



Good Evening and welcome to the Masto Conference Center at Big Bend Community College. I look forward to this opportunity each year of joining with you, the citizens of our several communities, and our staff, to discuss what has transpired, what is currently on our plate, and what we plan for the future. And if you think that the economic currents of our state and nation are washing up against us, then you understand the meaning of the title of my presentation, "Swimming Against the Current."

I've been fortunate in my 14 years at Big Bend Community College to work with the finest collection of people who serve on our Board of Trustees. Keep in mind that these folks represent appointments by three governors, Mike Lowry, Gary Locke, and Christine Gregoire. You also need to know that our trustees are essentially all at-large appointments. There are no specific interest groups or regions represented here; rather each trustee has the best interests of all the residents of all regions in our 4,600 square mile district.

Let me introduce them to you tonight. First from Quincy, and the current board chair is Mr. Mike Blakely. Mike is serving his first term as chair and has been a trustee since 2005. Our vice-chair is Felix Ramon from Moses Lake. Felix has served as board chair three times and was initially appointed in 1994. The next trustee is Katherine Kenison from Moses Lake. She also has served three times as board chair and was first appointed in 1999. This month we were informed that the state senate has confirmed her reappointment. At the same time we were also notified that our two newest trustees had received state senate confirmation as well, although each has been legally serving on the Board since the Governor's appointment. Mike Wren is from Ephrata and has served on the board since this past September.

Angela Pixton is from Warden and she too began service on the board in September.

The BBCC Foundation consists of a 22-member board and I am pleased that several board members are with us tonight including the board chair Mr. Howard Skaug. Will the rest of the Big Bend Community College Foundation please stand? Each year part of this report notes the critical assistance from the Foundation that is afforded to our students and to the college staff. You'll hear more about the Foundation later.

Our staff is comprised of faculty, administrators, and our classified staff. Tonight with us we have the president of the faculty association Mr. Mike O'Konek and the chair of the classified staff Mrs. Kathy Aldrich. My executive administrative staff, with us tonight includes Vice-presidents Dr. Mike Lang, Ms. Gail Hamburg, and Ms. Holly Moos, Associate Vice-president Candy Lacher, and Deans Valerie Kirkwood, Kara Garrett, Tim Fuhrman, Dr. Clyde Rasmussen, and Dr. Rachel Anderson.

I will mention the legislature tonight and the story I'll share with you could be far worse if not for the support of our representatives. I want to personally thank Judy Warnick and Bill Hinkle, and Senator Janea' Holmquist for their continuing interest and support of our students.

Welcome everyone and now lets begin our "Swim Against the Current!" Oh my, where to start? It has been a remarkable year, one that we are not likely to soon forget. Let me begin with a rather recent event, involving two foundations, the BBCC Foundation and the Harry and Masie Masto Foundation.

Several of you in the room tonight remember Harry Masto, and could very well have been one of his close personal friends. Of all the impacts that Harry had on this community as a businessman and farmer, the one with most importance to Big Bend was and is his early and continuing generous support of our students through the establishment of student scholarships.

Over 20 years Harry and Masie, through their Foundation, donated more than \$180,000 to student scholarships. When their daughter and Foundation Trustee Sherry Sparks described how much they valued the college, Doug Sly, the Executive Director of the Big Bend Foundation, mentioned the BBCC Trustees' donation schedule for campus naming opportunities. The schedule notes that the ATEC Conference Center can be named for a donation of \$500,000.

Subsequently, a pledge was made to bring the total Masto donation to more than \$550,000. Since only an action of the Board of Trustees can name a college property, I was pleased that the Trustees agreed to call a special meeting to be held during Winter Serenade in this very room on January 31, at which I recommended to the Trustees what you will now witness. So as you heard on the clip, Welcome to the Masto Conference Center!

This is only one example of the good things that come to us from the Big Bend Community College Foundation. Earlier this evening you entered through the Peterson Gallery, passing the Hardin Community Room, and the Simplot and REC rooms.

You see seven bronze portraits in the Peterson Gallery, each one representing a minimum gift to the Big Bend Community College Foundation of \$100,000. Later this year we'll add at least two

more to the collection, one for Warren and Ruth Osborne, and another for Harry and Masie Masto.

