



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Annual State of the College
August 2008

It truly is a pleasure for me to welcome you back to campus for the fall 2008 semester. I trust all of you took a break that has helped rejuvenate you. We all need this and must do it.

For those of you who are new to campus, I hope you are having the same wonderful experience I am. When I was here for my interview last October, I was very impressed with the campus - faculty, staff, students, and facilities. No one was able to tell me about any significant problem. When I was interviewed by the subcommittee of the Board of Regents, I asked what the hidden problem was and they all looked at each other and said, "Nothing." When I arrived on campus, I found it to be even better than I thought. We have outstanding faculty and staff who really do go the extra mile for our students. I have walked around campus and met students - and I have been impressed. So many are intellectually curious and do want a good education. I sat in on a student advisory group and was thoroughly impressed with their comments and input for improving our college and programs. And I am so pleased with the physical facilities. Everything looks great as we all take pride in our campus.

If you have not done so, walk around campus and look at the renovations and remodeling that were done in Sequoya where a large classroom and prep area were created from the old LPN area, the Tech Building where two small rooms were renovated to create a large classroom and where the Drafting Lab received new paint and carpet, the new LPN lab and faculty offices in Tech, and where remodeling resulted in two new faculty offices, a storage room, and the advising center annex in Lorberbaum. The Bell Tower is under construction and the completion date is set for September 27th. In October, construction on the parking deck is scheduled to begin. Remodeling of Westcott should take place this fall which will create a one-stop shop for student

enrollment management. The old library in Ellijay is being remodeled for us to begin teaching classes there, beginning with the spring 2009 semester. Next we will need additional classroom buildings on our home campus.

You will find few public institutions our age and size with a Foundation endowment as large as ours. When I was here in October, I was struck by the commitment of the DSC Foundation to the College. I was greeted by a number of board members and donors who spoke eloquently and passionately about the importance of the institution in the larger community and about their own willingness to support Dalton State. The months I have been on campus have reinforced that perception. We are fortunate to enjoy strong community support for Dalton State, and that support, combined with the investments you have made and will make later this year and into the coming years, will position us to move forward in ways that we once could only have imagined.

Everyone before me has done a terrific job laying a good foundation for us. Everywhere I go, people tell me what a great institution we are and what a vital role we play in the community and Northwest Georgia. I am frequently given examples of family members or friends who attended Dalton State who mention what an impact this experience made on them. Our graduates are successful, and I have had the opportunity to meet alums from the first class nearly 40 years ago through the most recent graduating class. Invariably each alum expresses good feelings for the outstanding experience Dalton State provided. Faculty are often positively mentioned as having had an impact on their lives and they believe they had a top-notch education. I thank you for all you have done and for all you are going to do in helping educate our students. Everyone in this room is about **quality** and I could not be prouder to be a colleague in this institution.

I have been asked questions about the new Higher Education Reauthorization Act that was just passed by Congress (only five years late) and how it will affect us. Overall there are some beneficial segments (although in 1,158 pages some concerns may arise for state colleges). It enjoyed bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate and is awaiting the President's signature.

- Pell grants and other student aid programs are supported, including year-round Pell. This is a benefit for many students who otherwise may not have been able to attend.
- Federalizing the accreditation process is prohibited.
- A special pilot program was established to begin the process to link state record systems. I had hoped for a national program so we could finally follow our students and get accurate graduation rate data.

But hopefully the pilot will be successful and soon spread across the country.

- Improved loan counseling for student borrowers is mandated.
- Compulsory testing was NOT mandated so we will not end up like K-12 with No Child Left Behind.
- It requires teacher preparation programs to set quantifiable goals for increasing the number of prospective teachers in math, science, special education, and English for speakers of other languages.
- Students lobbied, and now textbook publishers are required to disclose prices as they market to you. Additionally, publishers will have to “unbundle” their materials such as CDs, study guides, and workbooks.
- And Congress recognized the connection between state appropriations and public college tuition by including a maintenance effort requirement which requires states to raise spending on higher education each year by at least as much as it was increased, on average, over the past five years. If not, they will get no new funds from the College Access Challenge Grant Program which amounts to two million dollars for Georgia.

