

Please join me in thanking once again Dr. Anderes and Dr. Glasper for their message and challenge to expand degree completion opportunities for all Arizonans. Before I begin my Convocation message, there are several recognitions to be made.

I am pleased today to officially welcome our newest member of the College Leadership team – Dr. Sandra Miller Holst, vice president of student affairs. Sandra comes to PVCC well prepared for her role – six years as Vice President and Dean at SUNY Dutchess Community College, seven years as a Senior Director at the College Board – and prior to that, 25 years in various higher education leadership roles. Welcome Sandra. Let me also officially welcome our new team in Institutional Research and Effectiveness – Director John Snelling and Coordinator of Institutional Effectiveness Brandon Mesanko. Finally, although he has been with us for over six months and working very hard from day one, the last “new” member of the President’s Leadership Team – Mr. Tony Asti, interim vice president of administrative services.

I would also like to thank Dr. Shirley Green for her service as interim vice president. Those of us who have served in an interim role, know how challenging it can be. Dr. Green provided leadership to further institutionalize our recruitment efforts, lead the development and delivery of the Early College program, and oversaw the initiation of the Kranitz Student Center renovation and expansion. Please join me in thanking Shirley.

It is a personal privilege to thank and acknowledge the rest of the team that I work with on a daily basis: Mary Lou, Paul, Denise, and Julia. Would all of the President’s Leadership Team please stand and be recognized – I believe they represent the hardest working leadership team in the District.

Let me also extend my thanks to our policy group leadership for their high expectations for shared governance – Dan Donahue, Faculty Senate President, Norma Chandler, MAT President, and Elizabeth Buckton, PSA President. Finally, thank you Alexis Sharif for your daily support and patience without which the Office of the President would not function.

With those recognitions complete - now it is time to Power On! Yes Power On – our culture of student learning and success. Power On - the inspiration for active

and meaningful student engagement and involvement. Power On – PVCC’s Innovative spirit (let’s not forget that 3 out of the last 10 MCCD Innovation of the Year Awards are in our trophy cabinet) Power On - Puma Pride!

Power On is this year’s tag line to our 2011 – 2012 theme - **Student Learning/Success: A Completion Agenda for ALL Students**. This theme connects two key elements – student goal attainment at PVCC – (certificate completion, degree completion, successful university transfer or simply successful course completion) and the aspiration to create a climate, where when students chose to engage and become partners in the learning process, that there will be success for ALL students. Our goal is to close equity gaps that exist within student academic achievement. This year we will establish college wide student success and completion goals. Additionally, we are in the process of determining where the greatest gaps exist in terms of student academic achievement and developing strategies to close those gaps.

This morning I will tie this theme to my three driving goals and directions: Student Success, Bringing Learning Alive, and Expanding our Community of Learners by touching on a number of key activities. A complete summary of the College’s major activities for 2011 -2012 aligned with our six planning objectives will be posted online soon.

The formula is simple – start with making explicit to students a culture of **student learning and success**. This message needs to be delivered with the first contact during the recruitment process; it needs to be made explicit during advising, during new student orientation, the first day of class, in the library, on the athletic fields, and in the computer commons. We need to help our students understand, appreciate and act on their responsibility to be active and engaged participants in the learning process. Drs. Miller Holst and Green will be working hard this year to make this message more clear to our students; to make it visible on campus and to continue to integrate this culture in all of the programs that support student success. A first step can be as simple as handing out a copy of “Get a Grip” brochure the first day of class and spending a few minutes with students talking about success strategies.

This year, for the first time, PVCC will have specific student success performance measures aligned with our six planning objectives. We will now be able to track our annual improvement.

Secondly, I believe that much joy in our work comes from **Bringing Learning Alive**. As we all know – the single biggest indicator of overall student success is the degree to which they are actively engaged in educationally purposeful activities – time on task - involved in an inspired teaching and learning relationship with faculty AND engaged in out of class co-curricular activities. Bringing Learning Alive is what makes PVCC extraordinary. Last spring during our Honors reception, I heard from students about Tony Craig’s high expectations in his math classes, and how Satinder Bains brings chemistry alive. I’ve seen firsthand the students in Bob Dotterer’s paramedic program fully engaged. I’ve also witnessed the work of Ryan Martin and Helice Agria with team building done on our low ropes course. Yes PVCC faculty and staff bring learning alive!

