Thought for the week…
No road is long with good company.

~ Turkish Proverb

Survey of Student Engagement
This spring, RCTC will once again participate in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), a national survey focusing on teaching, learning, and retention in community and technical colleges. The project is housed within The Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin. RCTC was an early adopter of this survey, and this survey represents our fifth year participating. Data from this survey will be used to populate the “student engagement” measure on the MnSCU Accountability Dashboard and RCTC’s strategic dashboards. Last fall, USA Today ran a special report with institutional data showing RCTC outperforming medium sized and many MnSCU institutions on national benchmarks. The link to this story is http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2008-11-16-CCSSE_N.htm

Research shows that students who read and write more, and who interact in positive ways with their teachers and peers, gain more in terms of essential skills and competencies. Identifying what our students do in and out of the classroom, knowing their goals, and understanding their external responsibilities can help us create an environment that can enhance student learning, development, and retention. The survey will be administered in classes randomly selected by CCSSE to ensure a representative sample and to preserve the integrity of the survey results. Instructors whose classes are selected for survey administration will receive specific information from the appropriate administrator. RCTC is intent on being a leader in education, and this survey will help us in identifying where we are and what further action may be helpful in our continuing work to support and strengthen teaching and learning and all aspects of the student experience. Your cooperation and participation in this national survey are sure to enhance our educational programs and services to students. You may learn more about CCSSE from the project website at http://www.ccsse.org If you have any questions about the CCSSE project, please contact Christine Miller. Thank you for your cooperation.

~ Don Supalla, President
**Upcoming Events**

**Regional Sport Center**
- Feb 19 & 20 - Science Fair
- Feb 20 - Home School Defenders Basketball Game
- Feb 21 & 22 - RCYBA Girls Tournament
- Feb 24 - Crossroads College Basketball Game
- Feb 27 & 28 - NJCAA National Wrestling Tournament
- Feb 27 & 28 - High School Girls Subsection Basketball Games

**Ice Fishing Contest**
The BUM Club is planning an ice fishing contest on February 21 with proceeds to help Joe Geike and his family. Please pass the word to anyone that might be interested. Fliers and/or more information can be obtained from Tom Soltau.

**Students Venture on Team-Building Exercise**
The RCTC Student Life LIFT Team, led by Scott Krook and Jim Williams, went to the Boundary Waters Wilderness Area over winter break on a five-day dog sledding team-building exercise. During their winter camping experience, temperatures dipped as low as 37 degrees below zero putting them in the coldest spot in the nation at that time!

**Outstanding Educators Award for Part-Time Faculty**
Last week Dr. Bequette had the honor of announcing Don Baldus and Jean Marconett as recipients of this year’s Outstanding Educators Award. I have the distinct privilege of announcing that Richard Jordan has been selected as RCTC part-time faculty of the year. Richard is a truly outstanding psychology instructor, and I hope you will join me in congratulating him for this well-deserved honor. Way to go, Richard!

~ Bret Fuller, Dean, Teaching & Learning

**Attention Faculty and Staff:**
The next RCTC Teaching and Learning (T/L) Information Session is scheduled for Monday, February 23rd at 1:00 p.m. in CF 206-208. Details regarding program/curriculum changes since the publication of our last catalog and other T/L projects will be shared. Please plan to attend!

~ Rachelle Splittstoesser, Executive Assistant
Vice President of Teaching and Learning Office

**Winter Concert**
Tickets are available for the RCTC Winter Concerts. The concert will feature the RCTC Concert Band and Concert Choir during the first half of the show and special guests, “Three Sticks” during the second half. “Three Sticks” is made up of three brothers, all percussionists, who use ordinary objects to create a unique blend of percussion rhythms. The concerts will be held on February 25 and 26 at 7:30 pm in Hill Theatre. Admission is $5.00 each with reserved seating. Refreshments served at intermission. Contact Rhonda Jensson at x7220 for tickets.

**The NEXT...**
**Chat with the President**
(A series of informal opportunities for faculty and staff to chat with President Supalla on issues important to you!)

