



President's Weekly Briefing—January 22, 2016 *Convocation Edition*

Transcript of Spring Convocation speech given January 13, 2016:

Welcome back! On April 6 of this year, College of Marin will celebrate its 90th anniversary—90 years of transforming lives through education and training! Truly amazing. You have heard me say before, that when a life is transformed, a family is transformed, a community is transformed, and ultimately—I'd like to believe—society is transformed.

Over the past 90 years, literally thousands of students have been educated here at College of Marin. While we know of a few who rose to national and even international notoriety, collectively, we know of many others who engaged more modestly to impact the lives of others. It actually starts right here in this room. I am aware that a number of you were students at COM long before you ever were an employee. If you attended COM as student, please stand so that we may acknowledge you and the work that you are doing to carry on the legacy of those that came before you.

As a part of our 90th anniversary celebration, we are beginning an initiative of collecting stories about alumni who over the many years made a difference by their important contributions to their family, community, and beyond. At the end of the program we will tell you how to submit those stories.

I have had the pleasure and privilege of serving as the superintendent/president of COM for the past five years. I truly believe this is one of the most exciting and thriving periods in COM's history.

When COM opened its doors in 1926, there were 87 students enrolled. Today, we serve over 13,000 annually in our credit, noncredit, and community education programs. There have certainly been periods of time in our history when our enrollment was higher, specifically in our credit program. Of course, many dynamics are at play here—many of which we have discussed before. But I hope we can agree that more is not always better. Rather than playing a numbers game, I'd prefer we focus on ensuring that those individuals in our community who need us and want us most, have access to us. Those that need it and want it, get it.

Additionally, I also firmly believe our focus should continue to be on outcomes—the number of our students successfully attaining their educational goals. As of this morning, our enrollment is essentially equal to what it was this time last spring semester but we continue to be optimistic that our enrollment will begin to trend upwards. I want to continue to remind everyone that we all play an important role in growing and maintaining our enrollment.





Last semester we began the process of personally contacting students who had applied for admission but who had not yet completed the enrollment process. This contact was very well received.

This semester we are taking a slightly different, yet nonetheless, high touch approach. All students were sent a one question survey asking whether they wanted to receive a call from the college or not. Of the 500 individuals who responded, 400 requested a call back. My thanks to those currently going the extra mile by contacting those students.

As you can imagine, the demographics of our students has vastly changed since 1926. Today, we serve a richly diverse student population. Less than half of the students we currently serve are white—which means that the new majority—the relatively new face of California and now the new face of College of Marin is non-Caucasian. This ever changing demographic further enriches our community and while it presents challenges, it presents many more opportunities. Vice President Eldridge will be addressing a bit of both in his presentation. However, I'd like to report that with 30+ percent Hispanic/Latino students we are now eligible to become a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution which brings with it eligibility to apply for federal funds to support our efforts in helping those students and others be successful.

Whether our students are here for university transfer, training for a new career, learning English or other important life skills—now more than ever—they are coming to us with varying degrees of educational preparedness. This too presents challenges and opportunities.

I am proud of the fact that we currently offer 62 associate degrees, 24 certificate of achievement and 20 skills certificates. In the last two years alone, COM has created 20 new degrees designed to expedite transfer to California State Universities. COM continues to have high transfer rates to UC Berkeley as well as other universities in the University of California system. COM currently has multiple articulation agreements with 53 public and private universities. The pathways for our students for continued education are many!

The high quality education and training is made possible by our talented faculty and staff. Many of you have earned degrees at some of the finest colleges and universities in the country. And many more of you have years of experience and developed expertise supporting students on their educational journey. While we all serve in different roles and capacities, I am confident that collectively we are committed to the success of students and go that extra mile in ensuring they have the support they need to fulfill their educational goals. With approximately 600 employees, COM is the 9th largest employer in Marin County and proud to be a major contributor to the local economy.





By show of applause, I'd like to know how many of you have school-aged children. I recognize that the cost of living here makes it difficult or impossible to live in Marin County. Again, by show of applause, for those of you who have school aged children and live outside of the county, how many of you would be interested in having your children attend a nearby Marin County School?

COM is currently engaged in collaborations and partnerships in support of our mission at unprecedented levels. This has been and will continue to be one of our hallmarks as a provider of education and training. You've recently heard about our newer collaborations with the likes of Tesla and Marin Transit. Today I am pleased to announce that we are currently in discussions with Sonoma State University regarding the potential of offering a Sonoma State bachelor degree or two on our campuses beginning as early as fall 2016. Very exciting. Stay tuned.

