Convocation Address, Spring 2011
David Wain Coon, Ed.D., Superintendent/President

My name is Dr. David Wain Coon and as your new Superintendent/President it is a truly great pleasure and honor for me to welcome all of you to the start of the spring 2011 semester. Beginning my tenure last December toward the end of the fall semester didn’t allow much time for introductions before the winter break. Nonetheless, I do see a number of familiar faces in the audience today and I see many more new ones that I hope to get to know better in the months ahead. I am very grateful for the warm welcome that I have received from the college and from the community at large since I arrived.

I’d like to take a moment and introduce new colleagues and announce several staff changes. Angelina Duarte is our new Interim Vice President of Student Learning. Unfortunately, she could not join us today due to a previous commitment. We are very fortunate to have her fill in while we begin the search for a permanent replacement for Nick Chang. There are several other new college members who have joined us since last fall. Maridel Barr is the new Administrative Assistant to the Director of Modernization; Raul Botello is currently serving as our Interim Chief of Police replacing former Chief Charles Lacy; Padmawathy Helton is the Interim Kentfield Children’s Center Site Supervisor; Heather Holliday, who formerly worked in the modernization office, was recently hired as Administrative Assistant to Maintenance and Operations replacing Barbara St. John; Laura McCarty is our new Director of Modernization replacing V-Anne Chernock; Dong Nguyen, formerly of OIM, is now an Administrative Systems Analyst in the IT Department; Shannon Timpane is the new Health Services Assistant; and Dan Widger is serving as our acting Police Sergeant. Welcome to all of our newest college members.

One of my immediate goals has been to familiarize myself with the Kentfield and Indian Valley Campuses and meet faculty, staff, and students. Since arriving, I’ve visited several offices, attended committee meetings, and presided over events including the grand opening of the new College of Marin Main Building at the Indian Valley Campus. As I have made my way around both campuses I have been struck by their natural beauty and am impressed by the progress to date of our modernization program.

Faculty and staff have been working hard over the break to make sure that classrooms and offices in the New Fine Arts Building and Indian Valley Campus New Main Building are open in time for the start of the spring semester. I’d like to thank all of the Fine Arts and Indian Valley Campus faculty and staff for their patience and perseverance throughout the planning, building, and moving in process. In addition, I would like to thank the IT and Maintenance and Operations staff for their extra efforts in assisting with the moves and ensuring a smooth transition. And finally a special thanks to our modernization team and Swinerton Management for shepherding the projects through completion.

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As with any move, there will no doubt be a few glitches along the way, but everyone has been working very hard to ensure that our students will have access to these new, state-of-the-art learning facilities.

The physical landscape at the college is continuing to change. We have now completed four major facilities projects, including the Diamond PE Center, the Transportation Technology Complex, the new Main Building at IVC, and the Fine Arts Building. The Science, Math, and Central Plant Complex is now underway and the modernization of the Performing Arts building will begin soon. Our new Director of Modernization Laura McCarty will give us an update later this morning about where we are presently with the modernization program and highlight some of the milestones that we have achieved.

Over the past few weeks, I’ve spent a number of hours in a variety of on- and off-campus meetings—listening, observing, and evaluating.

I have had many conversations since I arrived and have especially appreciated the candid discussions with faculty, staff, and students. I have also attended several community events and met with external groups in order to gain a preliminary perspective about the college from our community’s point of view. Overall, I am impressed with the high regard that much of the community has for College of Marin, for the high quality programs and services, and especially for the dedicated and talented faculty and staff. Many of those that I have met in the community have either attended College of Marin as a student; know family or friends who have attended; or have attended one of our celebrated drama, dance, or music performances. Through my interactions with members of the college community and the community at large, I have learned more about College of Marin and its longstanding tradition in the community, and better appreciate how students and alumni have been positively touched by the important work of our faculty and staff.

