction).
- Launched Incident Command training and enhanced our ability to respond to campus emergencies. (Barry, Jim, Ryan, Mike, Eric, Diane Fiero and Sharlene -- good job!)
- Collaborated with the Hart District to jointly develop standards for college and career readiness through the continued implementation of the Math and English Learning Consortiums, and the new Career Coaches program (Way to go Audrey and your Green Team).
- Developed transfer degree programs in Geography, Mathematics, Psychology, Physics, Sociology, and Theatre Arts. (Yeah Vince and the Academic Senate!)
- Added 25 new courses to our academic programs, along with new certificates in Customer Service, Plumbing, and Robotic Welding.

- Launched the Santa Clarita Environmental Education Consortium and the Sustainable Development Committee. With the support of our external business partners, we initiated partnerships with local K-6 institutions to promote sustainability practices through the leadership of English faculty Jia-Yi Cheng Levine and Kim Gurnee and former Foundation chair, BJ Atkins.
- Selected as a 2013 State Bar of California Education Pipeline Diversity Award recipient for the development of outstanding law-related educational programs that train and support students to become interested in the judicial system and pursue careers in law (Great job Patty Robinson.)
- Created a first-of-its kind art exhibit as Art Gallery Director Larry Hurst joined together with Kelly Burke and Kelly Cude from the Biology Department (to create the examples you saw here tonight.)
- Achieved the status of seventh in the nation for our women's soccer team;

- Sent our Model UN team to Harvard and supported our national first place forensics team to shine!

### **How did we do all that and more?**

First and foremost, it is teamwork. Our team at College of the Canyons is successful because it is:

- **Forward-Thinking**
- **Responsive**
- **Optimistic**
- **Resilient**

These four hallmarks of teamwork, combined with **your** support, ensure that we can achieve anything we set our minds to at College of the Canyons!

## **Forward-Thinking**

Our forward-thinking nature can be seen in nearly every vista, on every horizon, in every place where people gather together and do good work on and around this campus, as well as on our Canyon Country Campus.

Take, for example, where you have been just this evening:

- **At COC, we have an Art Gallery!** Not many community colleges can boast a bona fide Art Gallery where a variety of famous and not-yet-discovered artists (including students and faculty!) are featured regularly and cutting-edge shows are **not** a novelty.

**This place in which we sit is an example of forward-thinking.** We all know that none of us can go back and start a new beginning. But, each of us can start today and make a new ending. That is what the TLC is all about.

At last year's Chancellor's Circle Dinner, the TLC had just opened. It was designed to provide a place where the students could go for help and where their hard work would yield positive results. Over the course of the year, the TLC has made an undeniable mark on the way we serve students, as it expanded the space for tutoring by 300% .

**And as a result, in the academic year 2012-13, the TLC served almost 9,000 unique students with more than 123,000 hours of student support services! In the first eight weeks of the Fall 2013 semester alone, 113,677 service hours have been provided through the TLC. That's just incredible. Let's hear it for James GG, Mojdeh Mahn and their team! Success breeds success and this place is helping our students succeed!**



## **Responsive**

In addition to forward-thinking, our team at College of the Canyons is responsive. Case in point: the University Center. It has been said that we become what we give ourselves permission to be. The UC is living proof to that belief. Where it took several years for this dream to come to fruition and gather funding, the 110,000-square-foot center opened in 2009. To date, nearly 30,000 students have been enrolled in degree, certificate and credential programs. Now, **that's** exciting!

## **Who has gone here?**

But what's even more exciting is how the University Center continues to evolve. It is not a static fixture on our campus, but a dynamic organism focused on meeting the changing needs of our growing community. We are constantly working with existing university partners, and potential new partners, to expand the array of degree

offerings made available. In the coming year, these new programs will come online:

- Bachelor of Science in Biology, Cal State Los Angeles
- Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration, Cal State Bakersfield
- Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Cal State Bakersfield
- Doctor of Nursing Practice, Brandman University

**Our commitment to being responsive means that we are building programs to meet the future needs of the workforce!** Workforce skill development is key to our mission and is, in these changing times, critical for the economic recovery of our valley, region and state. One of the hottest career fields, now and into the foreseeable future, is Culinary Arts. To meet that demand **ahead of the curve**, we recently broke ground for a permanent, well-equipped Culinary Arts training facility on this campus that will enable us to meet student and business needs in a wide range of Culinary Arts disciplines:

- ✓ When the new Culinary building opens, classroom sizes are expected to double from 17 to 34, and when you multiply that figure by **four** new teaching kitchens, you begin to see the full picture of just how many new culinary students COC will be able to serve.
- ✓ Alumni of iCuE have already launched solid careers at restaurants throughout Southern California (without the heartache of tremendous student loans from those “other” culinary schools) and are helping the program build a reputation for excellence.
- ✓ iCuE alumni hold positions at:
  - *The Lazy Dog Restaurant and Bar*
  - *Larsen’s Steakhouse*
  - *Oaks Grille*
  - *Velvet Cupcake*
  - *Wolf Creek*
  - *Porto’s Bakery*
  - *Newhall Refinery*

- *Lucille's Smokehouse*
- *Valencia Country Club*
- *Culinary Wonders and*
- *Le Chene*
- *just to name a few*
- *As you tasted tonight at the reception, their futures look good!*
- *Please join me in a round of applause for our students and teaching chefs.*

Another shining example of responsiveness is our Economic Development Division. Through partnerships with local businesses, we provide quality training for the existing and future workforce, and have done so for two decades.