February 25, 2009 from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Heintz Center ~ HA104

March 10, 2009 from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. ~ UCR ~ 3rd Floor Lounge

Stop in for treats and refreshments!
RCTC will host a Town Hall Meeting, one in a series being held across the state, to garner input from Minnesota citizens about the Governor’s budget proposal and issues of concern to taxpayers. I encourage you to take advantage of the public session scheduled from 6-9 p.m., Thursday, February 19 in the Commons at Heintz Center. House and Senate staff will make an effort to prioritize the testimony of those who sign up early on the House web site shared earlier.

Now that the U.S. House and Senate have finalized their versions of the stimulus/recovery bills, the difficult work of finding a compromise begins. Although the total size of each bill is relatively equal, there are major differences in where each body has appropriated funding. When the final legislation is passed and signed by the President, it’s expected that there will be some funding for higher education infrastructure, aid for students, job training and scientific research. A wealth of information on the stimulus legislation is available at http://www.insidehighered.com. Stay tuned for updates.

Kudos on Campus…

- Thanks to Holly Bigelow for her significant contribution in making last weekend’s “College is Possible” day a great success! A significant number of potential RCTC students showed up to learn about postsecondary opportunities, visit with area higher education recruiters, hear from powerful presenters and network. Thanks, Holly!
- ViAnn Olson and her math colleagues pulled off another successful Mathcounts competition over the weekend. For the first time, a girl won the Countdown Round. Students from Kellogg Middle School won the team competition. Mu Alpha Theta members and Math 1112 students also volunteered. Congratulations on a job well done!
- Kayla Fitzsimmons, Sarah Snyder, and Kirsten Goeringer – RCTC Soccer Players – all captured awards at the National Soccer Coaches of America Association Convention in St. Louis. Yellowjackets coach Deb Hare was named Coach of the Year for the Central United States! Kayla Fitzsimmons and Anastasia Jensen were both named to the National NJCAA All-Tournament Team. Congratulations to Deb and the honored soccer players.

Late last year, I was chosen to serve on the Rochester Ethical Practices Board Appointing Committee. The Appointing Committee is now ready to receive applications for five positions on the newly-created Ethical Practices Board for the City of Rochester. The Ethical Practices Board is responsible for all City Code of Ethics and conflict of interest issues. Applications can be picked up at the City Clerk’s Office, Room 135 City Hall, or call 328-2900 to request an application to be mailed. Completed applications must be returned to the City Clerk no later than 5 p.m., Friday, February 27, 2009.

Thousands of bottles of water are sold from vending machines or brought to campus each year. Did you know these bottled water facts?

- The Pacific Institute estimates that every used plastic water bottle uses ¼ of its capacity in oil to manufacture, fill, transport and dispose of it.
- It takes 17 million barrels of oil per year to make all the plastic water bottles used in the U.S. alone. That’s enough oil to fuel 1.3 million cars for a year.
- In 2007, Americans consumed over 50 billion single serve bottles of water; between 30 and 40 million single bottles go into landfills each year.
- Bottled water costs between 240 and 10,000 times what tap water costs.
- Bottled water, packaged and sold in the same state, is exempt from EPA regulatory oversight.
- Can you believe that in light of these facts, 20 percent of Americans drink only bottled water!

I’m writing an early edition this week before heading to St. Paul on Tuesday to join Steve Monson and MnSCU facility staff as we participate in the Designer Selection Board process to reduce the 17 architect proposals for the co-located workforce center project to three. Then, we’ll return in two weeks when the three finalists will have an opportunity to present their proposals and answer questions before an architect for the project is selected. On Wednesday and Thursday I’ll join a team of RCTC reps at an Academic Quality Improvement Project (AQIP) regional workshop at Alexandria Technical College. On Friday morning Stephanie and I catch the train to Chicago to spend Valentines weekend with our two granddaughters and their parents. I’ll see you back on campus for Tuesday’s staff development day.

Thought for the week…

Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans. -- John Lennon (1940-1980), Beautiful Boy
Enjoy the three-day Presidents Holiday weekend making plans for spring break and summer fun.

~ Don Supalla
Assessment of Student Learning
Puzzled about assessment?! Don't know where to start? Don't understand what is expected of you? Your experienced colleagues are ready and willing to help you demystify the process! The Assessment of Student Learning Committee invites your program/department to participate in a Power of 1 Retreat on Friday, February 27th. See attached flier for all the details!

