October’s Best Bee of the Month

Congratulations to Mona Perman for being Selected as the Best Bee of the Month for October.

Here's what Mona's nominator had to say: Mona is always helpful and willing at the last minute to find a computer lab in which classes may be taken. Some of the classes that she has accommodated include ESL and diverse populations. She always has a positive attitude.

Mona will receive an "up front" parking spot at UCR for the month of October. Thanks, Mona for helping make RCTC great!

Thank You!

Thank you to all who participated in and supported the recent UCR blood drive. According to Sue Churchill from Mayo Clinic's Blood Bank, the day was "incredible." 47 donors were seen throughout the day; 29 of these were first-time donors! UCR blood drives are also scheduled for Wednesday, October 27 and Tuesday, November 30.

Lactation Room – New Location!

EA301 (the break room just off of the cafeteria) is reserved for nursing moms. Monday - Thursday, 3:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. Students may use Student Health Services (RG115) Monday - Thursday, 8:00 - 3:30 and Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

National Tutoring Week

Please Join the Student Support Center in Celebrating National Tutoring Week, October 4 – 8, 2004 on Tuesday, October 5th from 12:00 to 3:00. We will have cake and lemonade to thank our tutors. Please stop by to write a personal message thanking those tutors that have helped you succeed in your classes. Stop by Student Support Services for good food and fun.
Weekly Funny

Marketing Fact
In the 2004 Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory, RCTC students expressed their greatest satisfaction on the following indicators:
1. "Library resources and services are adequate."
2. "Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields."
3. "Bookstore staff are helpful."
4. "Class change (drop/add) policies are reasonable."
5. "Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours."

Crossings Classifieds

FOR SALE: 4 - Vikings vs. Tennessee Titans tickets for sale. Sunday Oct. 24 at 12:00. Tickets are between the 30 and 40 yard line - 11th row - lower deck behind the Viking bench. If interested call Thomas Soltau (507) 324-5607.

Thank You
Thank you for your kind thoughts, prayers, and memorials with the passing of my father, Jack Ritchey. I especially would like to thank everyone in the Business Division for all they have done for me during this difficult time.

Karen Williamson

Campus Security Act - Notification
Rochester Community and Technical College recognizes providing the safest environment possible is an integral element of the college's educational mission and annually publishes a Campus Security Report that is available to everyone. This report provides statements of policy for a broad range of safety and security programs including crime prevention programs, reporting procedures, personal safety, community relations, environmental safety, enforcement authority and response and a 3-year statistical review of designated crimes on campus. A printed copy of this report may be obtained, at no charge from Campus Security at 851 30th Avenue, SE, CF130 Rochester, MN 55904, phone: 507-529-2789. The Campus Security Report for Rochester Community and Technical College can be accessed at:

http://www.roch.edu/dept/facilities/html/overview.html

Additional information can be found at:
http://www.roch.edu/dept/facilities/html/crime.html
and

Condolences
Condolences are extended to Bev Hawkinson whose father, Ward Parker Rhoads, passed away on September 23rd and also to Pat Williamson whose grandson, Cole David Dumais, passed away on September 27th. Our thoughts are with Bev, Pat and their families.
Supalla’s Scribblings

This has been a good week to share discouraging thoughts on how Minnesota’s policymakers have changed their thinking on public higher education. UCR reps took advantage of an opportunity Monday afternoon to testify at the first of six Higher Education Services Office “town hall” meetings. The disappointing notion that higher education is no longer a public good is occurring at a time when America is about to experience the greatest labor shortage in its history. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there will be 168 million jobs in our economy by 2011, but only 158 million workers will be available. Today, it seems that public policymakers have adopted a notion that higher education is a private, rather than public, good. While enrollment at UCR continues to grow annually by more than twice the system average, state appropriations for higher education continue to dwindle. Minnesota’s declining state support for higher education is now part of a disturbing nationwide trend that now threatens access, affordability and quality of offerings. Double-digit tuition increases, totaling 40 percent in the past five years have forced students to work longer hours, assume increasing amounts of student loan debt, extend their education over several additional years, or even delay post-second education or training indefinitely. Thursday, Marilyn Hansmann and I provided testimony at Minnesota State University – Mankato on the upcoming MnSCU biennial budget request. We shared some depressing RCTC financial numbers. Did you know that since 2002, full year equivalent (FYE) enrollments have increased by 19 percent? During this same time, our overall state appropriation has declined by 6 percent. Even more discouraging is the fact that the state allocation per FYE has declined by 21 percent. During this same time frame, RCTC tuition has increased by 48 percent and fees have risen by 20 percent. In an attempt to maintain the quality of education for our students, the College has spent down reserves, suspended or closed high cost low revenue generating technical programs, deferred building maintenance and repair/replacement projects, closed the campus during the semester break, and asked staff to do more with less. I encourage every student and staff member to keep the pressure on legislators and public policymakers. They need to be convinced that an increased investment in public higher education is a public good.