And in case you've entered the ATEC via the north entrance you've perhaps seen the Grant County Seal, that also recognizes vital financial support of this building from our Grant County Commissioners. (Intro County Commissioners if they are here) Cindy Carter, Richard Stevens, and Carolann Swartz

This gives me a chance to describe Foundation membership opportunities. In addition to serving on the Foundation board, friends, staff, students and graduates can take a more active role in foundation support through membership.

This slide is of my membership card to show my support of the foundation in addition to my donations, and service on the board. There are membership applications on your tables tonight and I invite you to fill one out and join with us. If you'll leave them on the table after filling them out, the Foundation Office will follow up with the membership details.

Please note the benefits described on the back of the card. Finances are tight for all of us, individually, and collectively. This assistance from the BBCC Foundation is one of several examples you'll hear about tonight to help us "swim against the current."

Each year as we all become more familiar with Big Bend, we often fail to see our detail. Certainly the campus and our buildings stand out, some more than others. Many of our buildings are 20 to 50 years or more in age. Our maintenance staff takes great pride in our plant and grounds, and spend many hours caring for and improving our facilities for our students and staff.

For example, this past year we replaced the roofs on both of our dormitories. In the business and liberal arts building, 1600, we replaced all the skylights. In building 1400, the admissions and administration building, we completed a window replacement project, both upstairs and downstairs.

This fall marked the grand opening of the new Fine Arts building, a project that also included some repairs in the Wallenstein Theatre. The Fine Arts building, only our second state financed capital project in 47 years, was handicapped as we ran out of money due to increased materials costs, so we were unable to finish the building interior as we wanted.

However, our M&O staff stepped forward and finished our landscaping and interior painting. Faculty and staff planted 2,000 bulbs in the center island of the new campus entrance off of Randolph Road.

The Big Bend Community College Foundation purchased a lighted reader board for that entrance from their facilities account (not the scholarship account), which has also become the new drop off and pick up point for the Grant Transit Authority.

Incidentally at this location, GTA furnished a new bus shelter for passengers. The entire entrance itself was paved courtesy of Pamp Maiers.

When the Art department moved to the new Fine Arts building, their old building, out near the other vocational buildings, was refurbished to provide replacement classroom space for the automotive department.

The aircraft hanger that houses our auto program has two second floor classrooms that are accessible only via very long, high metal stairs. The classrooms were abandoned for instructional use as not being in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). So while students must now leave the auto building for lecture, they are in much more suitable spaces, again thanks to the excellent work of our M& O staff.

We have some remaining capital improvement money, some of which will revert if we don't use it, and much of which we accumulated through careful budgeting. With these funds, (which can only be used for capital expenditures), we are planning to do some remodeling in the 1400 building to create new office spaces for student tutoring and advising, and an expanded space for tutoring and testing. The business office, currently located upstairs, will be provided with student friendly space in the front of the old auditorium and the Human Resources Department will relocate to the old Business Office Space.

But more than a physical plant, Big Bend Community College is our people, both students and staff. So who are we?

I hope you always expect to hear about our students and staff with every State of the College. For me, that news is one of the most interesting parts of the research that goes into this report.

What about our students?

Our annual student body count consists of an enrollment of about 4,200 individuals. While some of them attend full time, many are with us for only a part-time course load, something less than 15 credits.

So when we figure out how many 15 credit (full) course loads this population supports, it comes out to be a little more than the equivalent of 1,800 full time students. About 58% are female (42% are male). 54% are interested in our transfer programs, 41% are enrolled in our professional/technical programs, and for the note takers in the audience, and 5% are enrolled in our basic skills program.

At commencement last year we awarded 365 degrees. Among those graduates were 26 running start students who had graduated with their high school diplomas the week before.

And what about our staff?

Our academic employees (teachers, counselors, and librarians) number 54 full-time and on the average, every quarter about 120 part-time. We have 18 administrators and another seven administrative staff employees, and we have a core of 85 of the very best classified employees in the state.

Is Big Bend a good place to work? This chart demonstrates the number of staff who have worked for the college less than 20 years, between 20 and 30 years, and 30 years and more. I think this shows that working at Big Bend is a good thing!

