

Convocation: Abundance will trump adversity

While MVCC operates year-round, activities at the start of the fall semester provide a common point of momentum and renewal as employees get ready to orient and support new and returning students. In this context, President Randall VanWagoner's annual convocation remarks today centered on an awareness of ambiguous and alarming external trends, along with concentrating our collective focus on MVCC's mission, its strengths, and its central role in serving our students and community.

Dr. VanWagoner began his remarks with the assistance of the vice presidents, including new Vice President of Student Affairs Stephanie Reynolds, as they introduced the most recent hires in their reporting areas. Dr. VanWagoner shared that fully 30 percent of the College's full-time employees have been hired since 2006. With nearly a third of MVCC's employees being new hires, he noted that New Employee Orientation and related enrichment efforts are playing a larger role in promoting the mission of the college.

Much of the Convocation message encouraged employees to view the glass as half full and to focus on abundance as a way of gaining positive experiences and knowledge from areas where MVCC is performing well or making progress. As the administration and Trustees reconsider the College's budget with county officials and as news from Albany and Washington remains bleak, Dr. VanWagoner talked of the benefits of being proactive in making MVCC and the community it serves a more vibrant environment. Rather than retreating from adversity and "counting the paperclips," President VanWagoner encouraged employees to invest in and benefit from doing more of what we do well. As economic challenges persist and increase, the college is uniquely situated at a nexus where it can create positive energy and progress—if it invests in areas of greatest potential.

"We need to resist falling into a scarcity mindset as this attitude can create a downward spiral," said Dr. VanWagoner. "We need to maintain an abundant mindset which helps to create opportunity and growth as part of a positive, upward spiral. If ever there was a year for all of us to focus on doing our best job, this is it."

MVCC has pursued this "abundant mindset" through a number of efforts, including the continued development of the Diversity and Global View initiative as well as supporting faculty and staff travel to discover and share nationally recognized best practices for teaching and learning. Dr. VanWagoner used a recent trip to his hometown near Flint, Michigan, as a touchstone to interpret recent trends, looking at how that community nearly doubled its population and turned its economy around.

As a parallel, Dr. VanWagoner discussed MVCC's role on a 21-member regional economic development council that Governor Cuomo has established for the Mohawk Valley. The governor's office divided the state into 13 regions and charged each council with developing an economic plan. The



top four regions will then receive \$25 million in grants and \$15 million in tax credits to implement these economic plans. Dr. VanWagoner noted the similarities between this effort and the ways his hometown reinvented itself, emphasizing that the Mohawk Valley region can do the same by aligning regional goals and supporting an entrepreneurial spirit ... tasks that are especially well aligned with the college's mission

Some of the facts Dr. VanWagoner used to illustrate this alignment include:

- 21 percent of adults in Oneida County have a Baccalaureate degree 10 percent below the state average.
- 14 percent of Oneida County residents live in poverty 25% percent of the children in the County live in poverty, including 47% in the city of Utica.
- MVCC's continued enrollment growth has offset the flat budget by Oneida County and cuts in state aid – NYS reduced FTE funding by 24 percent in the past two years.
- MVCC now employees six trained peace officers and a dispatcher.
- More than 700 employees and students participated in the Civility Project forum this past spring.
- Dr. VanWagoner also gave a preview of a number of initiatives that will continue under the guidance of our existing Strategic Plan, with an emphasis refining our focus on student success, asking ourselves difficult questions about the extent to which we can really know how well we are doing, and informing our strategic planning processes. As part of updating the Strategic Plan, the College will host a professional storyteller from Proctor & Gamble on September 16 in an effort to facilitate a workshop for nearly 70 students and employees on how to promote student success at MVCC and "further define our quest to increase student success at MVCC."

Emphasizing an abundance mindset and a collective focus on our mission, Dr. VanWagoner closed his remarks with a reminder of the significant opportunity MVCC has: the thousands of interactions we have daily with students and community. VanWagoner's concluding remarks encouraged MVCC faculty and staff to use these interactions to build potential and make progress toward community renewal and revitalization.

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August Institute is Tuesday, August 16

Don't get left out of the 2011 August Institute workshops which promise to be more diverse and audience-tailored than ever. Don't wait as workshops will be held on Tuesday, August 16, with topics and programs suggested by YOU - the employees of MVCC.

