

A Message from President Di Pasquale – March 19, 2015

Last week, Governor Raimondo released her budget for the upcoming fiscal year. I'm pleased to share some of the key highlights regarding higher education.

FY16 Governor's Higher Education Budget Recommendations

As you may be aware from media reports, the governor expressed strong support of the public higher education system. Her budget proposal to the General Assembly for FY16 is a positive step forward for CCRI as well as the rest of the system. Major elements directly affecting CCRI include:

- Increased state funding of over \$2 million.
- Five new additional FTE positions.
- An endorsement of an increase in tuition and fees of eight percent, the first increase since 2011. While eight percent may sound like a lot, in actual dollars it will mean an additional \$316 per full-time student, and is critical to maintaining our current service levels. Depending upon enrollment, every one percent increase in tuition generates an additional \$400,000 to \$450,000 in revenue.
- Continued funding of annual RICAP for our asset maintenance projects of \$2.1 million plus an additional \$2 million to continue the Warwick Renewal project.

This is very good news. After years of seeing CCRI's support from the state erode to 1963 levels, this is the strongest statement of commitment that we've seen from a governor in a long time. Of course, the governor's budget still has to pass through the legislative cycle, but we'll be monitoring that closely and are very hopeful.

FY15 Budget Update

With the assistance of \$1.4 million in new state funds this fiscal year, as well as RICAP funding for facility projects, we have been able to initiate many activities and projects that contribute to the enhancement of the CCRI learning community. For example:

- Many faculty slots have been filled and a number of search committees are still in progress.
- Additional student counselors and financial aid staff slots have been created.
- IT will be replacing more than 900 computer units in labs and classrooms.
- A program to replace the aging multifunction devices is planned.
- All campuses will see improvements in Wi-Fi capacity.
- Phase I of the Warwick Renewal project is underway.
- The Knight Campus art studio renovation began in December and will be completed for the fall.
- The Knight Campus science lab renovations are in the planning stages.
- The Flanagan Campus keying project is completed and Liston Campus will be next.
- New roofs are nearly complete at both the Newport County and Liston campuses.
- The simulation lab at the Flanagan Campus is being prepared for bid solicitation.

All of these activities and projects have percolated up from conversations with you and I thank you for your creative ideas. As we turn to the close of the academic year, we look toward our 50th commencement, just a few short weeks away. Commencement is always a time to reflect on the good work being done by our faculty, staff and students and we expect another record number of graduates this year.

As we look toward the next few months, we welcome your questions and input and will face the challenges ahead of us together. I look forward to speaking with many of you on Professional Development Day and along the way. Thank you and have a great end to your semester.