In addition, I’m starting to understand some of the challenges that we face. Over the past two years the college has had to implement budget reductions that have impacted several of our categorical programs, credit classes, and programs across the board. Just yesterday I had breakfast with presidents of several San Francisco Bay Area colleges and universities, including San Francisco State University President Robert Corrigan, Sonoma State President Ruben Armiñana, and Dominican University President Joe Fink, and we all concurred that this is one of the most challenging financial times in the history of higher education in California.

With the federal, state, and local budget picture in crisis, the current economic downturn will continue to put pressure on our budgets here at the college. Later this morning, Vice President Al Harrison will speak in more detail about the college’s current fiscal health and provide highlights of the Governor’s proposed budget.

Also on the immediate horizon is our response to ACCJC/WASC’s recommendations. Last August the college submitted its comprehensive Institutional Self Study Report for the Reaffirmation of Accreditation and during the week of Oct. 25 the Comprehensive Evaluation Visiting Team presented its informal report. On Jan. 11 the Commission took action on the visiting team’s report. A formal report from the Commission is expected in early February. The visiting team’s preliminary report highlighted several commendations and also identified recommendations. Clearly, addressing WASC’s recommendations will be one of our top priorities this next year.

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Among the work ahead of us is fully implementing our Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Even while the college has made significant progress on SLO’s thanks to the good work of faculty and staff, there is much more to be done. Here today to talk with us more about SLOs is Academic Senate President Sara McKinnon. SLOs and WASC’s recommendations will become part of the college’s work plan this year along with other priorities in our strategic plan. The full WASC report will be made available in the weeks ahead and I am confident that together we will address all of the recommendations in a thoughtful and deliberate manner.

As far as my own personal work-plan, including goals and priorities, I will be retreating with the Board of Trustees next week on Jan. 28 to discuss their goals and expectations of me in my role as superintendent/president for the next year. Although I haven’t yet had time to discuss my annual goals with the Board, there are some important issues needing my immediate attention, including unresolved labor agreements.

At my previous district I enjoyed favorable relations with both collective bargaining units. Although I am walking into the 11th hour of this difficult and unfortunate situation, I am committed to gaining a full understanding and appreciation of the issues at hand and to the best of my ability move us toward contract resolution.

Some of the other immediate challenges that I have been working with the Board and staff to address are those associated with the modernization program. Having experienced bond measures at other districts, I know that it’s not uncommon for there to be modifications, changes, and delays along the way. At the recent Board meeting a plan was discussed to address some of the issues, including a new track, childcare center, improvements to existing buildings, and a new academic center using bond savings from projects that have been completed at lower costs than originally projected and from the Measure C Bond reserves. After meeting with the Board next week, I look forward to sharing my additional objectives with the college community.

In my effort to learn more about College of Marin I have been working with our Director of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness Dr. Chialin Hsieh, who has been doing fantastic work in bringing to light through data analysis some impressive information about the college and student success.

Also, it is important to keep in mind that one of WASC’s recommendations is for the college to strengthen the role of research through institutional dialogue and analysis of data. Dr. Hsieh has led the way in the development of a new technology tool that will be available to all faculty and staff who are interested in learning more about the college. Dr. Hsieh’s new data dashboard will provide greater transparency on how effective we are as an institution, and it will be a vital tool for institutional planning.

And now I would like thank you all for coming here today. I look forward to meeting many of you in person in the upcoming weeks and am planning to host a series of open forums so that we may become better acquainted.

Thank you for your good work on behalf of our students.
Open Forum with COM Superintendent/President
A series of open forums will be held starting on Wednesday, Feb. 2, at 3 p.m. in the Student Services Building, Deedy Lounge. Faculty, staff, and students are invited to bring their questions and ideas to this one hour informal discussion with College of Marin’s Superintendent/President Dr. David Wain Coon.

Convocation Budget Presentation:
A. J. Harrison II, Vice President of Operations
The recent budget news from the California Governor’s office is full of doom and gloom and the local budget outlook is nothing to cheer about.

The economy in general is in bad shape. The federal government is printing money while California continues to borrow funds. College of Marin has had to make budget adjustments.

