



NEVADA STATE
COLLEGE

Stand Our Ground 2011

State of the College Address

President Lesley Di Mare

Colleagues & Community Members:

It has been nearly a year, since I stood before you to apprise you of the status of our institution, Nevada State College. So much of what I shared with you a year ago not only reflected the state of our institution, but also the state of our state and the nation in general, which so obviously affect all that we strive to accomplish.

Our own personal and work lives so often reflect that of the world around us. The economy shakes our concept of what the future may bring; natural and some not-so-natural disasters weaken our physical and psychological infrastructure and test our limits of endurance; we say goodbye to some who have left us; and we shed tears for those whom we will never see again. Yet, with resilience almost unimaginable, the world rebuilds itself and emerges stronger and wiser.

During this past year Nevada State College has weathered similar storms—it suffered the loss of its President, experienced one of the most contentious Legislative Sessions in the history of Nevada, feared for its existence, and struggled in solidarity as it made difficult decisions regarding yet another round of budget cuts.

But I watched each of you as you went about your day and year during these crises. Times of tension were mitigated by someone's quick wit—allowing for a moment of catharsis. Periods of uncertainty were tempered by the knowledge that as colleagues you aspired to a common goal. And most importantly, your successes, of which there have been many, coalesced-- lifting our spirits and allowing us to transcend the storm below.

And nothing lifts our spirits higher than a story of student success. On September 2, NSC received a wonderful letter from one of our now alumni. A recently graduated nursing student shared the following with NSC and the greater world at large. Published on "allnurses.com" was the following tribute:

"I just graduated from the NSC Accelerated BSN program in August 2011 and wanted to share some of my thoughts about the experience.

My classmates were awesome. I made some lifelong friendships. We bonded over the challenging course material and clinical experiences. We studied a lot but also had a lot of fun. I'll miss seeing them on a regular basis.

The accelerated track was fast, doable and challenging. I think it would be very hard if you had to work part-time or were single parent with little ones. The start of every semester brought some anxiety but after the first exam, test-off, or clinical day, you generally got into the rhythm. You just had to be flexible (**which everyone at Nevada State College is**) and adapt to each professor's teaching style and personality.

The faculty is highly knowledgeable and experienced. Quite a few PhDs and DNPs on staff. The small class sizes made for a great learning environment. I definitely had the opportunity to get to know the professors well.

The facilities were good. We utilized the Clinical Simulation Center on Shadow a lot. On campus, all the classrooms were wired for internet and video. Webcampus was used effectively. The NSC libraries were accessible. Group study rooms at the big university library came in handy for late night studying. **(Comment here about collaboration)**

Clinical rotations were available all over the valley (which is good). I got to rotate through Summerlin, Sunrise, St. Rose Siena, UMC, Rawson-Neal, Salvation Army, and ECDC African Refugee Center. Clinical instructors were great and knew the facilities and staff pretty well.

Now I hear it's even more competitive to get into a NSC BSN nursing track. That's understandable considering it's probably the lowest cost fully accredited BSN program in Nevada. From my time speaking with a few RNS and AAS degrees, it sounds like some hospitals are pushing them to get BSNs.

Good luck to all of those who have started nursing school this Fall. Keep your head up! Get Going."

And that is what we all did last year. "Kept our heads up" (**proudly**) and "Got Going."

And we "got going" by doing what we do best. As the only state college in Nevada, we continue to be:

A teaching institution which provides high quality learning experiences.

Our emphasis on experiential learning continues in our Business program, where our newly-minted Finance Lab merges cutting edge technology with on-demand market information. Inspired by leading Wall Street financial centers, the lab's sprawling, 30 foot bank of high definition monitors exposes students to live video, breaking news reports, and the market data that drive world economies (**whether we want to hear it or not**)

Our nursing faculty worked with national consultants to become "Simulation Champions." Simulations are conducted in a lab using high tech mannequins to simulate/mimic real-life clinical situations. The simulations enhance student learning and develop critical thinking to make decisions about patient care in a safe environment.

