PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

April 2014

“All our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them”. Alicia B. Harvey-Smith, Ph.D.

Dear River Valley,

Sitting on the shelf in my office is the book, “Good to Great” by Jim Collins. I have periodically thumbed through the chapters, stopping often to examine the summaries, which is frequently all I seem to have time to review. However; last week as part of the American Association of Community Colleges National Conference, I had a unique opportunity to hear Jim Collins bring his research to life in a manner that elevated every listener in the room interested in transforming their unique organizations from good to great.

As I sat listening and taking notes, I could not help but think about our institution and each of you and our journey to the present and about how we together will evolve RVCC to its yet unseen future state of excellence, innovation and greatness.

I thought about the classes that I have visited and the many students that I have had the pleasure to meet, who because of you are embracing promising futures set on successful pathways. I thought of our emerging partners, who are now more than ever ready to link arms with us to find solutions to a myriad of concerns from improving college matriculation and transfer rates to enhancing economic development and workforce development and training.

Jim Collins provided many ideas, which lifted my thinking and I share random ideas briefly in this month’s message in consideration as we move RVCC from Good to Great. Other ideas will be shared in future messages and as always, I continue to welcome your reactions to this and all President’s Messages.

Idea 1: Good-to-Great Organizations have Level 5 Leadership during the pivotal transition years. These leaders possess personal humility and professional will. They are driven, passionate and have a need to produce sustained results.

Idea 2: Good-to-Great Leaders think First Who ...Then What. The focus is getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats-and then they figure out where to drive it. In a good-to-great transformation, people are not your most important asset. The right people are.

Idea 3: Good-to-Great Organizations maintained unwavering faith that they would prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties and at the same time have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of their current reality, whatever it might be.

I was also impressed to learn that when examining good to great management teams, that they consist of people who debate vigorously in search of best answers, yet who unify behind decisions, regardless of parochial interests. As RVCC continues its quest from good to great, I commend your commitment to re-imagining, taking risks and being innovative. The work we do is critical to transforming the lives and communities of those we serve. Thank you for pushing yourself to greater heights and improving the learning and work experience at River Valley Community College.

Envisioning The Future That We are Designing,

Alicia B. Harvey-Smith, Ph.D.