We have always thrived on our partnerships with employers and agencies throughout our district. In fact we annually report to the Trustees on our Partnerships. This past year we saw an example of why we want to establish and nurture partnerships, not just for the benefit of Big Bend but also for the benefit of our entire community.

About two years ago business expansion was growing at a vigorous pace, REC Silicon, Guardian Fiberglass, Katana, Yahoo!,

and Microsoft, were all in various stages of construction and the requirement for a permanent workforce was intense. Each company had and still has, a vigorous employee recruiting program, aimed particularly at highly trained and experienced workers. In addition they also had a continuing need for many entry-level workers. As is often the case in small communities “employee musical chairs” picked up its pace. A solution was needed to the problem of finding and hiring qualified, entry-level employees from the local workforce.

Nurtured and sustained by the college, the Grant County EDC, and the Port of Moses Lake, a cooperative of local industries saw a model of pre-employment training in the mid-west that held promise for this vexing problem. The consortium of employers and agencies became known as Central Washington Jobs. They in turn organized a pre-employment training program for area industries that were the initial investors in the enterprise. Known as the P.E.T. (Pre-Employment Training Program in Grant and Adams Counties), it is advertised as “6 weeks, 11 job offers,” reflecting the initial 11 employers. They are Simplot-Moses Lake, Simplot-Othello, Basic American Foods, REC Silicon, McCain, Quincy Foods, LLC., Columbia Colstor, Inc., SVZ, Genie, Lamb Weston and LaserFab. Their brochure is also at your table; please take it with you.

The first class, which began this month, is full and training has been underway for a little more than four weeks, with two weeks to go before the first class finishes. I can’t think of a better example of what our Trustees had in mind when they set “Partnerships” as one of their guiding goals (ends statements) for the college. It’s an exciting approach to pre-employment training and one that we believe can be adapted to many of our businesses and industries.

Our doors opened 47 years ago and many folks value us for just being around that long. More importantly however, we are valued for the quality of our product, i.e., our graduates.

We continue to offer a vital, college transfer program, pre-college training, and professional/technical programs. Last year I described our newest program, Medical Assisting; about 15 years ago we created a Maintenance Mechanics and an Industrial Electrical program.

But most of our vocational programs have been with us for almost the full ride, automotive, welding, office information technology, nursing, aviation, etc.

Yet, these are not the same programs unchanged, since 1962. Our faculty and staff are constantly upgrading and revising the materials we present and the equipment we use, incorporating new ideas and facts, and identifying the best practices in higher education that contribute to student success.

By now many, if not most of you, have heard of a grant we were awarded a couple of years ago, called **Achieving the Dream, Community Colleges Count**. The whole premise of this grant is that within each community college there are ideas, values, and processes that remove barriers our students often face. With those barriers removed, our students enroll, continue in their programs, and persist to the award of a degree or certificate. The funds of this grant are intended to directly impact every student by helping us collect information about what we do to enhance student success. The evidence collected is used to provide that same successful experience for all students, helping them achieve their goals, and making us an even more effective college.

Let me give you an example of how this works. For several years we have observed that new student orientation workshops seem to help new students adjust to the often dramatic changes of a first time college experience.

When AtD funding enabled us to look more closely at students who attended the orientations, and compare them with students who didn't, we saw much more than better adjustment. The orientation students performed better, and more of them enrolled for classes the next quarter. When we expanded the hours of the orientation student performance and persistence was enhanced. We were also encouraged by national research that suggested a full course in "new student orientation to college" showed positive results for all socioeconomic and ethnic groups. Our own research confirmed that more frequent sessions with an advisor, was also associated with improved performance and persistence. Now, all new students are required to have frequent advising sessions until they complete a minimum of 30 credits. Of course we hope they will continue to work with their advisors through their graduation.

The goal of AtD is to identify powerful practices that enhance student success and then to apply them across the entire student population. Currently we have projects involving mathematics instruction and remedial instruction in general.

Thanks to the support of AtD we are clearly focused on the needs and success of each student, using carefully evaluated data. As we continue to remove barriers, BBCC is helping our students "swim against the current."

Each year I try to choose the most appropriate and correct words to describe the State of The College. The next part of my story

tonight is about the current economic problems locally, throughout the state, and across this nation, and the potential impact this challenge may have on Big Bend Community College. So I'm trying to choose my words describing this situation most carefully.