Snapshots at jasonlove.com

"Tap water?! As if."

Condolences
Condolences to Margie Barrows whose mother, Marjorie Suhr, passed away on February 12. Our thoughts are with Margie and her family.

Play Opens this Week!
“Candyfreak” opens in the Hill Theatre on campus Feb. 19. The adaptation was written by RCTC faculty member Robert Sanborn and the music for the play was written by RCTC Physics instructor Rod Milbrandt. All those associated with the play are either current students, current or former instructors or alumni. Please plan to attend and tell your classes about the show! RCTC Hill Theatre on February 19-21 at 8:00pm and Rochester Civic Theatre on February 28 at 8:00pm and March 1 at 3:00pm. All Rochester Reads events are free to the public.

Academic Accolades
Congratulations to Amy Hahn, former RCTC Equine Science student and Journalism Instructor, who has had three of her literary works accepted for publication. An article about her appeared in the Saturday, January 31st issue of the Rochester Post-Bulletin and can be found at the following link:

Crossings Classifieds
Give Away: Two house cats - 3 years old, neutered, front declawed and updated on all vaccinations. They are brothers so I would like to have them go together, but If I could find two good homes that is okay too. Click HERE for pictures. Contact Heather Jungclaus at 507-273-1640.

Give Away: Free ticket to “Medora Musical” in Medora N.D. for month of June. If you are traveling on vacation in this area, you won’t want to miss this musical. It is fantastic with awesome college student performers. Ticket expires June 30, 2009. Call Rose Conway at x7260 if you are interested.

For Rent: 3 Bdrm home in NW Rochester, f.p. in family room, 2 car garage, fenced backyard, NS/NP. Available March 31st- $950. Contact Rose Conway at 507-272-8864.

Community Event: The a capella group Home Free will perform at Studio Academy High School, 415 16th St SW in Rochester, the night of March 12, starting at 7:30 PM. $10-adults, $7-Students. Click HERE for more information.


Community Event: World War II Round Table Meeting: 2/28 at 10 AM there will be a panel of 5 ex POW’s who will share their experiences. Meeting is at the Assembly of God Church. Students are FREE, everyone else there is a suggested donation of $3. Contact Tom Hosier 285-7254 or tom.hosier@roch.edu.

Food Service
The web link below takes you to our Food Service web page where you can see hours of operation, order catering, lunch specials and promotion specials. The web link can also be accessed by going through rctc.edu, click departments then food service. http://taher.com/dining/rctc/home.asp

~ Gary Peterson, Director of Food Services
Employee Code of Conduct

As an employee of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, you are responsible for knowing and following the Employee Code of Conduct. The Employee Code of Conduct establishes expectations for all employees and draws together commonly used employment-related policies and procedures, including ethics, nondiscrimination, fraud and other dishonest conduct, and more.

To help you learn about the Employee Code of Conduct, two new e-learning modules have been developed to:
- Raise awareness about the code
- Help you understand your responsibilities with regards to ethics and other laws, board policies, and system procedures
- Highlight the need for good stewardship of the system’s resources
- Reduce the risk of ethical violations within our colleges and universities

The online program consists of two parts: Code of Conduct: Employee Ethics; and Code of Conduct: Standard Policies. Each part should take 15 – 25 minutes to complete.

The courses are offered through the Desire2Learn (D2L) system. You have been enrolled in this course. To log on to D2L, click on the link below. Your user name and password are the same as those used to log onto your computer. Your participation will not be timed and your responses to the interactive questions will not be individually tracked. [https://www.roch.edu/dept/et/html/d2l.html](https://www.roch.edu/dept/et/html/d2l.html)

At the end of each course, you will be asked to respond to one question indicating you have reviewed the material in the course. The questions are not a test. Your response to all of the questions is required to signify that you have completed and reviewed the material in the courses.

Consult with a member of the roll-out team listed below if you have any questions about taking or completing the courses. It is very important for all Faculty and Staff at RCTC to complete this training before the end of Spring Semester 2009. Thank you for your participation in this important initiative.

- Rollout Team Members, Renee Engelmeyer, Barb Mollberg, Missy Hagen and Steve Higgins.