The School of Education, in partnership with a national benchmarking firm that consults regularly with colleges and universities, has been conducting exit surveys with its graduates. The most recent report by Educational Benchmarking Corporation demonstrated that NSC is

producing excellent teachers. When compared with 44 peer institutions, NSC's teacher preparation program ranked FIRST in overall quality of instruction and SECOND in Satisfaction with Faculty and Courses and in overall program effectiveness. In over half of the 14 factors that were measured, NSC ranked in the top 10% of institutions surveyed.

(We continue to be) an educational institution where the faculty and staff's scholarship influences quality teaching:

Dr. Larry Rudd, from the School of Education, was awarded a Nevada Collaborative Teaching Improvement Program Grant for 5 consecutive years. The focus of this grant was to provide secondary level CCSD teachers with professional development in science and pedagogy.

Dr. Aaron Wong from Mathematics has developed a new mastery-based model for delivering remedial math, giving students the opportunity to receive focused instruction in their areas of weakness while not causing long delays on their path towards graduation. This novel system has such promise that it is not only being implemented by NSC, but at other institutions across the system.

Dr. Rho Hudson associate professor in the School of Education and Director of the RCSD, attended NSC's "Summer Technology Institute" in 2010 during which she created a Webcampus course that provided online staff development allowing staff to work successfully with college students with disabilities. In line I would also like to point out that NSC's RCSD's website was ranked 8th in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* for its ease of accessibility thanks to both Rho Hudson and Spencer Stewart and his crew.

Assistant Dean, Roxanne Stansbury, co- presented a paper entitled "So You Think You Want to Teach an Online Class? A Three-Tier Training Model" at the ITC Annual Conference held in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Sam McCool moderated a panel discussion "Perspectives on Accessibility & Digital Media" at the July 2011 Bb World hosted in Las Vegas. I wasn't there to enjoy the dancing as I was last year in Florida but I am sure someone was up there on the stage representing NSC.

Representatives from our faculty senate, including Kebret Kebede, Gregory Robinson, Angela Brommel, Grace Thomson and Robin Herlands, presented at the AAUP National Conference in Washington DC this summer on the use of an adapted business model to guide strategic planning of the faculty senate.

And, Dr. Llasus received her PhD in nursing just this past summer. Congratulations to Dr. Llasus.

(We continue to be) a Technologically Advanced Institution

The Humanities department worked to explore new ways of infusing technology into the curriculum. In collaboration with the library, they began a digitalized oral history project and hosted a digital art exhibit.

The 2011 Technology Fellows Institute introduced the next generation of Web Campus and Cloud Computing as of June 2011.

Over 34 new part time instructors completed the full Web Campus Tier One Workshops; 113 of these instructors attended one or more workshops.

Support Tickets-I went by to see Sam “Too Cool” McCool and his team, Tonya and Kat, but they were a bit too busy to talk to me. They were in the process of closing out 2420 Web Campus Support calls and emails during AY 2010-2011. Granted, 2,000 of those calls & emails were from me. So we give many thanks to Sam, Tonya and Kat.

(We continue to be) an institution committed to supporting the educational goals of our students, and providing them with the tools and opportunities necessary to achieve them.

Admissions

The Office of Admissions created a “One Stop Shop” Welcome Center and Presentation Room; students are welcomed and receive advising and registration information for classes. Our recruiters are out every day helping potential students understand NSC and what it offers.

Financial Aid

One of the most difficult aspects of an institution for students and families to understand is the complexities of “Financial Aid.” Students rely on financial aid to see them through their education. I know I did.

I have never forgotten standing in line, waiting to receive my check that would buy books, groceries, and the occasional movie. Things haven’t changed that much since then.

NSC’s Financial Aid Office awarded over 21 million dollars in aid this year. The staff who are behind the scenes deserve much applause because finances always create the most angst-- as this recession has illustrated to us all and they deal with that angst every day.

