



## ation for Critical Thinking

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August 3, 2006

Dr. Frank Sells  
President  
Surry Community College  
630 South Main Street  
Dobson, NC 27017

Dear President Sells:

I am writing this letter to officially announce the award for excellence in critical thinking that Surry Community College received at the 26<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Critical Thinking. This award was symbolically memorialized in a small replica of Rodin's famous sculpture, *The Thinker*.

This award was presented at the opening address and keynote session of the conference, which was attended by more than 400 international educators, government leaders, and business representatives. Surry Community College is the only college in the country, and indeed in the world, to ever receive this award.

This achievement redounds to the credit not only of the faculty, the staff, the deans and department chairs who have fostered it, but to the highest administrative officers, and of course, to you for your unstinting support of this ambitious and important educational goal.

I was honored to read the following statement at the opening session, and to bestow this award, along with Dr. Richard Paul, to Dr. Steve Atkins and Ms. Connie Wolfe:

### **Special Award for Excellence in Critical Thinking**

We would like, at this time, to give a special award for excellence in critical thinking. Really there are many of you who deserve an award. We recognize that.

But we thought it was time to single out an institution that has been working toward bringing critical thinking across the curriculum for a number of years. This is a higher education institution that began its struggle toward critical thinking approximately four years ago when they placed critical thinking at the heart of their reaccreditation process. They have developed an ongoing, innovative, long-term faculty development program. They have developed and are using effective faculty and student assessments in critical thinking. They have recently developed a critical thinking website that is exceptional. And they have sent 13 people to this year's conference, because they recognize that the struggle is ever before them, to improve, to reach deeper, to go further.

The institution receiving this award *is* a higher education institution. When we think of excellence in education, we often think of the Ivy League schools, the Harvards, and the Yales. But the institution receiving this award today is not Harvard. It is not Yale. It is not Stanford. It is not any of the Ivy League schools. Rather it is a community college in a small place called Dobson, North Carolina. It is Surry Community College.

I would like to invite Steve Atkins and Connie Wolfe to come forward to receive this award.

Please join me in acknowledging the work of Surry Community College.

The struggle is ever before us to reach toward a substantive concept of critical thinking, to continually work to reach our students at a deeper and more meaningful level. This award indicates that the struggle is being taken seriously at your college.

I congratulate you and everyone at Surry Community College who made this award possible.

I can only hope that the struggle continues.

Sincerely,

Linda Elder, Ed.D.  
President