The majority of you have lived through the physical transformation of our campuses to some degree or another since 2004. We endured noise, dust, and sometimes less than ideal parking. We lived in temporary space that was good and bad. We moved into new space that was perfect as well as space that may have initially been imperfect. But, in the end, I hope you will agree that it was all worth it.

The Academic Center here on the Kentfield Campus was the last major project associated with Measure C which was passed in 2004. As you know, the complete scope of the \$249.5 bond measure included the Diamond Physical Education Center, Performing Arts Building, Science Math Nursing Building, Fine Arts Building, and Child Study Center at the Kentfield Campus; and the Transportation Technology Complex and Main Building at the Indian Valley Campus.

On September 22, we celebrated the near-completion of the bond measure by having a capstone celebration complete with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Measure C was an important investment in 21st century facilities, equipment and technology, and makes it possible for us to continue transforming lives in the years and decades ahead.

While much was accomplished through Measure C, I don't need to tell you that it didn't address all of our facility related needs. In preparation for developing a new facilities master plan, the District completed an in-depth conditions analysis of all facilities at Kentfield, Indian Valley, and Bolinas in 2013-14. This analysis confirmed in great detail that we indeed still have significant facilities related needs across the District.

The assessment, completed by Gilbane & Associates, has been central to informing the development of a new facilities master plan. The development of our new facilities master plan began in early 2015 and is scheduled to be completed early this year.





While the planning process diagram looks more like a diagram for a Rube Goldberg activity, the important thing to note is that we are almost at the end of the process. The senates and the board will be presented with project options for each campus. At this time, while no decision has been made about specific projects or priorities, it's clear that we have approximately \$200 million or more in unmet needs.

Potential facilities projects fall into the following categories:

- Modernization – 21st Century Teaching and Learning Space
- Capacity Building
- Asset Preservation
- Environmental Sustainability
- Instructional Equipment and Technology

And finally, let me confirm today something you may have read in the Marin IJ on Christmas day of all days—that the Board of Trustees is indeed in the process of deciding whether or not to go out for another facilities bond in 2016. We will spend the next month or so engaging and educating the community and studying the polling that was completed in November. I expect the board will make a decision no later than March about the potential of a bond election in 2016.

While our campuses continue to physically transform, we recognize that the physical transformation only sets the stage for the transformative work that happens in our classrooms, labs, libraries, this theater, and the offices and service areas across our campuses. I am so proud of the work, the deep work, that is happening across the College in preparing students for success—success as contributing members to this 21st century global society in which we live.

Much of this work was initially prompted by national and state-wide initiatives focused on student success, basic skills and equity, and job training. We have not only embraced this work, but we are excelling at it. While I'm proud of our institutional efforts and initiatives, I am extremely proud of the grassroots efforts that have emerged from members of our faculty and staff in support of our institutional agenda. Learning communities, UMOJA, Faculty Led Inquiry Team (FLIT), and service learning are just a few examples. Powerful, powerful work! I applaud you.

Vice President **Jonathan Eldridge** joined COM in January 2013 as vice president of student services. In August 2014, I asked him to assume the role of vice president of student learning in addition to his role as vice president of student services on an interim basis. For over a year, Jonathan provided exceptional leadership over both areas. Hey, if ain't broke, don't fix it! In November, Jonathan was appointed senior vice president of student learning and student services on a permanent basis.





Accreditation

COM's accreditation was unconditionally reaffirmed by the Association of Community Colleges and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) in January 2013 and we are currently engaged in our institutional self-evaluation review which happens every seven years. You may recall from a briefing I sent to you in November, that the Board of Governors for the California Community Colleges unanimously directed the state Chancellor's Office to develop a new model for accrediting the systems' colleges.

As I reported, any changes to the how and why and by whom we are accredited will likely take several years to implement. Accordingly, we will continue moving forward with the re-accreditation process with ACCJC.

Contest—Submit a Video on How COM has Transformed Your Life

All faculty, staff, and students are invited to submit a video describing in under one minute how COM has transformed their life. A selection committee will review the submissions to determine the winners. The winner from the faculty and staff category will receive \$1,000 in professional development funds and the student winner will receive a \$1,000 scholarship! **Submit your videos by March 1, 2016**, to <https://dropitto.me/collegeofmarin>.

I also encourage you to share your alumni stories on [COM's Facebook page](#). COM's [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) pages are also open for you to ask me and members of cabinet questions or post suggestions.

As we look toward the future, I am grateful to you—the College community—and to the local community for your ongoing support of COM. Philanthropic support of College programs and scholarships for students was at an all-time high in 2015 which I believe is a positive reflection of the community's confidence in our important work together. Under **Dr. Linda Frank's** leadership, I expect this to be a banner year of support for our students and programs. As with #GivingTuesday, it all begins right here! One special benefit planned in support of the Drama Department is *Love Songs* a Valentine's cabaret celebrating five decades of musical theatre at College of Marin.

