



## Dallas County Community College District

Dr. Wright Lassiter, Jr. has served as chancellor of the Dallas County Community College District, a seven-college district, since May 2006. Prior to that appointment he had served as president of El Centro College in the Dallas district for 20 years.

During his four years as chancellor of DCCCD, Dr. Lassiter has overseen the completion of a \$450 million bond program passed by voters in 2004. Currently, 29 buildings have been completed across the district's seven college campuses; that number also includes the construction of five new satellite, or community, campuses in underserved or fast-growing areas of Dallas County. Several projects have received architectural design and sustainability awards.

Dr. Lassiter and the district have seen unprecedented enrollment growth in the last two years, and overall enrollment includes 80,000 credit and 25,000 continuing education students. In addition to his service to the district, the chancellor also serves on the board of trustees for both Dallas Baptist University and Parker College of Chiropractic; he also is a member of the National Advisory Board for the College of Education at Auburn University.

He is actively involved in the community. His current and past activities include: chairman of the board of trustees for the African American Museum; immediate past board chair and senior director of the Urban League of Greater Dallas and north Texas; board member for several other organizations, including the YMCA Foundation, DBU Foundation and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas Foundation.



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**Texas Senate Higher Education Committee Testimony  
Presented by Dr. Wright L. Lassiter, DCCCD Chancellor  
September 23, 2010**

## ***DCCCD Background***

With seven colleges, a “virtual” campus and thousands of classes to choose from, students and community members know that the Dallas County Community College District understands how important education is to professional success. DCCCD’s mission is to educate students of all ages, from all walks of life, who represent the diversity of the community so that they can become productive and responsible contributors in those communities.

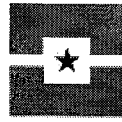
More than 1.5 million students later, DCCCD serves people of all ages from all walks of life who simply want to succeed both personally and professionally. As it has for more than 40 years, DCCCD continues to enrich lives and build community.

In fall 2010, 81,000 credit students and 27,000 continuing education students fill the district’s campuses: Brookhaven, Cedar Valley, Eastfield, El Centro, Mountain View, North Lake and Richland colleges, as well as the Dallas TeleCollege, a division of the R. Jan LeCroy Center for Educational Telecommunications. Administered by district offices in downtown Dallas and Mesquite (the District Service Center), DCCCD serves a diverse student population; employs faculty, staff and administrators from Dallas County and beyond; and serves as a conscientious steward of taxpayers’ dollars.

## ***DCCCD Efficiency Measures***

As the foundation of higher education, community colleges are the lowest cost option in the state. DCCCD’s current tuition rate is \$41 a credit hour -- \$123 for one three-hour course.

In our culture, we have learned to survive by staying “lean and mean.” However, as we manage a system of seven independently accredited colleges, we know that redundancy inadvertently can creep into our operations. We consistently seek opportunities for efficiencies.



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In order to make recommendations for opportunities to achieve cost efficiencies, I will share with you some broad areas that have worked for DCCCD.

### **Instructional efficiencies**

The basis of our operations is the delivery of instructional opportunities to our students. To ensure these associated costs remain affordable, we must diligently manage our instructional costs. One way we can achieve this goal is to carefully manage the mix of full-time and adjunct faculty. We also carefully manage faculty teaching loads.

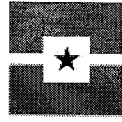
We also carefully manage class size to ensure we do not needlessly add sections; on the other hand, we carefully monitor and then schedule the number of courses sections to meet our students' needs so that they do not spend additional time in school, waiting to enroll in courses that they need to finish their course of study. We also strategically eliminate additional class sections where it is possible by increasing class size, when this can be done without negatively impacting the quality of instruction.

Because we know that 75 percent of our costs are based on salaries, wages and benefits, we achieve efficiencies by controlling personnel costs and deploying human resources in ways that meet our needs and still conserves funds – such as requiring our full-time faculty members to teach five classes during the fall and spring semesters.

### **Outsourcing**

We also have identified efficiencies throughout our operational areas through methods of consolidation, centralization and collaboration, thus eliminating redundancies which we identified and then resolved. These efforts are ongoing to prevent redundancies from occurring or reappearing.

As we expanded our efforts to find cost redundancies, we studied costs associated with our Student Technical Call Center. A cost study was conducted and we discovered that outsourcing was the lower cost option. As a result, we are saving \$100,000 to \$200,000 annually.



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We continue to look for areas to outsource including janitorial and landscaping services.

### **Energy efficiencies**

Like our colleagues in higher education, we continue to seek efficiencies in utility costs. For example...we used a consultant to assist in the RFP process, analysis and contract negotiations for electricity, which resulted in a significant reduction in our electrical service rates – more than \$2 million in savings over a three-year period.

We also are experimenting with solar arrays and wind technology. In fact, our downtown campus, El Centro College, has a mini-wind farm on its roof – a unique sight for downtown, high-rise office workers who peer down through their windows on our wind-driven turbine.

Each new project and each new structure involves a “green” look at both sustainability and savings, which go hand-in-hand today.

### **Technology**

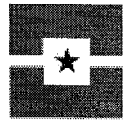
While oftentimes expensive from an initial investment standpoint, technology provides an opportunity to do more with less.

Everyone is keenly aware of the costs related to paper and printing. Costs, on average, have risen 10 to 20 percent annually over the past several years. Today, technology allows us to reduce the number of course schedules we produce, and our old print catalogs have been retired to make way for electronic versions on our district’s web site. The electronic version of both our catalogs and our course schedules are more readily available to students and, typically, they prefer to use online resources.

DCCCD added an employment tracking component to our enterprise resource planning capabilities, which saved us over \$600,000. This streamlined our overall resource management operations.

### **Affordability**

As you already know, the issue of affordability is at the top of the list for many students and parents when they consider a college or university. The growth of community colleges is a well-documented national phenomenon.



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In response to that growth and demand, DCCCD and the DCCCD Foundation continue to keep costs down for students through a multitude of scholarships that acknowledge leadership, scholarship, community service and need.

Every year, the DCCCD Foundation makes more than 1,500 scholarship awards totaling several hundred thousand dollars. More than a third of the Foundation's 200-plus scholarship opportunities are funded by permanent endowments. We have seen the number of students seeking financial aid grow consistently over the past several years, and these scholarships often represent a turning point in their lives and academic careers.

### **Textbooks**

Another component to affordability is related to textbooks. Oftentimes textbooks are more expensive than community college tuition.

In order to assist our students during increasingly difficult economic times – and to keep them in school once they enroll – we heard their pleas for relief related to the cost of textbooks. This fall, we began textbook rental programs at all of our college bookstores, a trend that took flight nationally. The popularity of our new program, barely two months old, is a huge hit with our students.

Based on reports from our bookstores and our vendor who manages those operations, students saved more than 50 percent on costs when they rented a new textbook instead of buying one. More than 10,000 textbooks were rented, and the total cost savings on initial figures is \$484,000. We expect those numbers to grow. Add in savings from used books and buybacks, and the vendor estimates that the total amount saved is more than \$2 million. Keeping costs down for students is just as critical as maintaining operational efficiencies in the district.

While these are just a few examples of DCCCD's efforts to achieve cost efficiencies, some might be applicable to other state-supported operations.



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Dr. Wright L. Lassiter, Jr  
DCCCD Chancellor  
1601 S. Lamar St.  
Dallas, TX 75215  
214.378.1601