Thank you.

~ Don Supalla, President
ITEM 6 (F) Accreditation Report: Assessment of Learning – Wright asked for an update on the status of assessment of learning as it relates to the College’s accreditation; he asked if the College was on a reasonable timeline to meet the deadline and if RCTC is on the right track in order to meet the expectations of the accrediting body. Weber confirmed that the AQIP Site Team shared a concern on the assessment progress; hence the College plans to be more systematic on the approach (work at course level; identify action plans; collect relevant measurements/data, and use the data to impact change in student outcomes.) Brown added the AQIP Site Team also stated recent efforts show promise, and the Assessment of Student Learning Committee is focusing on three areas: 1) core outcomes; 2) documentation of the work being done; and 3) continued facilitation at both course and program levels. Brown also noted that faculty will be expected to submit a paragraph of “where they are” by February 22 or submit the information through the IPP program review process; adding she is available to assist both individuals and departments. Wright suggested the deadline be set as a first-draft expectation so questions can come forward earlier to ensure the final deadline is met. O’Bryan questioned if it would be required to include outcomes in common course outlines or syllabi. Brown responded it would not be necessary; however it was expected that all outlines have objectives. Wright suggested Staff Development Day have breakout sessions to assist faculty in understanding expectations. Brown responded conversations have been held with Program Leadership/Division Coordinators; but agreed additional training would be beneficial. Wright stated that working on the accreditation and completing the report should be the College’s first priority. ACTION: Weber will visit with Engelmeyer to suggest breakout sessions during the February 17th Staff Development Day to provide an opportunity for faculty to discuss elements of the program review.

ITEM 1 (A) Search Update – Supalla distributed a spreadsheet reflecting the status of searches. Wright noted it would be acceptable to have a single search committee for the Associate Degree Nursing and Practical Nursing positions. ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 2 (A) Regional Staff Development Day – Supalla reported, due to budget restraints, the other colleges have decided to not participate in a Regional Staff Development Day in 2010; hence the April 7, 2010 day will return to a regular Staff Development Day for RCTC. ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 3 (A)

a) Academic Program Review Policy (3.36) First Reading - Bequette reported that MnSCU requires colleges to report an annual summary of program review activities. In completing the annual report, it was determined that RCTC’s published Program Review policy did not reflect the College process; hence the need for an update. ACTION: Faculty will review the proposal and the policy will return for a second reading.

b) Grade Appeal Policy/Procedures (3.8.1) FY1 - Bequette reported that the Grade Appeal Policy was reviewed at Academic Affairs and Standards, but not supported because of a pending arbitration between MSCF and MnSCU. The policy was then presented to Supalla and approved for implementation. The accompanying procedure will now be shared with AASC. Wright stated the policy doesn’t clearly state the Academic Standards Committee is the higher authority, and that their decision is final. Cram indicated that situations occur where a student receives a failing grade due to an error on the part of the College. Wright suggested that also be addressed in the policy. ACTION: Bequette will take the suggestions under consideration and share any changes with AASC and FSGC. The Procedures for the Grade Appeal Policy will also be shared with AASC and FSGC at any future meeting.

c) Academic Standards Policy (3.17.3) First Reading/ITEM 1 (F) Signature for Grading Changes - Bequette reported that a process was changed last summer that required faculty changing grades to document an explanation through Admissions and Records, and if the change occurs after one year, it would require approval of the CAO/Vice President of Teaching and Learning. Bequette confirmed that the procedure was implemented without consultation with faculty; hence is now moving the change through the proper process. Bequette reported the rationale for the change was driven from an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, and provided for another “check and balance” in the process. Wright stated that he could not think of any instance when the CAO (Bequette) would not agree with an instructor’s grade change; therefore the policy requirement that required the CAO’s signature is superfluous. Bequette also reported that similar policies exist at other MnSCU institution, some only allowing a semester before Administrative approval. ACTION: Faculty will review the proposed change and the policy will return for a second reading at the next meeting.
ITEM 4 (A) Break-Even Class Enrollment Analysis – Hansmann reported a calculation of an average break-even class size is virtually impossible, but in reviewing instructional cost studies, state allocations, and expenses required to operate the College, 34 could be an average. Bequette reiterated such a number would never be considered in making decisions about a class or program; adding profitable classes have always of-set the higher cost technical courses at the College. ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 5 (F) Budget Recession/ITEM 5 (A) Unallotment and Potential Second Unallotment – Supalla reported that MnSCU was unallotted $20 million in December, and RCTC’s portion was approximately $425,000, which has resulted in the delay of numerous Repair and Replacement projects and furniture purchases for the remainder of the year. Supalla also noted that the BTECH program stepped forward and returned $10,000 from an approved FY09 IPP initiative to assist in the financial crunch. Given the potential for another grim February forecast, a second unallotment is possible in the coming months. ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 6 (A) Learning Alliance: Supalla announced WSU President Judith Ramaley appointed Ken Gorman as the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs to replace Dr. Quinn in Rochester.