Together, we stand firm in our commitment to educational excellence which is rooted in providing equitable opportunities and fostering success for all members of our diverse community.

—end Convocation speech transcript—





A Message from our 2016 Commencement Speaker: “Dr. Q”

California community college graduate Dr. Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa "Dr. Q" will be College of Marin's 2016 Commencement speaker. He is looking forward to his visit in May and sent COM a message which can be viewed on our [YouTube channel](#). I am thrilled that he will be sharing his inspiring story of how community college transformed his life with this year's graduates.

His book, *Becoming Dr. Q: My Journey from Migrant Farm Worker to Brain Surgeon*, was selected as the COMmon Read for the 2015-16 academic year. Throughout the fall semester students, faculty, staff, and community members took part in the program by attending discussions and lectures. More information about the spring schedule of COMmon Read events is available [online](#).

Online Writing Center is Open!

The Online Writing Center (OWC) is open 24/7 throughout the spring semester to help students with writing assignments for all college subjects. Students can get free help with grammar, idea development, and organization, as well as with research and essays. There are self-help materials and instructional specialists (tutors) who respond to student posts within 24 hours. The OWC also assists students with transfer, scholarship, and job applications, including resumes and cover letters. In order to best support students with their writing needs, your help in getting the word out and customizing the OWC for your students is needed.

If you would like an in-class orientation for your students, please contact the spring 2016 OWC Coordinator [Alisa Klinger](#). If you would like to submit your writing assignments for posting in the OWC so that instructional specialists can best guide your students, or if you would like a course forum folder created for your particular course(s), please send your request to Alisa at your earliest convenience. Online writing services are available to faculty and students in all disciplines until the end of the spring semester.

United Professors of Marin Launch New Website

A tip-of-the-hat to the *United Professors of Marin* (UPM) and webmaster **Derek Wilson** for the launch of [UPM's new website](#). The new site provides access to the UPM/MCCCD contact, breaking COM news, current and archived newsletters, downloadable forms, photos and articles about faculty colleagues, and many other features of interest and relevance to COM faculty. For information on how to register for access to the website's member resources page, see the UPM January Newsletter or contact [Derek Wilson](#).





Upcoming Events

Robert Ellison Maquettes—Final Week on Display

A collection of Ellison's maquettes is on display in the Fine Arts Gallery through January 28, 2016. The maquettes in the exhibit are a part of a large body of his work donated to become part of the College's permanent collection. Each maquette was carefully constructed to a one inch to one foot scale, and many of the pieces on display were eventually realized as larger pieces.

In October, College of Marin became the home of *Renaissance*, one of two sculptures by world-renown artist Robert Ellison that are now part of COM's permanent collection. The 120 x 192 x 210 inch welded steel sculpture was installed in the open area between the Fine Arts Building and Academic Center. Ellison created the painted steel sculpture of giant scissors cutting a ribbon in 1988. College of Marin received its first sculpture, *Bi*, as a gift to the Fine Arts Department. Created in 1971, the sculpture was initially displayed in the fall of 1974 at COM's Fine Arts Gallery when Ellison was a faculty member. (Read the complete [press release](#) online.)

Exhibit Closing Event

Thursday, January 28, 2016
3 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Fine Arts Gallery, Kentfield Campus
Open to the public

Gallery Hours

Monday through Friday
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Special Valentine's Fundraising Performance—*Love Songs*

Paul Smith, director

Get your tickets now for *Love Songs*—a Valentine's cabaret celebrating five decades of musical theatre at College of Marin. From **James Dunn's** first smash-hit production of Kurt Weill's *Three Penny Opera* in 1965 to his exceptional production of Roger Miller's *Big River* in 2013, the Drama Department performs outstanding Broadway musicals for Marin County audiences. Music faculty member **Paul Smith**, who began his COM career with *The Music Man* in 1976 (and has worked on 26 of the 51 musicals produced at the College) has assembled a cast of alumni from every decade to relive these past glories and point the way to the future.

Saturday, February 13, at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 14, at 2 p.m.

Studio Theatre (PA 32)

Performing Arts Building, Kentfield Campus

A \$20 suggested donation goes toward COM Drama Department scholarships and future musical productions. Space is limited. Please call to reserve your seat, (415) 485-9385.



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Ongoing Events

Sports

Read the latest sports stories, view schedules for upcoming games, and gear up with COM athletic apparel on the [Mariners website](#).

Have a great weekend,

David Wain Coon, Ed.D.
Superintendent/President



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