Did you know that almost two million community college students received Pell dollars during the 2003-04 academic year? Public community college students accounted for 35.1 percent of all Pell recipients and received 32.1 percent of the $4.038 billion disbursed. We must continue to lobby both federal and state legislators for even more student aid, especially for part-time non-traditional students, to help offset ever-increasing tuition and fees.

The University of Minnesota is seeking candidates for four seats on the Board of Regents. Residents of the First Legislative District are eligible to apply for the one at-large seat. The university’s Regent Candidate Advisory Council is requesting recommendations of “skilled, experienced individuals from diverse backgrounds.” The deadline for application is December 6. The university plans to begin interviews in January. Application material is available at http://www.rcac.leg.mn.

Faculty members that have retirement contributions vested in the Teachers Retirement Association should take note that a new retirement counseling schedule has been posted at http://www.tra.state.mn.us. Members may have retirement questions answered during a 40-minute counseling session with a representative from the TRA office at one of the 16 cities noted on the schedule. Since appointments are scheduled on a first-call basis, call TRA as soon as possible if retirement is in your short-term future. A number of January and March sessions are available at UCR’s Heintz Center.

Almae Larson, RCTC Art Gallery Director, hosted a gallery opening, “The Battle Red Lipstick” painting series by Odell Portz. If you haven’t checked out the exhibit, I encourage you to do so today…it’s terrific. Almae has done a wonderful job putting together an ongoing series of shows highlighting some very talented regional artists.

Shirley Wilson, BTEC instructor, initiated development of a new customer service program that is now being offered. I urge all faculty members to continue to be on the look out for potential new program or course opportunities.
Colleen Landherr organized some wonderful youth camps this summer. Camp Invention turned out to be a very successful offering and the feedback from participants was extremely positive. Parents said things like...I got positive comments from my child each day...She had a blast!...It is totally awesome...Please have it again next year. We will.

Thought for the week...
"Get Real. If all it takes is an angry stranger to ruin your day, what are you going to do if something really serious happens? Why give someone else control of your life like that?"
Jeffrey Gitomer

Enjoy the crisp nights, cool days, beautiful fall colors, and smell of burning leaves...they’ll all be gone soon. Don

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**National Depression Screening Day**
Thursday, October 7 from 8-2pm
Counseling Center
Free and Confidential
Classes are welcome

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**Minnesota State Employees Combined Charities Campaign 2004**
October 11th-29th
"State Employees Caring for Minnesota"

Rose Conway is chairing this campaign for RCTC
The campaign is striving for $1,000,000 for the state of Minnesota

You will receive a brochure in your mail box October 11th. Give yourself time to decide how you want to help support an organization in need, in our community or anywhere in the state, to provide assistance to those in need.
Rochester Community and Technical College
AFSCME Labor/Management
Minutes for Thursday, August 12, 2004 – 11:00 a.m. – AT109

Present: Administration: Arntson, Cram, Hansmann, Lee, Supalla
AFSCME: Clark, Conway, Kiehne, Lunning, Martin (Business Agent), O’Dea, Staloch, Tucker
Guest: Berg
Recorder: Judy Kingsbury