Although Dalton State is terrific and many things have been put in place, there are a number of ways we can continue to improve and grow. We can make this even a better campus.

We are unusual. If you look around the country, few schools have technical programs, two-year programs, and four-year programs. We need to continue to make this an advantage for us. With Volkswagen opening a plant in Chattanooga, how can we take advantage of that? Tennessee is building a technology training facility for this work, so what programs can we offer that support the industries and needs of all the related businesses? We need your help in determining our program growth. In which academic areas should we grow? What types of graduates does Northwest Georgia need? In which areas do we have a potential to meet student need?

We are requesting the Board of Regents to grant us approval to develop full blown proposals for four-year programs in Criminal Justice and in Chemistry, English, and History, with Secondary Education tracks in each of these three areas. I am looking forward to receiving proposals soon for Green Technology in the School of Technology and Special Education in the School of Education. We have begun to look at the feasibility of offering a Bachelor in Nursing program. What additional majors should we propose that will help meet our mission?

I am a big proponent of accreditation. Some will say the only thing accreditation does is cost you money - more staff, more faculty, more students, more buildings. But this simply is not true. Yes, we may need to add resources in some areas, but this is not the point. Accreditation is a form of self-regulation, the primary means by which an institution of higher education and its programs assure and improve academic quality. It does help us understand what we are doing, how we are preparing our students, and what our students are learning. And **quality** is what we are about. On campus we have eight different program accreditations plus we are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. We are always working toward re-accreditation in some area, such as SACS, in which we will soon be engaged. And I encourage new accreditations where appropriate. The next big one we are working toward obtaining is that of AACSB for the School of Business Administration. This takes many resources, and much time and effort, but only 25 percent of all schools have this and I support our efforts to be in this elite group.

Becoming a residential campus is an even bigger challenge and change we will face. In October, we plan to ask the Board of Regents for permission to add residence halls beginning with the fall semester of 2009. This will give our students a truly collegiate experience and we will begin to attract students from further away. As we all know, Atlanta continues to grow and will produce more and more college-bound students. With residence halls, we will be able to attract more students from that population. The more students we have, the more tuition we will bring in and the more things we can do. The more we grow, the more programs, faculty and staff we will add. Residence halls will require new kinds of programming, a 24/7 campus, and additional staff in a variety of areas.

I am a supporter of the arts, and as we fully develop a residential campus, we need to add the arts - visual arts, theatre, and music - so we will become not only the educational center, but also the cultural center of Northwest Georgia. These are critical for a thriving community, a robust institution, and a well-rounded education. All three programs require many resources and space that may not easily fit on our physical grounds. I envision cooperation with the City of Dalton, Whitfield County, and the Creative Arts Guild to develop and help fund these programs and facilities, most likely downtown. In turn, additional small businesses and restaurants should open in that area. Although plenty of parking is available, we will need a bus system to get students back and forth from campus. These specialized classes could be offered in afternoons and evenings so general education and other courses can be taken earlier in the day. We could have a first-class arts program.

This, of course, leads to athletics. Nearly every day, I am asked when we will begin athletics. I believe our first teams will be in sports such as golf and tennis - with both men's and women's teams. An issue or concern is joining an athletic conference with similar athletes that does not require traveling long distances resulting in huge travel expenses. After our residence halls are up and functioning, we can discuss athletics.

Residence halls will also allow us to begin to recruit international students. Since we prepare students for our global economy, we need to provide international experiences. Not all of our students will be able to travel to other countries, so we will need to bring some experiences here such as those resulting from interactions with international students. I had hoped to begin the process this year but because of budget constraints, this may have to wait.

