As we approach the halfway point of the 2015–2016 academic year, I want to share valuable information regarding some of the important initiatives and other activities taking place at the Community College of Allegheny County.

First and foremost, I have news about the state budget. I am pleased to report that as of Tuesday, December 8, 2015, the State Senate has approved SB1073 and the State House has approved HB1460. The outcome of both bills is getting us closer to a state budget. Included in both bills is a $226,450,000 community college operating fund appropriation, which is an increase of 5 percent over last year’s funding for Pennsylvania’s 14 community colleges. The community college capital fund remains at last year’s funding level of $48,869,000. I am cautiously optimistic that the six-month budget impasse will soon be resolved; however, legislative leaders are still seeking a consensus among their caucuses on what combination of taxes or fees will be used to generate the $600 million in new revenues to balance the framework spending plan.

Certainly, having a state budget in place would be welcome news, given that CCAC is about to enter a very special and historical year. As many of you know, the college will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2016. In honor of this milestone, the college is planning a year-long series of events designed to recognize and celebrate the many individuals—faculty, staff, alumni, students and community leaders—who have dedicated their time and talents serving as inspirational role models and advocates for the betterment of our institution. In January, a group of CCAC Honors students will embark on an international study tour in India, providing students the opportunity to engage in learning and academic opportunities, cultural exploration and community service. As part of their research for their course Comparative Cultures & Politics of India and United States, students will also be required to do a comparative analysis of India and the U.S. During the tour, students will attend lectures at two universities in New Delhi, visit a nongovernmental organization micro-credit program for women, meet with officials at the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and interact with speech-impaired school children through creative activities, as well as visit historic sites. This is the first time the Honors program has undertaken a study trip abroad, and the experience promises to greatly benefit the students both in their studies and in their lives.

Cultural enrichment opportunities such as these help reinforce CCAC’s ongoing commitment to providing a rich and rewarding student experience. These opportunities are just one of the reasons students from across the county and beyond are seeking out a CCAC education.

Dr. Quintin B. Bullock
CCAC President

Highlights:

- State Budget Update
- 50th Anniversary Preview
- Honors Program Highlights
- Enrollment & Student Retention Developments
- Middle States Self-Study Process Update
- College’s Strategic Planning Progress Update
- Capital Improvement Projects Overview
- Recent Grant Awards
- Awards & Other Distinctions

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Enrollment & Student Retention Efforts Yield Positive Results

In my year-end report, I included information regarding the college’s efforts to implement college-wide enrollment strategies with the goal of increasing enrollment and student retention. While still in its early stages, many of the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan’s...
Enrollment & Student Retention Efforts Yield Positive Results continued

recommendations are already being implemented by faculty, staff and students who are working through four subcommittees to achieve results. Combined with other activities (including those highlighted below), these efforts are beginning to yield results. In fact, I am pleased to report that current spring term FTE and headcount figures are up from where they were at this time last year, at 3.8 percent and 4.35 percent, respectively. In addition, distance education continues to show sustained growth, with both FTE and headcount up more than 14 percent over this time last year. These are strong numbers that bode well for the upcoming semester and for future terms down the road.

It certainly comes as no surprise that much of the college’s success at retaining students is the direct result of the college’s student success initiatives as well as the incredible work undertaken by CCAC’s instructors, counselors, student success coaches and tutors. And now, with the college offering expanded tutorial services during the day, evening and weekend, student retention rates and grades should continue to rise. The news is equally optimistic for CCAC’s other student success initiatives, including the Learning Commons and the Math Cafés.

Learning Commons
The Learning Commons has expanded its strategies in recent months to include a Reading Enhancement Initiative for use in tandem with the Writing Enhancement Initiative, as well as desktop skills instruction and customized workshops targeting specific groups, such as pre-nursing and international students. These strategies enable students to work both independently and collaboratively in the improvement of skills. The use of PLATO learning software, guided by learning facilitators, is being expanded for use by English and reading faculty members. In addition, Kurzweil text-to-speech software and CCAC library databases are now available for skills practice, reading comprehension and research support. PowerPoint voiceover reading and writing skills lessons also will be available for students in the upcoming term. Additionally, the College Reading and Learning Association has certified CCAC to train tutors through a course that will begin in the spring, so as to provide tutors with a national certification. The success of the Learning Commons is evident in the steadily increasing numbers of students using the resource—the total number of student visits in 2014-2015 was more than twice that of the previous year.

Math Cafés
Enabling students to receive assistance with math questions and problems on a walk-in basis, CCAC’s Math Cafés are available at six locations: Allegheny, Boyce, North and South campuses and West Hills and Homewood-Brushton centers. Facilitators provide individual as well as group assistance to students in all math courses, particularly for those in developmental math courses, and those students who have mathematics components in other courses, such as physics and nursing. Additionally, the cafés offer online preparation for students new to CCAC who are provided with practice for the college’s placement testing. During the fall 2015 semester, across the campuses, students visited the Math Cafés 6,086 times, resulting in both enhanced comprehension and retention in addition to better scores and grades, particularly for those students who attended the cafés three or more times.