A recurring theme, at least in the last two installments of State of The College is that all of us are experiencing constant financial challenges.

Last year, we all shared the problems for students, staff, and the community and college operations, due to the increasing cost of fuel. And now, an economic catastrophe, that none of us have ever experienced, suddenly descends upon us.

While we've had financial challenges in the 47-year history of the college, we have never seen such a deep challenge to everything we do.

Early this fall we received word from the Governor to hold back our spending and to expect budget reductions in the current fiscal year. As frustrating as that direction was, not having a clearly defined reduction target heightened feelings of doubt and confusion across the campus. Staff thoughts ranged from, is this really necessary, to are we going to close? The reality officially hit three weeks ago when the legislature passed and the Governor signed the "belt-tightening" bill that restricted out of state travel, equipment purchases, and hiring for the rest of this fiscal year. The impact on Big Bend is a reduction in our current budget of \$475,000.

Meanwhile, the projected state expenses for the next biennium continued to grow, and the projected state revenues (to pay for

the increased expenditures) continued to shrink. Right now the ever-changing nature of the budget shortfall (so far state-wide it has been estimated as between \$6B and \$9B) is frustrating.

Both as a system of 34 community and technical colleges, and as Big Bend Community College, we have been in close contact with our legislators. For us, we work most closely with legislators of the 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> districts, but also reach out across the state. Our message to the legislature and the governor in this time of economic crisis and rising unemployment, is that community and technical colleges are the most important state resources to deal with job skill training, therefore do as little harm to us as possible, so we can respond as effectively as possible.

The major impact will be felt when the final budget is adopted and we know what our next two years will bring us. Both the Senate and House budgets are out (the House budget was released just today). The least drastic cuts are in the Senate budget. That would reduce our funding for the next two years by almost \$1.6 million, even with a tuition increase. It appears that the House budget would cut us even deeper.

Our legislators and the governor understand that the size of the reduction and the timing of it are of critical importance. The past few months we've been engaging in formal and informal discussions with staff across the campus and with the trustees, on the impacts of this constantly changing picture. Here is a clip from our MediaSite Archives of a meeting of the Budget Review Task Force. This clip is part of a discussion of how we might be able to use technology to deliver instruction in a less costly way: What we know as of this date is that **Big Bend will be open for business this fall**. What we will look like is still not clear.

We have identified three core functions of the college, which must be sustained to remain a viable institution.

Our core functions are instruction, services, and maintenance. Instruction core functions include teaching those classes minimally required to provide the training and degrees needed in the district; we must maintain, repair, and service our instructional equipment; we must continue to monitor, evaluate, and report on the success of our instructional efforts, and we must maintain our accreditations.

Service core functions include student support activities such as financial aid award and administration; we must continue to recruit, register, and counsel our students; and we must continue staff support such as payroll and human resource employee benefits and services.

Maintenance core functions include debt payment on our financial obligations and maintenance, repair, and service of our physical plant and grounds.

Revenue loss this year and in the next biennium will impact each of these areas to a significant extent. Classes will be impacted in terms of the numbers and types of classes, and how often they are offered. Teaching positions may be lost, as could entire programs. Purchase and repair of vital instructional equipment, will be postponed. Administrative and classified positions may be lost, weakening services to students and employees. Plant and grounds maintenance and repair will likewise be postponed. Our efforts in dealing with these financial problems are focused on continuing to serve the residents of Community College District #18, providing all the educational opportunity we can with a greatly reduced budget, and weeding out our weaker, less

effective and less relevant programs and services so that we can emerge a stronger, more focused college.

Now is the time to encourage our legislators to protect community and technical colleges and of course especially our own college, Big Bend!

When I speak to large groups I often ask how many in the audience either attended Big Bend or knows someone who did? In most groups, I can work in enough variations of the basic question to engage more than 90% of the audience. Then I ask them to imagine what would it be like if Big Bend Community College had never been here? I'm never able to recreate the scenes of George Bailey's vision of Bedford Falls without him, in the 1946 movie "It's a Wonderful Life", but at least a few folks pause to consider that impact. We are in a constant battle to stay fresh in the minds of our community so that we are not taken for granted.