Register now at http://www2.mvcc.edu/training/aug/ While some of the workshops are full due to limited seating, there are still others which will help both inside and outside the

August Institute is for all faculty and staff who are interested in developing their talents, learning new skills, or getting to know colleagues better. Employees in all areas of the college are invited to attend; supervisors have been encouraged to arrange their staffing and advising patterns on August 16 so that as many faculty and staff as possible can attend one or more Institute sessions while maintaining required levels of coverage.

The day begins at 8:30 p.m. with free morning refreshments in the IT lobby. Morning sessions include an "On Course Workshop" to promote engaged learning in MVCC's classrooms; a workshop on understanding diabetes; Residence Halls tour; classroom management workshop; and a refresher on imparting critical thinking skills to students. Mid-morning

sessions will cover conflict resolution; StrengthsQuest for student advisement; Yoga instruction; and a presentation on emotional intelligence – after which lunch will be served from 12:15-1 p.m. in the IT lobby. Please sign up for sessions today to RSVP for lunch.

Afternoon sessions will include the kickoff of the annual Teaching Squares project; a presentation on obtaining and using freeware; a fitness workshop; a discussion of the Anna Badkhen book "Peace Meals," and a session titled "Let's Get Physical with Classroom Design."

Plus, for the first time, August Institute will include an MVCC course offering: PE 154, "Intro to Fitness Center," a credit course on how to use the new Jorgensen Athletic and Events Center's fitness center. The center is on track to be one of the signature features of the athletic complex, and PE 154 is a required course for everyone who would like to use it – including employees. August Institute's special, employee-only sessions (registration cost: \$5) will feature two, 1:15 sessions.

Employees may choose Aug. 16 and 18 or Aug. 17 and 19. If you haven't already taken PE 154 and would like access to the new Fitness Center, contact Gary Broadhurst at (gbroadhurst@mvcc.edu) to sign up.

Reynolds appointed VP for Student Affairs

Stephanie C. Reynolds, LMSW, a veteran higher education leader and student counselor, has been appointed as MVCC's Vice President for Student Affairs. Reynolds' appointment was made by MVCC President Randall J. VanWagoner, Ph.D., and ratified June 13 by the Board of Trustees, successfully concluding a nationwide search that began in March.

Reynolds, of Syracuse, joined the college July 5, where in her new role will lead MVCC's expansive efforts to provide co-curricular experiences that help students be more successful.

"Our community and our students face greater challenges than ever, and their experiences at MVCC play a major role in shaping opportunities for success," says Dr. VanWagoner. "The need for this college to tailor its offerings to a diverse population has never been greater, and Stephanie's wealth of knowledge and experience will greatly assist MVCC in meeting and exceeding the needs of the Mohawk Valley."

Reynolds brings extensive and diverse leadership experience to MVCC. She moves to MVCC from the post of Vice President for Student Services at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, where she implemented comprehensive programs to facilitate students' academic, personal and social growth. She supervised counseling, disability services, health services, residence life, student government, student activities, judicial affairs, student engagement initiatives,



testing services, and veterans' affairs. She was previously Associate Vice President of Student Services and Director of Counseling and Advising at OCC.

"I am excited by the momentum at Mohawk Valley Community College, and I am impressed with its close-knit ties to the community we serve. I am very much looking forward to working with the accomplished Student Affairs team to create new opportunities for MVCC students to succeed in college and in life," says Reynolds.

Before her time at OCC, Reynolds was Director of Syracuse University's Partnership for Better Education, a collaborative venture involving SU, other colleges and universities, and the Syracuse City School District. She also served as Director of the Student Success Initiative in SU's Division of Student Support and Retention; Associate Director of the Academic Improvement Program; and as a counselor, therapist, and educator in the University's R.A.P.E. Center. Earlier in her career, she worked in the field of health care for organizations including SUNY Health Science Center's Pediatrics Unit and the VA Medical Center in Syracuse. She has 10 years' experience teaching as an adjunct faculty member in SUNY Empire State College's Human Services Division.

Reynolds has been published nationally in "The First Year Experience" (2005) and Community College Times (2009). Her educational background includes a BA in Counseling and Human Services from SUNY Empire State and a MSW from SU's School of Social Work. She holds New York State licensure as a Licensed Master Social Worker.

New Publication Schedule

Communitas is changing!

Starting this month, regular editions of Communitas will be published each Tuesday afternoon while MVCC is in session. This will help bring the most up-to-date news to the college community. If you have news you want considered for inclusion, e-mail the information to editor Rich Haubert (rhaubert@mvcc.edu) no later than Friday of the preceding week. As before, for the latest news and events check MVCC Today and www.mvcc.edu daily.

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