Achieving the Dream
Following on previous accomplishments, CCAC’s Roadmap team is once again achieving new heights. Thanks to the hard work and leadership of Achieving the Dream Coordinator Mary Kate Quinlan, along with the faculty and staff who are actively involved in the project, CCAC was one of 44 community colleges to receive the League of Innovation’s Innovation of the Year award for Roadmap to Your Destination. This award recognizes significant achievements and the spirit of innovation and experimentation upon which the league was founded.

On other fronts, the ATD team has been working to address recommendations from the national ATD organization. This year, feedback focused on designing mechanisms aimed at engaging more of the internal college community in student success-oriented work. Over the summer, the ATD committee redesigned its structure to include more campus-based involvement to accomplish this goal. Following the October ATD meeting, individuals had the opportunity to participate in campus-based sessions to discuss student success data and the factors contributing to good and poor performance. This new approach, led by the campus representatives on ATD, engages college employees in using data to inform decision making. The teams presented data in different venues on campus, facilitated dialog sessions for exchanging ideas and promoted collaboration.

Additionally, in the coming weeks, CCAC faculty and students will be invited to participate in a national Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) focused on teaching, learning and retention in community colleges. This project, part of the Center for Community College Student Engagement and the Program in Higher Education Leadership at The University of Texas at Austin, seeks to identify what CCAC students do in and out of the classroom, know their goals and understand their external responsibilities with the aim of creating an environment that can enhance student learning, development and retention. The survey will be administrated March 28 through April 8, 2016.
MID-YEAR REPORT continued

Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self-Study Process Enters Next Phase

Thanks to the efforts of Co-chairs Kevin Smay and Stephen Wells, as well as members of the Steering Committee and Working Groups, considerable progress has been made on the CCAC self-study process. In anticipation of the next phase of the process, Kevin and Steve, together with Dr. Stuart Blacklaw, provost/executive vice president for Academic and Student Affairs, just returned from the Middle States Conference in Washington, D.C. While there, they received valuable information about the self-study process that will be useful going forward in the preparation of a preliminary draft of the self-study report which is expected to be shared with the college community on January 8.

College’s Strategic Plan Makes Steady Progress

Since my last report, CCAC has made solid progress on the college’s strategic plan. This past November, and following similar feedback from various CCAC constituencies, a workshop was held with the CCAC Board of Trustees in order to give trustees an opportunity to provide input on the college’s mission statement.

A subcommittee of the Strategic Planning Committee is now in place with committee members working to prepare a draft of the college’s mission and value statements in time for distribution at All College Day on January 12. Additionally, the committee is also considering acquiring strategy management system software in order to assist in the planning process. More details will follow at January’s meeting.

Capital Improvement Projects Enhance CCAC Programs, Services & Image

Multiple construction projects and facility-related improvements have been completed in the past six months, with other projects on track for completion in the spring. Finished projects include Phase 1 of the Allegheny Campus Ridge Avenue Revitalization Project (Physical Education Building and Student Services Computer Lab), construction of an egress road at South Campus, new parking lots at West Hills Center and a new roof at North Campus.

In the Allegheny Campus Physical Education building, an expanded college bookstore and Starbucks fronting Ridge Avenue opened to enthusiastic response in July. The relocated Cougar’s Den student lounge recently opened in an airy space on the fourth floor, and the new fitness center has been in use since September. The gymnasium also opened in September with a new wooden floor and motorized baskets, and further renovations, including a bleacher movement system and energy saving lighting, are in the works.

Also along Ridge Avenue, two lecture halls in the Library building are open after being renovated with improved acoustics, new seating and carpeting. The former bookstore space in the library is being repurposed for a River’s Casino dealer’s school, which will be completed in January for the spring 2016 term. Six sections of the Library building roof will be replaced by February.

Phase 2 of the Allegheny Campus Ridge Avenue Revitalization Project is ongoing in West Hall, which is being repurposed as a new Cultural & Fine Arts Center. Set to open for classes in the summer 2016 term, the center will house the Art, Music, Speech, Language and Criminal Justice departments and will feature an art gallery and music performance area.

Renovation of the entrance to Jones Hall, along with a historical review of the building, will be completed in the spring. At the Visual Arts Center, new sidewalks, railings and ADA accessibility ramps have been installed and repairs of the roof, cornice and dormers will get underway following the historical review.

In addition, a new computer lab with 64 computer stations opened on the third floor of the Foerster Student Services Center, and a video surveillance system upgrade was completed in student parking lot No. 2 in November.

At North Campus, installation of a new roof over the entire building was completed in October, and a study of the exterior of the building is underway.

A new roof also has been installed on the C Building deck at South Campus, and plans are underway for replacement of the D Building patio roof deck.

South Campus Way was opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony on November 11. The one-third-mile drive provides a second road to and from the campus, enhancing convenience and safety for students, staff and the community. The project included installation of LED street lighting, a guardrail and a new storm drainage system.

New chillers and boilers and a B Building rooftop AC unit have been installed at South as part of the college-wide Energy Retrofit Project. The Efficiency Network is performing a total energy study and retrofit of all mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems. The two-year Electric Grid Study Project, starting at South, will go campus-to-campus and will pay for itself through energy savings.

