

July 21, 2009

To Members of the St. Petersburg College Board of Trustees:

It has been an incredible journey. For 43 years, it has been my pleasure to serve a college that nurtured and educated me; that provided the tools to help mold an already fine and established institution into a learning center prepared to meet the needs of 21st century students. This year, we made history again when we became a state college.

St. Petersburg College has held a special place in my heart since 1956, when thanks to a \$50 scholarship, I was able to walk into the Language Arts building in St. Petersburg for my first college class (English 101). My love for this college has not wavered over the years. It has consumed my life during working hours and beyond, sometimes to the detriment of personal needs. I cannot recall a single sick day not made up. I am embarrassed to say that over the past 15 years, I have worked at least an additional 1,000 days.

You, too, have sacrificed for St. Petersburg College. Together, along with previous members of the Board of Trustees, we have much to be proud of. The following are a few of what I believe to be our most important accomplishments:

- To provide financial help to our students and faculty, and to enhance programs and degrees, we established the college Foundation which, despite the current economic climate, has assets worth tens of millions. We were one of the few community colleges in the nation to establish an active Foundation years ago.
- To meet the needs of our communities, we grew Nursing, Dental Hygiene, and other healthcare programs that now include four-year baccalaureates in a number of fields including our newest four-year degree in Health Services. Successful partnerships with area hospitals have increased the number of students we currently serve as well as the quality of our instruction. The largest R.N. to B.S.N. degree program in the state is under our umbrella.

- From two campuses in 1966, we now have 10 learning sites making a quality college education convenient for almost everyone. Our University Partnership Center is one of the largest and probably the most successful program of its kind in the nation with more than 100 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs.
- In addition, we have the largest program of online classes (eCampus with more than 25,000 enrolled each semester) in Florida, and have been recognized by the AACC Instructional Technology Council as the No. 1 Distance Learning program in the country. We have invested millions to make sure our students are exposed to the finest and latest technology and to ensure that our college operates as efficiently as possible online.
- Our public safety institute at the Allstate Center is highly respected among law enforcement officials and has been awarded millions of dollars in federal grants to provide services for the National Guard, police and fire agencies here and in other countries, and for drug enforcement, forensics and cyber security organizations. In addition, we offer the only specialty-degree tract in the country in fighting gang-related crime.
- With your backing, we have established partnerships with countries around the world – Russia, China and several nations in Latin American. These relationships have resulted in foreign study, faculty and staff exchanges and cultural experiences for many in our community. As a result, we have strengthened our college's curriculum and established strong friendships that are invaluable. The college is one of a few in the nation that operates an honorary consular office. That honor, by the U.S. State Department and the Russian government, recently was extended five years.
- Without diminishing our community college mission, we have enhanced our offerings with four-year degrees in more than 20 fields, more than any other state college. Enrollment in these programs increases annually by 15 to 20 percent. The relationship we have established over the years with state officials allows us to add degrees when there is a need without first receiving state approval.

- Since its establishment in 2002, our charter high school has consistently ranked among the top high schools in the state in all fields as well as ranking No. 1 in Pinellas County. This has been accomplished even though our high school has a lottery-based admission policy.
- In 1965, St. Petersburg Junior College merged without incident with Gibbs Junior College, which was established in the 1950s for black students. Since then, SPC has consistently promoted minority candidates to high-ranking positions and was the first community college in Florida to hire a female provost and the second to hire an African-American provost. The college has support groups for females seeking training to re-enter the workforce and for men in danger of dropping out. There are service clubs for minorities that prosper under college leadership.
- Our legacy in the arts knows no bounds. We have established two acclaimed art museums with collections worth millions. We are the hub of the arts community in St. Petersburg with the recently renovated Palladium Theater and our new Downtown Center, home to the Florida Orchestra, American Stage, and the Florida International Museum. The Music Center on our St. Petersburg/Gibbs Campus is an acoustic marvel and home to a magnificent Heissler organ and the only two Steinway Concert Grand pianos in one venue on the west coast of Florida.
- Our scholastic Phi Theta Kappa chapters are recognized for excellence each year and our St. Petersburg/Gibbs Chapter has been recognized an unprecedented five times as the most outstanding chapter in the world.

There are many more accomplishments I could mention but you are aware of many of them because you have been an important part of their implementation.

A few years ago, the world economic climate began to change and like almost all government institutions and businesses, we were affected. However, despite a substantial decline in state revenue dollars, we have been able to rebuild our campuses and form incredible partnerships that have sustained us during this difficult time. We continue to negotiate partnerships that have the potential to bring in millions of dollars and further enhance SPC. As a result, while other agencies are cutting back their services and staffs, we have a credible fund balance and cash available due to savings

accumulated over the years. I am pleased that our audits have been nearly perfect. Our college is financially strong.

And so it is with mixed feelings that I feel it is time to ask you to begin the task of choosing our next college president. While there is no doubt the next president will face obstacles still unknown, the person you choose will be stepping into a position as the leader of a college of superior reputation with an expected double-digit enrollment increase this fall. He/she will be fortunate indeed.

Warmest regards,

Carl
Carl M. Kuttler, Jr.