The district’s initial fiscal year 2010/11 budget had projected a structural $1.2 million deficit. The deficit was addressed by eliminating some vacant positions, reducing non-mandated units, reducing summer school by about 50 percent, reducing non-instructional discretionary budgets by 5 percent adding to the 10 percent reductions of a few years ago, and moving a number of noncredit courses to our fee-based program.

The college’s current budget situation includes revenues slightly higher than anticipated from increased enrollment and nonresident tuition, but still lower than the same period last year. Expenditures are $643,000 higher than the same period last year and salaries also are $877,000 more, offset by less spending in some areas, part-time faculty, and overload units.

Looking forward, the district may end with a deficit for fiscal year 2010/11 if controllable costs are not contained resulting in smaller reserves.

Fiscal Year 2011/12 Budget: Structural Deficit

Revenue breakdown:
- 89% Local property taxes
- 4% Enrollment fees
- 4% State revenue
- 3% Local revenue

College of Marin is a basic aid district relying primarily on local property taxes for revenues. The inflation factor for the secured tax base is 1.00753, which is an increase of .753 percent over fiscal year 2010/11. This is an approximate increase in secured taxes of $660,000. This potential revenue increase will be offset by reductions in supplemental, unsecured, and prior year taxes.

The state budget will also have a negative impact primarily on categorical programs and enrollment fees. A funding reduction of $400 million for California community colleges has been proposed by the governor along with a fee increase from $26 to $36 per unit. The bad news is that the proposed $400 million reduction assumes an extension in tax revenues and if the tax extensions are not passed, then the reduction could turn in to reduction of $800 million.

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Expenditure breakdown:
- 85% Local property taxes
- 4% Utilities
- 4% Operating expenses
- 3% Capital outlay/other outgo

Expenditures included step and column increases of about $300,000 annually and doesn’t take into consideration salary increases, either on- or off-schedule. The cost of health benefits is expected to continue rising. Last year benefit costs went up 16 percent. Assuming a blended rate increase next year of 9 percent, the cost of health benefits will increase by about $482,000 next year. PERS is also projected to increase by 13.7 percent next year costing an additional $237,000. These costs will add another $1 million in expenses and the district cannot continue to operate with this imbalance. The structural deficit will need to be a consideration in future budget planning.

Convocation Measure C Modernization Update:
Laura McCarty, Director of Modernization

There are currently two new academic buildings open—the New Main Building at IVC and the Fine Arts building at Kentfield. Because of this, construction zones and paths of travel will change. You will notice that the construction fencing is in the process of being removed. At IVC the final paving of Ignacio Boulevard will be complete within two weeks, weather permitting. To assist students, faculty, and staff in finding their way, temporary signage will be installed throughout both campuses.

Building Name Changes
Fine Arts (FA) is the name of the new arts building. The Fine Arts building houses the visual art programs including: painting, drawing, sculpting, ceramics, art history and architecture, fiber and print, jewelry, wood, and metal studios.

Performing Arts (PA) refers to the former Fine Arts building which has been renamed the Performing Arts building. It will house drama and music. The PA building will undergo its own modernization beginning summer 2011. The space in that building that was formerly the visual arts studios has been largely relocated with the exception of PA 120, 151 and 153. Dance will remain in MS-3 through fall 2012. Room location maps will be available in FA 101.

Parking Lot Changes
At the Kentfield Campus, Circle Drive will open for access and parking. It will remain a staff-only lot with 44 spaces, including 4 ADA spaces. You can still expect to see some contractor lay-down areas adjacent to Circle Drive but they will not interfere with parking.

At IVC, Parking Lots 1 and 2 are now open.

Please note that the above changes are for spring semester 2011 ONLY. Summer 2011 will have subsequent changes.
COM Board of Trustees Personnel Actions
Appointment of Classified Personnel
- **Maridel Barr** has accepted the position of Administrative Assistant to the Director of Modernization effective Jan. 13, 2011.
- **Dong Nguyen** has accepted the position of Administrative Systems Analyst effective Jan. 1, 2011.

