
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH DR. OLON RAY
DATE 6/6/01
CC: RENICK
FORTENBERRY

As I have shared with you in an earlier memo, I am trying to initiate regular meetings with the educational agency heads in order to have a stronger grasp on the operations of our educational organizations and to enhance communications with them. I had my first meeting with Dr. Olon Ray yesterday and he shared the following:

- The SBCJC is reserving the 5% of the first six months of appropriations as you have recommended. Dr. Ray has strongly suggested to the community college presidents that they do the same. Dr. Ray asked me to tell you that SBCJC is dealing with the budget and they will make it work.
- Dr. Ray's biggest fiscal concern is faculty salaries, with a larger problem being the colleges' ability to replace faculty and being competitive with the public schools.
- 2 SBCJC members' terms expire June 30, so you have 2 appointments to make to the Board. 1 of these two members is also your appointee from the Board to the Ed Net Board. Dr. Ray strongly suggested that you fill these appointments by July 1 due to a lot of Ed Net activity.
- Nancy Alley SBCJC is working closely with Nissan on the company's workforce training needs.
- The virtual community college is growing, although the Legislature tends to oppose the concept that Ray feels can enhance the state's provision of life long learning opportunities for students. 3,400 students have enrolled for web classes this summer, compared to 900 last summer. 3 community colleges (Southwest, Mississippi Delta and Pearl River) do not participate in the virtual classroom.
- SBCJC is working on a contract to hire an ombudsmen to "connect" the Workforce Investment Board, the State Workforce Council, MDA, the presidents of the community colleges, MESCC and others to begin identifying common interests and operations. Dr. Ray said that he hopes this can result in agencies collectively responding to economic development and training needs.
- Dr. Ray and I discussed the first meeting of the Steering Committee for the Leadership Summit on Higher Education. Dr. Ray is certain that the state needs a more comprehensive and unified P-16 educational system. He is concerned that the new accountability model is going to strangle our K-12 schools. He thinks we

need to create a new kind of school with new outcomes – technology has to have an emphasis if the state is going to defeat our isolation and local businesses and educational advocacy groups need to get back involved with school boards and superintendents on the local level. Dr. Ray described the current situation as local districts simply filling in the “paint by number” picture prescribed by the Department of Education. Dr. Ray is interested in community colleges and K-12 schools working together to provide early enrollment opportunities for high school students via the Web.

I am meeting with Dr. Ray again on July 3.