Well, why should we be remembered? I'm always grateful for our excellent staff that makes lasting, positive impressions on our visitors and clients (students). Beyond that, it is the level of accomplishment of our students that demonstrates the quality of our efforts. Within Washington State all community colleges are measured in several categories of student achievement. The titles of the several categories of achievement may or may not be meaningful to you on first glance. Within the community and technical college system we call them Momentum Points.

Visualize a continuum of educational work after high school that ultimately leads to a bachelor's degree, the ultimate American higher educational goal. For students ready for college level work, the achievement categories represent the earning of 15 and

30 college level credits, a separate achievement category for passing college level mathematics, and for community colleges, completion of requirements for a certificate of achievement or an associate's degree.

Since community colleges are open entry colleges, we also accept folks not prepared for college level work and so there are achievement categories before the first 15 college level credits to account for skill level gains in basic skills and completion of pre-college classes (developmental classes in math and English) so that they are "college ready."

The basic purpose of this tracking and evaluation of our efforts is student success. I think one way to reinforce this effort can be found in a recent column by Jack Z. Smith, an editorial writer for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. This was printed in the Spokesman-Review, in the March 17<sup>th</sup> edition. He commented that the U.S. unemployment rate at that time, was at 8.1%, which he noted as the "highest in about 25 years." This chart correlates the unemployment rates in his article with educational attainment. The usual comparison is between academic achievement i.e. no high school diploma, a high school diploma, and a college degree and lifetime earnings. The projection of higher lifetime earnings correlated with more education is intended as an incentive to stay in school. I think this comparison is more relevant today as it correlates unemployment rates with educational attainment. All groups experience unemployment, but which groups have the higher unemployment rates? Clearly, we can help in this time of economic turmoil.

This accountability system awards points to the college for helping students make the academic achievement gains in each achievement category. If we are using our data on student

performance, and on factors that effect student success, and if we are making instructional decisions based on that evidence, then we should expect to see annual improvement for all students who fit into one or more of the achievement categories.

This chart confirms that our students improved in every achievement point category and that's something we should all be excited about. We know that student achievement involves excellent classroom instruction but AtD research also reinforces the observation that many of the ways we support students outside of the classroom are equally important in their success. We don't expect to see uniform increases across all categories because not all students are in the same place or proceeding at the same pace.

So what does this mean? It is all about establishing a momentum for each student to allow him or her to move towards completion of a certificate or a degree. A student who starts and stops constantly, failing to complete one or more courses, is not likely to complete a degree. However, students who persist in earning even a small numbers of credits over time, are more likely to complete their program.

Earlier I noted that we awarded 365 degrees last year. These students are graduates because they established a momentum i.e., they persisted from quarter to quarter to keep their goal within reach. Does everyone who enrolls with Big Bend earn a degree? No, of course not, but they have a very good chance of moving along this educational continuum, improving themselves along the way. No one does it alone, somewhere they find some level of support to keep him or her going.

Now let me share a few stories about our students on this “Educational Continuum.” These are stories of achievement and success accomplished by the students. In several instances I note some additional support, at the right time that kept the momentum going.

**Oscar** is a welding student from Wilson Creek. He works full time doing construction and is a full time father with five children. He works 40 to 50 hours per week at his job and devotes close to 15 hours per week to class. He began college courses two years ago along with his citizenship classes. The welding program is integrated with teaching adult basic skills and English as a second language. Oscar says, “I want to become a welder. I want to be a good example for my kids so when they grow up they can go to college too!”

**Maurice** was living in his car in the Wal Mart parking lot when he was referred for assistance in November. He had attended BBCC in 05-06 and left to work full time still owing BBCC \$430 in tuition. He was laid off in September and was thinking of selling his car to get money to enroll winter quarter. But first he needed to pay off the balance owed to Big Bend before he could enroll and have financial aid reinstated. He was awarded \$430 to pay the fees.

**Maurice is enrolled in school and living in the dorms winter quarter.** He is working on a business transfer degree.

**Jake** is a **welding** student, a single dad with four-year-old daughter, carrying a full class load. He wants to provide a better life for his daughter, but is behind on day care and in danger of dropping out of the welding program. The **BBCC Foundation provided \$220 and the Associated Student Body provided \$200** to help this student pay day care in October and November. Here’s a good example of combining resources to help a student

(It should be noted that ASB funds are very limited for these purposes.)