Foundation

The NSC Foundation Board has long since recognized the need for additional student financial support, and they have made baccalaureate education possible for many students by raising over \$200,000 in the past 2 years to support student scholarships. The Trustees are again making

student scholarships a priority for the 2011-2012 academic/fiscal year, and many more students will benefit from their philanthropy.

Registrar (Project iNtegrate Big News)

The Registrar's Office— Patricia Ring and the Registrar's Office along with the help of Brian Chongtai and his crew, led the pack in a successful “go-live” of the new student registration system, myNSC, for this Fall 2011. A complete migration of a system with barely a blip.

NSSA (Our Students)

I am so pleased to report that in the last year, the Nevada State Student Alliance went from 8 members to 23, and as of this month, all available positions on the NSSA Board have been filled. With the increased level of participation, our student government was able to accomplish amazing things.

They collaborated with multiple campus departments to plan new and exciting events for students, including FAFSA Workshops and Academic Advising Week. They were actively involved throughout the budget session, even taking several long bus trips to Carson City to fight for public higher education. And in the midst of all that, they continued with their yearly programs, such as the Halloween Event and the Spring Luau, which are quickly becoming NSC traditions.

Finance & Administration

It is important to note that many of our enhanced student services would not have been possible without enhanced facilities. Many remodeling and improvement projects have been completed during the past year, including the expansion of the Bookstore and the installation of a sidewalk and lighting on Compassion Way. These modifications have allowed us to better meet our students needs and to make our campus a safer, more comfortable place to learn.

Finally, (we continue to be) a state college, whose goal is to address the needs of the workforce and our community.

The students of Nevada State College deserve the best education possible. One that prepares them for a profession and one that also makes them a well rounded individual who attempts to better the human condition from both a professional perspective as well as through the lens of history, literature, the sciences, and the arts.

As educators ourselves, what are we--if not aware of the historical pain and struggles all peoples have suffered— struggles that brought them to this country to become educated, contributing members of society.

As nurses, what are we if not sensitive to both the psychological and biological dimensions that create the fragileness of all human life. As business men and women, how can we understand and predict recessions such as the one we are now experiencing without having analyzed historical economic trends. As human beings how can we move forward in the midst of chaos, if we do not recall a John Steinbeck novel or the words of Martin Luther King.

If you are a graduate from Nevada State College; you will be prepared to work at Beckman Coulter in the biotech industry; you will walk confidently into the classes you teach at the elementary, secondary, or college level; you will understand the criminal justice system as a law enforcement agent or an attorney; you will have the tools and critical thinking skills to analyze the region in which you live and determine the ways in which we might diversify our economy so that our communities continue to thrive.

Most importantly, because you have received a well rounded education, you will succeed in your profession and you will do so with dignity, passion, commitment, ethics, and a desire for what is best for the greater good not just for yourselves personally.

And now, due to one of the greatest NSC accomplishments to date, we can officially say....(We are) a fully accredited comprehensive baccalaureate degree granting institution; The first and the only state college in Nevada.

And how do our peers view us? Well, I know they like what they see...

After concluding its most recent visit in April 2011, the Commission, as part of its report, provided Nevada State College with six commendations, which I believe truly represent the excellence that is NSC:

- 1.** The Administration, faculty and staff of Nevada State College are commended for their exceptional vision, focus and collaboration in providing quality teaching, scholarship and services that promote high levels of student learning.
- 2.** The broad Nevada State College community, including campus constituencies and local and state business and educational leaders are commended for their deep commitment to Nevada State College and its mission.
- 3.** Nevada State College is commended for its efficient and effective delivery of quality educational programs in the face of frequent administrative changes, constrained physical facilities, and declining budgets.
- 4.** Nevada State College is commended for its commitment to integrated assessment of personnel, courses and programs that has led to data-driven improvements in programs, courses and services.

5. Nevada State College is commended for its effective recruitment, selection and in-service training of full and part-time faculty members.

6. Nevada State College is commended for the innovative and functional design of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Building. During fiscally restrained times, the institution has created innovative and effective instructional space, including a series of connected laboratories with state of the art equipment, and a finance room that will serve the students and the community for many years to come.