We do need to work on our retention and graduation rates. All of us play a role in recruiting students, retaining students, and helping students through to graduation. Any of our interactions with potential or current students, regardless of who we are, may have an effect on whether a student attends Dalton State and whether he or she remains here. Giving that little bit of help may make a difference. We have two-year and four-year degree programs and we all need to be aware of what they are so we can encourage our good students to stay here and graduate. We need to review our curriculum (and the faculty owns the curriculum) so that students do not need to repeat a number of courses as they go from one degree level to the next. Each student's goal must be to graduate. I do not mean we should eliminate certificate programs, but rather students who are working toward a degree should be encouraged to graduate from here and not transfer to another school.

I am a big proponent of adopting new technologies and we must look ahead and anticipate what is coming. Today, the place students look to get the most information about potential colleges is on the web. That is a major component for admissions and recruiting. Many of us have Blackberries and other devices, and an institutional support structure is important if we want to compete in today's world. As many of you know, I have encouraged the implementation of a new email system. We have ordered a blade server which is composed of sleeker and slimmer servers taking less energy and creating less heat. After this is in place, we will be able to update the portal which will allow us to use the most current version of our email system. During the spring semester, we hopefully will be able to purchase and install a new email system.

Students today do not use old technologies, such as email, with nearly the frequency we do. When some campuses have had crises and needed to notify students, they found students did not look at their email but used other sources. My Space, Facebook, YouTube, Linked-IN, SecondLife, and text messaging all get students' attention. I have only known what twittering is for a few weeks, yet many students communicate this way. We have to be aware of all that is going on, monitor these, and compete on that basis.

Not all programs lend themselves to online instruction and we should not become an online college. However, many programs will fit that mode of instruction. With the classroom space crunch we have on this campus and with the potential growth in the numbers of students, we do need to investigate opportunities for alternative instruction. Online is one method. I have seen great online instruction without students coming to campus, so I do know it can be done with quality. And quality is what I am interested in - not just numbers of students. Some programs may be well-suited for weekend instruction such as Friday afternoons and evenings and all day Saturdays. Each class would then meet a few weekends during the semester. I am very open to appropriate non-traditional delivery methods. Alternative delivery results in alternative times on campus and that does mean some of us may be on campus from 8 to 5 while others are here afternoons and evenings. But we do have to meet student needs as those come first. We must be available for our students.

Because of the initiatives I have just mentioned, I think it is time we develop a new strategic plan. During this academic year, we will appoint a committee of about 15 people who represent the various components of the campus. They will develop a new strategic plan composed of four to six goals. This will be vetted on campus so you all can have input. Once I accept it we will know where we are headed, and we will begin putting our resources toward those goals.

As we all know, the state has shifted the tax burden of running this college from all Georgia residents to a more limited group - students attending Dalton State and their families. As of last fall, Georgia contributed just 54% of our costs which is down 14% from 68% just five years ago. As we look at possible cuts of up to 10%, this percentage of support will continue to decrease and very soon we will be simply state located, not state supported.

During the last session, the General Assembly treated the University System of Georgia well. The Governor recommended what the System requested and the General Assembly appropriated the money. Unfortunately, our economy is not growing as robustly as predictions suggested, so we are now faced with budget cuts as are the majority of other states. The situation we are in is very fluid. Several weeks ago we expected a cut of approximately 3.5%. Then it became five percent. Suddenly we were at six percent. On Monday of this week, it was announced July revenue figures were down 6.6% from last July. Figures most likely will continue to change. We are fortunate that at least we are in the beginning of the fiscal year so we can spread the pain throughout the entire year and not make cuts over just a few months.

Dalton State has been very fiscally conservative. We have a very lean infrastructure which does not always serve us well because of the work load placed upon us from external entities and because of our growth. More is expected, and growth does not allow us to progress with the same numbers of employees. But in this cutting climate, it also means we have more options prior to any point of laying people off - and that is the last thing I want to do.

For this fiscal year, we already know the state is withholding six percent of what was in our allocation. In addition, they are cutting the amount of money we were allocated for salary raises. For the next fiscal year, these cuts will be permanent. We will never get this money back.