During 2011- 2012, Drs. Mosley and Digianfillippo will continue to work with faculty to further our quest to assess student learning outcomes and make meaningful improvement. I congratulate the progress demonstrated by the Academic Assessment Team led by Christine Tabone and Nancy Kolakowsky as well as the work of the Out of Class assessment team.

Finally – student success, learning and degree completion are enhanced as we **Expand our Community of Learners**. Over the last several years we have successfully leveraged our capital bond projects with the new Life Sciences building, our Black Mountain site, and Q Building to expand access to quality teaching and learning spaces.

This year we will continue with our bond projects with the final planning for the KSC expansion and renovation – take a moment to look at the proposed new “front door” to the college where students will receive student services in a one-stop fashion and we will be afforded a new large conference room to host student and community events.

There’s more – a ground breaking for our newest building on campus – the Health Science Facility; including a nursing simulation laboratory. This project is a result of Denise Digianfillipo and Dan Donahue collective vision to position this new building to expand curricular innovation linking nursing with EMT/paramedic programs. This is a model effort. I am confident that nursing student persistence and success will be enhanced with this new facility. Lastly the preliminary planning for phase II construction at Black Mountain will also begin this fall.

All of these projects are developed with two key questions – how will this facility improve student learning and success and how will these facilities increase student engagement and connection to PVCC?

This year I look forward to continuing last year's dramatic increase in the number of community members coming on to our campus – as demonstrated by the Fine and Performing Arts program's growth in attendance at productions; Athletic events continued buzz in the community and Community Relations' hosted forums. Already this summer, we've hosted a forum for the candidates for Phoenix City Council District 2 election and just last week, Norma Chandler and Career Services co-sponsored with Congress member Qualye's office, a Career Fair that attracted over 2,500 community members. All of these activities bring greater visibility and recognition for PVCC.

Before I finish this morning, I also want to Power On and publically commit to moving the College's Diversity and Inclusion plan forward beyond a draft that has taken only marginal traction over the last several years. Student learning, success and completion are at the heart of this plan and it is critically important that this plan becomes part of all of our daily work. We will address in a genuine and sustainable fashion how Diversity and Inclusion increases student learning and positively impacts the campus culture for students, faculty and staff. The learning week session co-sponsored by myself and the Diversity and Inclusion team will address this in a meaningful way.

So in 2011 – 2012 together let's Power On student learning, success, and degree completion. Let's harness the energy exhibited by Richard Morales and his passion for students succeeding in developmental education. Let's harness the energy exhibited by Patri Mays, Renee Cornell, Michele Marion and Diane Chapman as they pilot an amazing new Learning Community using iPads with students and open educational resources. Power On. Let's harness the energy of Lori Anonson as she continues to build a model dietetics tech program.

Let me conclude with some personal observations. This summer the overriding theme of my non-work readings dwelled on profound courage, overcoming adversity, and deep personal reflection. My readings included: *My Stroke of Insight: A Brain Scientist's Personal Journey* by Jill Taylor, *Beyond the Rain of Gold* by Victor Villa Senior, and *Unbroken*, by Laura Hillenbrand. Taylor wrote from a very personal point of view about her recovery from a debilitating stroke, Villa Senior wrote about his unbridled determination to get his epic novel *The Rain of Gold* about his family's immigration story published. Finally Hillenbrand

chronicled the survival of three World War II pilots who crashed in the Pacific; then cast adrift for over 40 days followed by eighteen months of internment in Japanese prison camps. The story lines were extreme - in each case - the authors wrote of overcoming daunting odds not only to survive but to ultimately flourish and go on to make significant contributions for the good of society.

So as we Power On with students next week, take the time to reflect on and acknowledge our students' courage to learn. Demonstrate empathy and understanding of the barriers and adversity that many of our students overcome. Finally help students commit to the deep personal reflection often required to “get” what it takes to be a successful and committed student.

Let me end today, asking you to reflect on the Power of Words – our words as we communicate with each other and our words to students, many of whom are new to college. Watch this brief video to see how the power of words can be transforming.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzgzim5m7oU&feature=youtube_gdata_player

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for the work you do to create student success, bring learning live and to expand our community of learners.