Also at South, a new Job Placement & Career Services center and two renovated classrooms opened in August. The South maintenance crew did all the work, including new walls, carpeting and lighting.
Capital Improvement Projects Enhance CCAC Programs, Services & Image

At West Hills Center, two new parking lots that provide an additional 250 spaces and a secured car corral for program vehicles have been completed. An upgraded video surveillance system also has been installed.

At Boyce Campus, three classrooms and an administrative area are being repurposed for occupancy by classes and faculty in the Health Profession Opportunity Grant program.

Construction is in full swing at the Energy Innovation Center in the Hill District, where CCAC will offer workforce development training to support students in career and skilled trades program tracks beginning with the spring 2016 semester. Currently under construction are an HVAC lab, classrooms and administrative offices.

Grant Funding Initiatives: Recent Awards

CCAC has secured more than $14 million in new grants to fund programs and services that will expand opportunities for all students. The following awards have been received since June 2015:

HPOG
The Community College of Allegheny County’s Health Professions Opportunity: Pathway to Success in Healthcare program has received a six-year grant totaling more than $13.1 million from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program will provide education and training in three healthcare tracks—nursing, emergency medicine and medical records/health information technology. It will target low-income individuals and will provide students with wrap-around services to address academic, financial and personal issues that can impede college completion.

Adult Literacy Program
CCAC has been awarded an Adult Basic and Family Literacy Education Instructional Technology grant in the amount of $5,150 from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The funds will go toward the purchase of 12 Edmentum Higher Education Postsecondary Academic Library licenses and one PLATO Courseware Career and Technical Education Library gold package, which will be used to provide service to the 155 enrolled students identified in the program’s Adult Education grant allocation. The purchase will enhance what is already available to students in the Bridge to College and Career Pathways program. PLATO courseware, which will complement the development of daily lessons created by instructors, is a standards-based online learning program grounded in a relevant curriculum aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards.

BioMaS
CCAC’s Biotechnology, Bioremediation, Math and Science (BioMaS) Workforce Collaborative project also was recognized recently with a $629,207 grant from the National Science Foundation. The project provides scholarships to students majoring in biotechnology, bioremediation or mathematics and science programs. The project seeks more students from underrepresented groups studying science, technology, engineering and math, including veterans and their dependents, minorities and women. The project will seek to provide the value of 40 full scholarships.

TRIO—Student Support Services
CCAC has been awarded a Trio Student Support Services grant from the US Department of Education. This is a five-year grant with a total funding amount of $1,068,665. The CCAC-SSS program will provide support services annually to 140 students who have been identified as coming from low-income households, are first-generation college students or are students with disabilities, with the goal of increasing their rates of retention, graduation and transfer to four-year colleges and universities within four years. The program will be housed at Allegheny Campus with oversight by a program director. A student support specialist will work with the students and closely monitor their progress to help keep them on track academically.

Awards & Other Distinctions

CCAC continues to receive accolades for accomplished individuals as well as for the innovative programs in which they teach and the services they oversee. Here are a few examples of people and programs receiving special recognition in the past several months:

Through the work of the Office of Military & Veterans Services, under the direction of Dwight Boddorf, CCAC has been recognized for the support the college offers to veterans and individuals serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. For the third year in a row, CCAC has been designated as a 2016 Military Friendly® School by Victory Media, a global media leader in successfully connecting the military and civilian worlds. This designation signifies that CCAC is among the top 10 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools in the country doing the most to embrace military students by dedicating resources to ensure their success in the classroom and after graduation.

Clyde Wilson Pickett, special assistant to the president for Diversity and Inclusion, was appointed to serve as a mentor in the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) Fellowship program. He will be paired with a chief diversity officer at another community college to provide support and guidance. Clyde also serves as a member-at-large on the Board of the Directors for the NADOHE.
Awards & Other Distinctions continued

Nancilee Burzahechi, executive director, Government and External Affairs at CCAC, was named one of 10 Pittsburgh recipients of the 2015 Most Powerful & Influential Women awards by the National Diversity Council. The awards were presented at the council’s sixth annual Pittsburgh Leadership Conference on Thursday, October 22, at the Pittsburgh Marriott City Center.

Charline Rowland, CCAC adjunct reading instructor at South Campus, and her husband, Marcell Rowland, were honored as 2015 Angels in Adoption awardees by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) at an awards ceremony and gala in Washington, D.C. Senator Bob Casey Jr. selected the Rowlands for their outstanding advocacy of adoption and foster care issues. In July 2015, the couple adopted three young brothers, ages 7, 5 and 4, who have been in their foster care since 2012.

Although brief by design, I hope this report has provided you with some additional information as well as insight into some of the recent developments at the college. During this season of giving and gratitude, I continue to be grateful for the extraordinary dedication of everyone here at the college—I admire your commitment and the work you do each and every day to ensure our students succeed. It has been a pleasure to get to know you over the last year and a half, and I look forward to our continued collaboration.

Happy Holidays,
Dr. Quintin B. Bullock