a) Budget Listening Post (2/19/09) – Supalla announced that a joint RCTC/WSU-Rochester Listening Session is scheduled for February 19, 2009 to provide a brief update on the budgets and obtain input from faculty and staff of both institutions. ACTION: Information Only.

b) New Program Survey – Supalla announced that WSU would be conducting a survey to obtain input from faculty on new programs, including potential 2+2 programs. Bequette added Teaching and Learning has already begun to investigate the possibility of a Women’s Studies program with WSU, as well as a new Energy Management Program and Communications certificate for incumbent workers. ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 7 (A) Capital bonding Update: Supalla reported there is a potential for a Works Bill, and announced MnSCU has been asked to submit a list of potential projects that are ready to begin immediately.

a) HEAPR – Supalla reported that the vetoed renovation project of the former nursing labs in Plaza has been placed second on the MnSCU priority list; the HEAPR request follows the vetoed projects. ACTION: Information Only.

b) Green Pipes Project – Supalla reported RCTC supports the Olmsted County’s proposal for $6 million for a new steam line from the Waste-to-Energy Facility to the UCR campus (to be matched by Olmsted County funds). The project would allow UCR Main to use renewable energy resources for both heating and cooling. ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 2 (F) Follow-up on Faculty Survey – Supalla expressed his appreciation for the survey summary, and announced the annual 360 degree assessment surveys will be forthcoming for the Leadership Cabinet in late-March or early-April. Wright confirmed the faculty plan to continue to conduct additional surveys. ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 3 (F) Closing on Test Days – Wright announced the faculty did not question the decision to close the college for safety concerns; however, faculty did express a concern about the lack of guidance immediately after the closing; adding, although the purview of grading is the faculty’s, several faculty were concerned that administration would question their grading decisions. Cram added a grade of incomplete have caused ripple effects with some students as it relates to financial aid and athletic eligibility. Bequette responded that less incomplete grades were assigned Fall Semester than any other semester; hence faculty handled the situation appropriately by making their best assessments based on the information they had available. ACTION: Administration will communicate grading processes earlier should a similar closing be required during the last week of a semester in the future.

ITEM 4 (F) Review of Online Classes – Wright questioned the status of the online class size discussions and asked that the discussions be held in the appropriate committee. Bequette responded the issue will be further discussed at an upcoming AASC meeting. Wright thanked Bequette for being mindful of ensuring that appropriate committees were being observed. ACTION: Information Only.

ITEM 8 (A) Smoking Task Force – Hansmann reported a Smoking Task Force conducted a survey on the current smoking policy and received over 1,530 responses from both faculty and staff. Based on the results, the Task Force plans to bring forward a recommendation for a total ban of tobacco products on the entire 518 acres campus with an effective date of July 1, 2009. Marconett questioned the specifics of the questionnaire results. Hansmann shared the details, which included 76% of the responders did not use tobacco products; 40% indicated the current policy of 20 feet from entrances has not been adequate, and an overwhelming majority said a total campus ban would not affect their decision to work or attend classes at RCTC. Israelson questioned what sanctions would be imposed for violators. Hansmann responded the students would be handled through the student discipline process and employee violators would be handled through employee discipline. ACTION: Information Only.

Adjourned at 3:08 p.m. NEXT MEETING: February 24, 2009 – 2:00 p.m. – AT109