For the first five percent cut, we are eliminating the Automotive program and the Post-secondary Readiness Enrichment Program (PREP). We will eliminate six vacant positions. We will cut equipment, library, technology, and computer purchases over the year. These cuts will seriously affect us. If the money is taken for these vacant positions or from programs we are eliminating, then we cannot reallocate the positions and resources to new programs we need or to areas with the need of additional resources. We will get far behind in what is needed in terms of equipment, library holdings, and computers and technology. It will be difficult for us to attain the next level.

We have been instructed to have a procedure in place for hiring critical new or replacement personnel so we can better determine whether it is possible to postpone hiring. We also need to have a review and approval process for purchasing any and all equipment and approving any and all travel.

Beyond these cuts, the Board staff is proposing System-wide cuts. To achieve six percent, the Board may cap the match for the Indemnity Health Insurance Plan at the rate for the PPO Plus Plan. If this cap goes into effect it will increase costs to those in the Indemnity plan but will save the state \$20M and cover a one percent reduction. An additional one percent to make it a seven percent cut will come from the individual campuses. This will cause serious hardships. Not filling positions that become vacant could help us, but there is a possibility that several filled positions may have to be eliminated. These have **not** been identified, and we are looking for other options, but it is a possibility when approximately 80% of our budget goes to personnel. Again, I want you to remember the budget allocation is fluid and not set in stone. We continue to be advised by the state and by the Board of Regents. When you return to your offices, a different scenario could be in effect.

Because of the decisions that will need to be made in the future, I want more input from our campus constituencies. While some of the decisions have already been made, others may need to come. I will form a campus budget committee composed of representatives from various constituencies across campus. These members will become knowledgeable in the budget process and help make future decisions on our budget - both increases and decreases.

Some of you would like me to visit your classes and students. I am willing to do this on an invitational basis. I will not just show up and interrupt your class. If you want me to visit, please make an appointment with Dudd Dempsey in my office. I will NOT schedule any meeting or appointment myself. Always go through her. I also plan to set meetings with the faculty and staff of each school. I think these school meetings are important to do with the Academic Vice President, so these will be arranged.

It is very important that we celebrate each other's accomplishments. Take the effort to support each other. Through your chairs, deans, directors, and vice presidents, let people know good things are happening. I also suggest when your area plans a celebration, invite another area from across campus. Or better yet, take your celebration there. We are all here for the same purpose of providing a quality education for all our students. We need to know each other and support each other.

There are many reasons to celebrate accomplishments across campus. I am going to list just a few and there are many, many more. Just because I may not mention your accomplishment, does not mean it is any less important.

- Ms. Katie Sanders, a psychology major, was one of six receiving the Georgia Commission on Women's annual recognition award which also includes a \$1,000 scholarship.
- Dr. Christy Price, Professor of Psychology, won the University System 2008 Teaching Excellence Award in the Two Year/State College sector - the second year in a row a DSC faculty member has won.
- Ms. Joan Chapman, Assistant Professor of Education, presented at the AACTE conference in Washington, DC.
- Dr. Keith Perry, Associate Professor of English, co-published a book Larry Brown and the Blue-Collar South.
- Dr. Joe Baxter, Professor of Management Information Systems, and Dr. Marilyn Helms, Sesquicentennial Endowed Chair and Professor of Management, recently had an article published in the Journal of the International Academy for Case Studies titled "The U.S. Floorcovering Industry – 2006."
- Dr. Marsha Mathews, Associate Professor of English, has published poems in two different publications during the past year.
- Dr. Baogang Guo, Associate Professor of Political Science, presented a paper at an international forum, spent a month as an invited visiting scholar at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and published his second co-authored book, China in Search of a Harmonious Society.
- Rad Tech continues to have a pass rate of 100 percent on their licensure exam.
- Christy Walker, Instructor in Respiratory Therapy, is arranging with a Tennessee company for DSC students to participate in one of the first long-term pulmonary rehabilitation and ventilator-weaning units in the Southeast, thus insuring graduates of our program are at the cutting edge of this field.

Let's have a great year. Thank you for all you do!