ITEM 1 (AFSCME) and ITEM 1 (Admin) - Summer 2005 Schedule Update - Supalla announced some MnSCU campuses have, or are, implementing four or four and one-half day work weeks. He requested AFSCME’s input in pursuing a similar scheduled at UCR. Martin acknowledged his appreciation for early discussions on the subject in order to allow employees ample time to work out personal issues (day care, second jobs, car pooling, etc.) Conway questioned what feedback has been received from those campuses that have already implemented the work week reduction. Martin responded there is usually about a three percent negative response (which is common), but overall the reaction has been positive when ample notice is provided to the employees, students and community through advertisements in local newspapers and postings throughout the campus and on websites. Hansmann questioned if the closings have just been the offices or the buildings. Martin responded the closing have been equal to a normal closing of a campus on a weekend, with no business being conducted. Kiehne questioned if a one-half day closing on Friday would produce any cost savings. Hansmann responded the closing is not being considered for budget savings, but rather to assist employees who are requesting time off on Fridays in the summer, and a closing would eliminate the need to back fill responsibilities. Martin added there were utility cost savings at Century College with a Thursday evening closing through Monday morning opening. Action: The possible four or four and one-half day work week schedule for Summer 2005 will be brought back to the next meeting for further discussion.

ITEM 2 (AFSCME) Budget Update - Hansmann provided an update on the FY05 budget allocations formula, noting the budget was set based on a 1.5% tuition increase and 5% enrollment increase. Hansmann also noted discussions have begun to prepare a biennial budget (FY06 and FY07), assuming 50% of the allocation will be based on the new MnSCU budget allocation and 50% based on previous base allocation. Lunning stated members of the Office of the Chancellor staff presented information at Riverland Community College to inform the employees of the new formula. Action: Hansmann will schedule a budget allocation forum at RCTC with members of the Office of the Chancellor staff.

ITEM 3 (Admin) Staffing Update - Arntson provided an update on postings, which included the Student Ambassador/Intramural Program Director, Recruiter, Transfer Advisor in SSSP, and Human Resources Assistant. Arntson announced the part-time OS position in Health Services is being re-evaluated and might be posted at a higher FTE. Other openings include an OAS Intermediate for the Dean of Health Sciences, a temporary OAS in Financial Aid, and College Lab Assistants in Chemistry and Vet Tech. Arntson also announced a joint position was posted for a Regional Diversity Trainer and Investigator with Southeast Technical, Riverland, and South Central Technical. The Dean of Distance Education search resulted in no hire. Martin questioned the responsibilities of the joint position with the other colleges. Arntson responded the individual would be responsible for investigating harassment and other discrimination complaints (not grievances) and serve as a consultant to the College on issues of policy and procedures, including affirmative action, and each campus would pay 25% of the salary/benefits. Supalla added the joint position would be an example of partnering for cost savings. O’Dea added the posting appears to be contracting in, rather than contracting out, for services while gaining expertise. Martin reminded administration that the person would need to deal with several union locals if they are hired by four campuses. Arntson also announced a new .50 FTE position was being created to handle safety, OSCHA, EPA and other issues currently handled by the lab assistant in the science department. Action: Information Only.

ITEM 3 (AFSCME) and ITEM 4 (Admin) Winter Break Closing - Supalla confirmed the UCR buildings (with the exception of the Sports Center) will be closed during the winter break (December 24, 2004 through January 2, 2005), resulting in a possible four day impact on employees choosing not to work. Supalla also announce the closing dates have been promoted throughout the campus (i.e. website calendar, annual report calendar, and several e-mail notices to the employees.) Martin questioned if a specific date has been set for employees to notify their supervisors if they intend to take leave during the winter break. It was agreed November 1st would be the deadline for employees to notify supervisors of their intent to take leave, and those that haven’t completed the appropriate request forms will be assigned duties, and shifts during the break. Action: Several notices/reminders will be sent to employees notifying them of the November 1st deadline for submission of leave requests during the winter break.

