

July 16, 2009

FROM: Jim Wright, VP of Academic Affairs

TO: Ohlone Faculty and Administrators [Deans, Please forward to Adjunct Faculty]

This is a follow up to my May 27 and June 11 emails about our enrollment reduction plans for the coming year in response to the state budget crisis (those messages, and this one, can be reviewed on the Academic Affairs website at: <http://www.ohlone.edu/org/academicaffairs/enrollmentreduction.html>).

Our summer enrollments have come in pretty much right on target at approximately 890 FTES. This represents a 22% planned decrease from last summer. The Deans have also worked hard to reduce the fall schedule by 105 sections, representing approximately 390 potential FTES. I want to commend the Deans and the affected departments for their hard work on this. It is very difficult to reduce a schedule this much after registration has begun.

We had hoped this level of cut for fall would allow for less of a cut next spring (I was hoping only 70 or so sections). However, we project the state will support even less enrollment for 2009-10 than previously thought. This means the cut for next spring will need to be approximately the same as that for this fall (105-110 sections). The Deans are working on this now with the departments. And it continues to be clear that next summer will be even smaller than this summer.

We will be monitoring enrollments for fall with an eye to reducing more, if possible, to lessen the impact on spring. But the classes are rapidly filling so there may not be much more to reduce. After four or five years of trying to grow enrollment it seems a bit bizarre to be hoping for less enrollment – but ‘bizarre’ seems to be an operative term when discussing the machinations of state budgeting.

As I mentioned in my last message, our first priority is to cause as little harm to students as possible and protect our core mission. But make no mistake about it, this crisis is going to shrink access to community college classes and students will be hurt across the state. In addition to colleges getting less money for classes, student fees will very likely be increased (current estimate is from \$20 to \$26 per unit) and possibly increased retroactively for students who have already registered for this fall! At the same time, UC and CSU are capping enrollment as well. Bottom line: access to higher education will decrease across the board - it seems there is no way to avoid that.

Please stay abreast of the updates Dr. Browning is posting to her website about the budget crisis in general and how Ohlone is working to meet the challenges, challenges that go beyond decreasing enrollment.

We are all hard wired to meet student needs. Cutting classes and services, including asking faculty not to accept enrollment beyond course caps, goes against our basic make up as community college educators. We are trying to implement these reductions in a rational manner, in what is essentially an irrational environment. I am confident the faculty at Ohlone are well aware of the situation and I count on your support, patience and understanding as we deal with this. And I do want to repeat one more thing I stated in my last message:

“...we will get through this and things will get better. But it is going to be painful. I know the Ohlone Community will work together to meet this challenge. In my capacity I will do everything I can to find that elusive balance between over- and under-reaction.”

In continuing appreciation, jim