

From the desk of Neeta Sane



There has never been a more important time for community colleges in our country's history than now. Community colleges illustrate what is working and what needs to evolve in higher education. At HCC, we continue to redefine what a community college can be for our students, local business and for our community.

HCC offers affordable and convenient academic courses and career and technology programs that train the highly-skilled, in-demand workforce required by today's changing economic markets. As a community college serving the greater Houston area, HCC provides students with the higher education that they otherwise may not have access to.

This past year HCC was selected as an Achieving the Dream Leader College and is one of only 15 colleges nationwide to be awarded a Developmental Education Initiative Grant by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, MDC, and the Lumina Foundation for Education. The grant will allow HCC to expand its programs to students who need assistance.

Community colleges serve a greater portion of minority, lower-income and at-risk populations than do their four-year counterparts. In this uncertain economy HCC is stepping up to the plate to meet the needs of those communities. It is my objective to spearhead educational outreach programs to low-income and underserved populations in my capacity as a member of the Diversity Committee for the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), as the Chair for the Asian Pacific Islander Native American Trustees Association (APINATA; a sister organization of ACCT) and as recipient of the 2009 DiversityFirst Award from the Texas Diversity Council.

Because of our associations with national organizations such as the ACCT and APINATA, HCC is in a better position to network and bring innovative pro-

grams from other institutions around the nation to the Houston area. The college is able to leverage its national position to the advantage of our learning communities.

It is important to look at the best practices and initiatives being developed on a national level and tailor them to meet the needs of our community and our students as we improve student support services for minority students. One way HCC is doing this is by improving the educational environment for our students through new state-of-the-art facilities. HCC dedicated the new Stafford Campus Learning Hub in September. The 120,000-square-foot addition to the Stafford Campus provides 35 new classrooms and labs for 3,300 students.

It is HCC's goal to actively recruit not only a diverse student body, but diverse faculty, staff and administration to HCC. We know that there is a world of opportunity for our students, and we are proud to be able to help them broaden their minds through education and reach for their dreams.




Jonathan Arambula reads course materials on his Kindle for Philosophy 2306.



Armando Moreno, Emily Jackson and Miguez Acevedo study Intro to Ethics with their Kindles.



Local dignitaries and HCC officials cut the ribbon to dedicate the new Southwest College Stafford Campus Learning Hub.

Pilot Program for Paperless Classroom

HCC Southwest launched a pilot program this fall to explore the value of an electronic reader device in place of traditional college textbooks. The project, financed through HCC Chancellor Mary Spangler's Innovative Fund Program, features the Amazon Kindle®, and will determine if these devices are the future of classrooms across America.

"We are very excited about having this cutting edge technology in the hands of our students, said Dr. Doug Rowlett, HCC-SW English professor and head of the project.

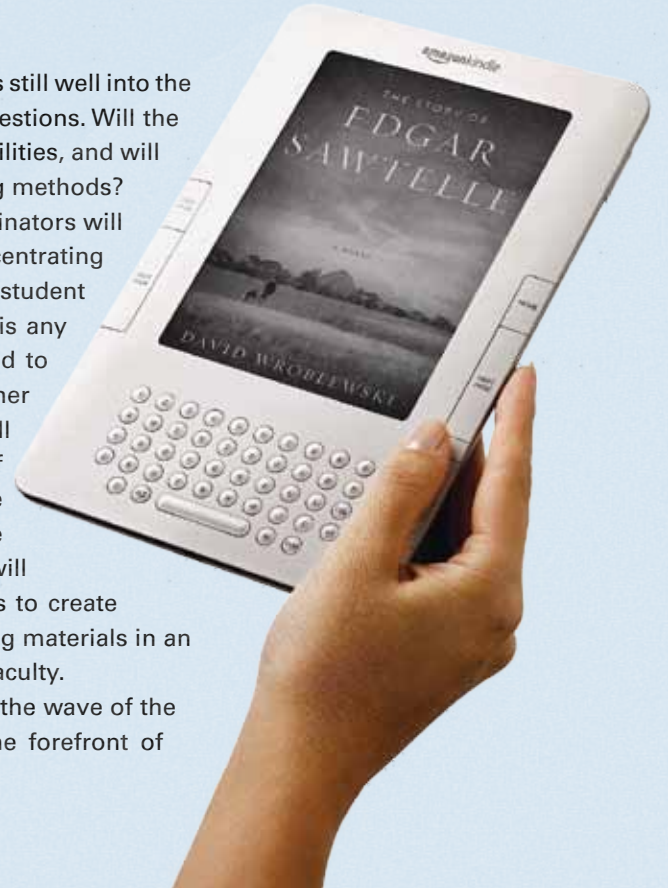
The idea evolved from a discussion and debate over two key issues: the cost of textbooks and maintaining the quality and accessibility of texts without restricting student mobility. eBooks and eBook readers quickly became the proposed solution to these problems.

The program has several key components. One factor is mobility and the convenience of having hundreds of textbook titles and research materials at your fingertips. Another factor is expense, with the rising cost of college textbooks students now have another inexpensive option. Its accessibility is also an advantage. Students will no longer have to wait in long lines at bookstores or search for online bargains. Everything is purchased online with the click of a mouse and books are downloaded in a matter of minutes.

While the reality of a paperless classroom is still well into the future, this program hopes to answer two questions. Will the device deter or enhance student's learning abilities, and will it encourage or discourage traditional reading methods?