ITEM 2 (Admin) MOU – Presidents’ and Veterans’ Day Holiday Update – Supalla questioned the status of the MOUs shared at the last meeting. Martin responded the forms have not been officially signed, but AFSCME supports the agreement and will complete the signature process by the end of the month. Action: Administration will proceed with notifying the employees of the MOU once the appropriate signatures are obtained on the agreement.
ITEM 5 (Admin) Sick Buildings at RCTC – Hansmann announced concerns were raised by individuals becoming sick at work when housed in the East Building. However, several tests were conducted for mold by both Berg and representatives from the Department of Administration, and report results reflect adequate air flow each time. Although no findings were substantiated in the tests, Administration has decided to be pro-active and install ultraviolet lights in the air intakes to treat the air in the building. Martin thanked Administration for conducting the tests, and being proactive in the follow-up. Martin requested the results of the tests and the actions taken be published to reflect appropriate action was taken to address the employees’ concerns. Hansmann also requested employees leaving the campus because of illness complete the appropriate incident report forms for documentation. Action: Hansmann will publish the results of the air tests and actions taken in an upcoming issue of College Crossings.

ITEM 7 (Admin) Online Performance Evaluation – Arntson announced the pilot program for online performance evaluations (with a mutually agreed upon evaluator list) was conducted with the Business/Cashier’s Office with positive feedback, reminding everyone the survey is only a tool used in the overall performance review process. O’Dea confirmed his experience with the pilot online performance evaluation was positive, noting his comments were strictly on a personal level and not a representation of the union. Martin indicated the use of the pilot in one department may not be a true reflection of the employees as a whole, suggesting the pilot be expanded throughout the campus. Arntson agreed to expand the pilot throughout the campus, noting the Human Resources Office has put together a tickler file for employees needing annual performance reviews and will use the tickler to process on-line reviews between now and November. Arntson and Martin also agreed the statement that read “It is legally required. Without it, there is no objective data on which to evaluate performance, therefore, no performance-based salary increases will be granted.” will be removed from the draft Evaluation Procedures document. Action: Arntson will continue the pilot through October 29 and make necessary editing changes to the draft procedures. Once the pilot is completed, the procedures will be brought back to the next meeting for final approval.

ITEM 8 (Admin) Travel/Professional Development Form – Arntson announced a task force reviewed the numerous travel/professional development forms and is working on combining the forms into a more user-friendly process. Further discussions occurred on whether forms are necessary when training incurs no expenses. Arntson shared her desire to have the professional development form completed (even without expenses) in order to track professional development training. Martin shared his interpretation that if an employee is being required to attend training/meeting by their supervisor, then it would not be the employees responsibility to complete the form. Additional discussions occurred on the difference of union leave (which requires a leave of absence form) and training (which requires travel/professional development forms). Action: Arntson will continue to develop a final form for completion of travel/professional development activities and bring back to the next meeting for further discussion.

ITEM 9 (Admin) Auxiliary Power – Supalla announced some concerns were raised regarding adequate lighting in the hallways during a recent power outage. Conway and O’Dea agreed the lighting was dim, but indicated it was adequate to allow employees/students an opportunity to evacuate the building. Further discussion occurred regarding the inadequate lighting in restrooms. Action: Administration will conduct a walk around to determine what lighting is available with the generator, and what lighting is needed.

ITEM 10 (Admin) FY05/06 Draft Academic Calendar – Supalla announced the biggest change in the draft proposal is to only conduct one pre-semester staff development day, and to hold the other day later in the fall. Martin requested the Veteran’s Day be reflected as an observed holiday per contract or MOU by AFSCME, MAPE, MMA, etc. Action: The calendar will be changed to reflect staff observe the Veteran’s Day holiday on November 11, 2005, and students/faculty observe the day on March 10, 2006.

ITEM 11 (Admin) Stress Level Follow-up –Cram confirmed conversations occurred, along with physical reorganizations in some areas, although Cram hasn’t had an opportunity to meet with everyone. Kiehne agreed the concerns have tapered off since Cram’s arrival. Arntson suggested a Zoomerang survey be conducted to obtain feedback in a non-threatening manner. Martin shared his appreciation with Administration in following up on the concerns, and continued to offer his assistance if additional discussions are needed. Action: Information Only.

Adjourned at 12:40 pm