**Amy enrolled** in our Commercial Pilot Program. She has struggled financially to complete her degree in a very expensive program. She was on the verge of completing the program, but increasing flight fees over the past two years and a husband on disability, meant that she was running out of money at the end of her training. She was carrying a 3.9 GPA. Her award was \$600 for flight fees. **She completed her training and earned her AA in Commercial Pilot.**

Sometimes money isn't the only remedy as we often find out with our Achieving the Dream and Student Support Services Students. **Here is Lori's story.** She dropped out of school at age 16 to marry her husband of 34 years.

They have raised four children and she worked full time as a middle school custodian where she discovered that she wanted to become a teacher. She enrolled with Big Bend in 2007, where among other things she was continuously challenged with math classes, and even had to repeat a few, but never gave up. She was also part of our TRiO program and made it her second home where she received tutoring and academic support which she stated: "saved her". She is currently a Heritage University student working towards a Bachelor's degree in Education. She is most excited about the fact that every one of her family has followed her back to BBCC to take classes.

**Denise** is a single parent, mother of two, who completed her GED at age 20. She enrolled at Big Bend and joined the TRiO program at age 40. She is carrying a 3.34 GPA and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa. She will soon graduate with an Associate's degree

in Business Law. She is an example for her children who now see college as their opportunity too.

**Fabi's** parents emigrated from Mexico to California when she was a young child. She married at age 17, and is the mother of three children. She earned her GED in 2004 and was the Student Speaker at that award ceremony. Two years ago she began BBCC as a part-time student. After two years she continued to work and care for her family while starting to attend school full time. She managed to juggle all these responsibilities with the assistance and advice of her TRiO mentors and has completed her pre-requisites for the Nursing Program.

A phenomenon that seems to be gaining some favor in higher education is the tendency to re-name community colleges by dropping the “community” from the name.

My previous college, Northern Nevada Community College is now Great Basin College, years ago Olympic College was known as Olympic Junior College (Olympic JC) and recently there was a bill in the legislature to make Bellevue Community College Bellevue College. All of these changes are for reasons ranging from simplicity, i.e. shortening the name, or a change of mission, such as offering baccalaureate degrees, or to seek additional prestige by suggesting that the term “Community College” somehow cheapens the experience.

Would Big Bend ever consider such a change? I don't see any reason why in this current environment, but perhaps some conditions will change that make a name like Big Bend College a better fit for what we do. In my 43 years of working in community colleges, it has always been the reminder that my institution was a “Community College” that kept me spending

time **in** my community or communities it was our mission to serve.

I worked on two campuses of Macomb County Community College in Michigan, now Macomb Community College. It currently serves 59,000 students from one county just north of Detroit. I moved on to Western Nevada Community College, now Western Nevada College, which became Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno, serving 10,000 students. From there after 19 years, I moved to Northern Nevada Community College in Elko, where we served about 2500 students, however our service district was 48,000 square miles. Depending on the reference source (US Census Bureau) Washington State covers about 67,000 square miles!

Although I had almost 30 years of service with two very large and quite excellent schools, I probably learned more about the community college movement serving the several far-flung communities in rural Nevada. Our district of only 4,600 square miles and 15 communities is very similar to that of the 10-fold larger Nevada district. Our residents realize the need for life long learning, of education beyond high school. They expect easy access to our resources, which of course as a state institution are really their resources, and by the way, at an affordable cost.

Our trustees and I believe that our mission is to serve all of our residents and visitors throughout our district. It is always a challenge, but when I return from a community visit or hear a report from one of our staff returning from an off-campus recruiting/advising trip, I am reminded that good things happen when we go off-campus. We know we have succeeded for the day or week, or even the year when we enroll someone who came to us because Big Bend was his or her "First Choice".

We know we have succeeded when after commencement one of our graduates thanks us for giving him or her a “Second Chance”. We know we have succeeded when a family takes a ceramics or a Spanish class together because they want to enjoy an opportunity for “Lifelong Learning.” And that’s why it’s important to me to keep the “Community” in Big Bend Community College.

Thank you for joining me again for this discussion of our hopes and challenges. Please be here next year for another addition of the “State of the College.”

Drive Safely now! Good Night!