At the end of the semester, program coordinators will conduct an assessment of the program, concentrating on three key factors. The first is to measure student learning and retention to determine if there is any clear benefit to paperless classes as opposed to traditional classes. Secondly, to gauge whether eBooks and eBook readers function well in the modern classroom and recognize if they offer a cost-effective friendly substitute for traditional textbooks. And thirdly, if the project demonstrates its viability, the team will work with HCC and other institutions' efforts to create the beginnings of digital teaching and learning materials in an eBook format accessible to all students and faculty.

Houston Community College understands the wave of the future and strives to continuously be on the forefront of technological advances.



Major Achievements Highlight State of the College Address

While this past year was a year of challenges for Houston Community College, its students, faculty, staff and community, it was also a year of great progress. HCC's Board of Trustees and chancellor led the college closer to its vision as the most relevant community college in the country, an opportunity institution that is essential to our community's future success.

At the annual State of the College Address, HCC Chancellor Mary S. Spangler outlined the college's achievements and initiatives. In a year when community colleges have become the focal point of our nation's education objectives, HCC has stepped into the spotlight.

In October, HCC received a \$3.5 million grant from the Department of Energy, one of nine colleges across the country. The grant is to establish a network of edu-

cational, industry and state partners to ensure the availability and effectiveness of solar installation training throughout the region.

HCC was one of eleven colleges nation-wide to share in a \$3.3 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and MDC, Inc. The grant, given to HCC in June, will be used to expand groundbreaking remedial education programs that promise to boost the college completion rates of low-income and minority students.

The White House invited HCC to be one of a select group of higher education institutions to host an event for its national initiative on better understanding, reaching and also educating the Hispanic community. HCC was the only community college invited by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to participate in an education policy discussion at the State Department.

The HCC Board commissioned an energy audit of the college's 38 buildings to reduce utility costs. The Board identified 28 projects that will save HCC approximately \$1 million annually for each of the next 15 years. HCC is now implementing those audit recommendations and transforming HCC into a greener learning and working environment.

And HCC reached a milestone when our enrollment increased from 55,000 to 63,000 last spring. It was an increase of 14.5 percent in two years and the highest in HCC's history. This fall, HCC is poised to reach 70,000 students.

These are just the highlights of this year's achievements. Locally driven, HCC continues to have a profound effect on our community and is pushing beyond into the global market place.



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HCC seeks to provide equal educational opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability. This policy extends to employment, admissions, and all programs and activities supported by the College. The information in this publication will be made available in large print, taped or computer-based format upon request.



HIGHLIGHTS

Houston Community College Report to the Community

HCC TV Airs Landmark Series



Host Rick Gillis and Dr. Sabrina Lewis, Interim Director of Veteran Affairs, on the set during the taping of HCC Partners for Jobs: Retrain, Reinvent and Re-enter.

Many people in the Houston area who are out of work, are thinking about a new career or are looking to advance in their current career. In response to current educational demands, Houston Community College kicked off a dynamic education awareness campaign last summer with HCC Partners for Jobs. The information juggernaut brings together leading Houston-area employers and organizations in a grass-roots effort to help Houstonians get the training and job opportunities they need.

With greater dependence on post-secondary education and workforce training, especially in a challenging economic environment, there is an increased need for HCC's career training programs. About 80 percent of today's new jobs require education or training beyond high school, and those jobs represent the fastest-growing and highest-paying segments of the new economy. HCC provides training opportunities in over 70 career programs to more than 100,000 area students each year.

As part of the information campaign, HCCTV aired its landmark series – HCC Partners for Jobs: Retrain, Reinvent, Re-enter. The series exposed viewers to HCC's vast array of workforce training programs. For five days, HCCTV showed Houston-area residents new career options and new training programs – what you need to know to retrain for new job opportunities, how to reinvent yourself professionally and how to re-enter the job market.

HCC's partners who have worked with the college to develop this outstanding campaign are Mitton Media, Comcast Cable, the City of Houston, the Greater Houston Partnership, the Houston Chronicle, HoustonJOBS.com, HR Houston, Jobs Ministry Southwest, Workforce Solutions and Rick Gillis.

The campaign has had a significant impact, with more than half a million page views on the campaign's microsite and a 14 percent increase in enrollment in HCC's workforce program. A great job is only an education away and more information can be found online at HCCPartnersForJobs.org.

HCCPARTNERSFORJOBS.ORG

HCC's Financial & Operational Excellence

HCC stewardship of its financial and operational responsibilities is producing demonstrable effects. Through HCC Chancellor Mary S. Spangler's cost-saving initiative, HCC reduced operating costs over the last two years by \$4 million and added revenue, including that from competitive grants, in excess of \$14 million, all derived without additional taxes, tuitions or fees. The HCC Board of Trustees returned these savings to taxpayers in the form of reduced taxes for the fourth year in a row, an increased household exemption for seniors of 11 percent and dual credit waivers to 7,400 high school students. HCC's fiscal responsibility also

resulted in a bond rating upgrade for the district by Standard and Poors from AA to AA+.

HCC is educating 20 percent more students today than it did two years ago and is doing so with a reduced tax rate without compromising services and the quality of education to its students. The college works hard to keep student tuition constant by increasing efficiencies and maximizing taxpayer dollars. HCC is proud of its financial and operational excellence.

upcoming events

December

Missouri City SnowFest
Saturday, December 12, 2009
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Community Park
1700 Glenn Lakes, Missouri City, Texas

December

Wonderland in Westchase
Thursday, December 17, 2009
5:30 -8:30 pm
Quillian Recreation Center
3663 Westcenter Drive
Houston, Texas

