

November 4, 2009

“It’s the most sophisticated teaching tool I’ve seen in my professional career,” said Richmond Community College Public Services Technology Chair John Robich. He and Medical Assisting Technology Chair Renea Craven presented examples of their newly developed Instructor’s Course Requirements (ICR) document to the Board of Trustees Tuesday night.

Currently all RCC course syllabi are available on the RCC webpage and provides information on prerequisites, textbooks, student learning outcomes, and college policies. For the ICRs, instructors developed standardized templates for their delivery methods for each outcome and their expectations for students. Students receive both the course syllabus and ICR on the first day of class.

For a sociology course, Robich’s teaching methods include the usual lecture, research papers, and exams. The ICR explains how students are expected to create outlines on specific topics, complete textbook assignments, answer case study questions, and formulate hypotheses for evaluation.

Craven said the project was well worth her time since her program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).

“First, the ICR shows students we’re well organized and helps them become better organized. Second, specific skills are required by CAAHEP, and the ICR provides documentation that we are meeting those requirements,” she said.

Vice President for Instruction Johnnie Simpson said this is the second part of a three-year project to ultimately have course syllabi, ICRs, and specific program and general education outcomes available.

“This is an educationally and structurally sound tool that lets students know exactly what is expected of them. While we may have 10 instructors teaching the same English course, academic freedom allows them to teach each outcome using their personal styles of instruction. This process provides an ongoing evaluation of an instructor’s teaching methods and student learning outcomes,” she said.

The next step in the process is to develop program outcomes that allow students to look at all of the information and determine whether a course or program is the right choice for them.

Simpson provided information on the success of the Richmond and Scotland Early College High Schools on campus. According to statistics for the 2008-2009 academic year, students in both high schools scored the highest on the end-of-course exams for their respective counties. Civics and history instructor Amber Watkins received the Scotland County Schools’ Teacher of the Year Award. Over 100 students took college-level courses during spring semester. This is the third year of the program.

Vice President for Continuing Education Richard Garrett updated the Board on the workforce and economic development efforts of his department. Nearly 2000 people in Scotland and Richmond Counties have taken the WorkKeys test. Almost 300 have attended KeyTrain classes to prepare for the test. The WorkKeys test assesses a person’s skill levels in three areas and awards levels of certification that lead to a Career Readiness Certificate, which is become a tool employers use when hiring or promoting employees. Garrett said funding is becoming available to assist individuals with the cost of the tests.

The JobsNow Program has 44 students enrolled and is opening courses in catering, carpentry, plumbing, and electrical wiring this month. This program provides a student skills training for employment in six months or less.

The Growing America Through Entrepreneurship Grant is operating in conjunction with local ESC JobLink Centers to help dislocated workers with ideas for new business start-ups. Forty-nine clients have investigated the program and three new businesses have begun with assistance from the program.

RCC President Dr. Sharon Morrissey informed the Board their request to Governor Beverly Perdue to exempt community colleges from the five percent budget reversion resulted in reducing the reversion to three percent. All 58 boards of trustees united in the request since enrollment growth increases during economic downturns and a reduced budget makes it difficult to serve students effectively. While RCC experienced a 10 percent enrollment growth in the fall, many community colleges saw an increase of 30 to 35 percent. RCC expects another record enrollment for spring semester as more plant closings bring people into the classroom to learn new skills.