Over the Economic Development Division at College of the Canyons , which has generated **\$19.9 million in funding** dedicated exclusively to helping nearly **19,000 employees at more than 4,000 businesses learn, compete and grow.** As we dream big and follow through, working with others, we have boosted the region's economic development and played a key role in helping shape the dynamic economy we now enjoy by providing access to training and development that helps local companies stay at the forefront of their respective industries.

And recently, through the leadership of Keri Aaver, in the last two years, the WorkSource Center has assisted **12,000 clients** in acquiring the training needed to help secure employment.

At the same time, we support local businesses by growing and updating our course offerings in order to provide students with the skills, expertise and currency needed to move seamlessly from the classroom to the workforce.

Our CACT award-winning partnership with ADI has resulted in their expansion and the training of thousands of employees in the field of aerospace manufacturing thanks to the leadership and support of ADI president John Cave.

## **Optimistic**

**What fuels our team?...**The secret that makes COC different is really no secret at all. It's simple: It's our **attitude**. Someone once explained the power of attitude this way: "Our lives are not determined by what happens to us, but by how we react to what happens; not by what life brings to us, but by the attitude we bring to life. A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events and outcomes. It is a catalyst...a spark that creates extraordinary results."

Our attitude is one of optimism and it stands in sharp contrast to the attitude that many colleges display. Over the last several years, and, indeed, even today, surrounding colleges are focused on *surviving*.

And, in many ways, you can't blame them. In our system, when faced with a difficult decision many community colleges elect to hunker down and wait for the storm to pass.

Some tend to be extra generous in sharing their fears and blaming others. Many have seemed all too eager to plan and fuel negativity. But that does them no good because what you feed yourself...your mind and your soul...is what you become.

The direction we take differs from the norm. We are confident in our abilities, in our creativity, in our innovation, and in our entrepreneurial spirit. We don't shrink from challenges. We tell ourselves **can** and those positive thoughts propel us to positive acts.

We push ahead determined to take advantage of every opportunity.

Our attitude of optimism puts us on a path that will:

- ✓ Enable us to become the place that people, businesses and organizations in our community can count on.

## **Resilient**

Because of our optimism, we are also resilient. Sure, we meet with difficulties. Things don't always go smoothly. But when times are tough and challenges rise in front of us, instead of folding our tents and running for the hills, the people at College of the Canyons call on our greatest traits—tenacity and creativity—to shepherd us through. We



know how to turn adversity into victories; we leverage hard-knock lessons to glean even more benefits out of the good times.

Harriet Beecher Stowe said, “The difference between perseverance and obstinacy is that one comes from a strong will, and the other from a strong won't.” I’m proud to say, that at COC we have a predisposition to persevering! And it is that perseverance and drive to be the best, and the courage and confidence we have to take risks, that has, in fact, enabled us to achieve beyond the norm in areas that matter.

Our “normal” is different from the rest of the community college system. Few colleges—two- or four-year—do what we do. The can-do attitude, energy, enthusiasm and resilience that characterize College of the Canyons are an integral part of our culture that allow us to detect nuances that others do not as we continue to reach new levels of service and excellence. We’re used to pushing the boundaries, exploring new opportunities, and finding new ways to better serve our

students and the community. Rather than taking the easy, or familiar path, we often go where others dare not tread. And we also stay the course until we reach the desired outcome.

The resilience of our team has allowed us to forge ahead when skeptics have said we wouldn't be able to make it happen.

- ✓ It allows us to continue to innovate when need intersects with possibility.
- ✓ We don't wait for the "perfect" moment, if we did, growth would never occur. Instead, we move forward, create our own moments and make new things happen. We don't complain. We don't let naysayers drown out our hopes and dreams.

Losers live in the past. Winners learn from the past and enjoy being in the present and moving toward the future.

At COC that is what we do as we DREAM and DREAM BIG! We build our team and change for the better. John F. Kennedy said: “Change is the law of the land. Those who look only to the past are certain to miss the future.”

### **So what about the future at COC?**

Here is a peek at just some of what is on the horizon:

- The 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this institution, which began with about 700 students and today serves up to 26,000, will be celebrated in 2013-14;
- On Oct. 14, 2014, we will commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center, a collaboration between the college and the City to bring live theater, music and performance to our hometown;
- Our “Alumni Network” will afford thousands of alumni with new benefits and networking opportunities;

- We will host an Accreditation visiting team in early fall 2014 as we see reaffirmation of the accreditation of this amazing college district; and
- We will complete construction of Institute of Culinary Education and host its grand opening, and follow that with the opening of the 46,000-square-foot Student Services and Administration Building.

The people at College of the Canyons, the teams in which they work, and our partners in the community, continue to inspire me each and every day. Few colleges have the vision, courage or energy that we do and I can say that with certainty.

I thank you for letting me share with you what we strive to do at COC, the caliber with which we do it, our commitment to fulfill the promises we make to our community and introduce you to a few members of this great **TEAM**.

I look forward to celebrating our new Institute of Culinary Education next year and paying tribute to all of you who are part of the team that makes our dreams work!

Thank you!