Resignation of Classified Personnel
- Administrative Assistant to the Math and Sciences Department **Carson Riutta** has submitted her letter of resignation effective close of business Jan. 20, 2011.
- DSPS E-Text Specialist **Shiloh Cokinos** has submitted his letter of resignation effective Jan. 7, 2011.

Sabbatical Leave Recommendations from the Board of Trustees
- **Becky Brown**: 1 year split—fall 2011 and fall 2012 for independent study or research
- **Tara Flandreau**: 1 year—fall 2011 and spring 2012 for independent study or research
- **John Jacob**: 1 year—fall 2011 and spring 2012 for independent study or research
- **Derek Wilson**: 1 year split—fall 2011 and fall 2012 for independent study including enrolling in university level classes.

Kudos
College of Marin Social Sciences and Contemporary Affairs Professor **Walter Turner** was honored at this year’s first Ubuntu Community Awards for his work on KPFA’s *Africa Today* at an awards dinner held Jan. 22 at the Waterfront Hotel at Jack London Square in Oakland. Ubuntu, as explained by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, means the essence of being human, and particularly the inability to exist as a human being in isolation; it is about our interconnectedness. Professor Turner currently serves as the chairperson of the College of Marin Social Sciences Department. He has developed courses on Globalization, the Middle East, Africa, and African American History. Turner is a co-founder of the College of Marin Mentoring Project. He is the President of the Board of Directors of the San Francisco based human rights organization Global Exchange and is on the Board of Directors of Freedom Archives. For his international work and activism he has been awarded the Martin Luther King Humanitarian Award, the Golden Bell Award, and has been selected as a National Faculty Member of the Year.

Mileage Reimbursement Rate
Effective Jan. 1, 2011, the mileage reimbursement rate is 51 cents per mile.
Upcoming Events

Spring Welcome Week 2011
College of Marin will host its Spring 2011 Welcome Week Jan. 24, 25, 26, and 27 in the Learning Resources Center quad area, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Below is a list of some the many vendors that will be at the Kentfield Campus to provide services and information to our students, as well as our staff, faculty, and administration. This is a wonderful opportunity for local businesses to promote themselves and offer discounts to our students.

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Make sure to take a break and join in the festivities. Big Ned’s BBQ will be selling BBQ ribs, chicken, steak sandwiches, and potato salad and there will be an ice cream vendor on site for dessert. For more information please call Vickie Lamke in the Student Affairs Office at (415) 485-9376.

ESCOM Hosts Artist’s Reception
Emeritus Students College of Marin (ESCOM) is sponsoring an exhibition of paintings by Cole Posard now through March 25, 2011. A reception for the artist will be held Monday, Jan. 24, from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Kentfield Emeritus Center, Student Services Building, Room 146. Poet Ella Eytan will provide food for thought; refreshments will be served.

Alumni Association Open House
The Alumni Association will host an open house on Feb. 17 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the archive room located inside the Library in the Learning Resources Center, Kentfield. Come and enjoy refreshments and learn about the history of the college.

COM Athletics
Men’s Basketball vs. College of Alameda
Monday, Jan. 24, 7 p.m. in Alameda

Men’s Basketball vs. Solano College
Wednesday, Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m. in Solano

Men’s Basketball—Bye
Friday, Jan. 28

Women’s Basketball vs. Laney College
Monday, Jan. 24, 5:30 p.m. in Oakland

Women’s Basketball vs. Solano College
Wednesday, Jan. 26, 5:30 p.m. in Solano

Women’s Basketball—Bye
Friday, Jan. 28
College of Marin student will be missed

Student Jerry Alderson—known to many as Jay or Jaybird—passed away recently. Jay was well known in our campus community and worked very hard as president of the ASCOM club the Marin Art and Music Alliance (MAMA) to bring music to our campus. Jerry had a wonderful spirit and was as passionate as they come about his endeavors in music.

Have a great week!

David Wain Coon, Ed.D.
Superintendent/President