

El Camino College alum to ride on Endeavour's last flight

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer

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The crew of space shuttle Endeavor, clockwise from left wearing orange, British born U.S. astronaut, pilot Greg Johnson, European Space Agency astronaut Roberto Vittori, of Italy, Canadian born U.S. astronaut Greg Chamitoff, mission specialist Drew Feustel, mission specialist Mike Fincke, and commander Mark Kelly, leave the Operations and Checkout Building to board the orbiter moments before the launch was scrubbed because of technical problems at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Friday, April 29, 2011. (The Associated Press)

It will be a space-filled few days at El Camino College.

One of its very own alums is among the astronauts taking shuttle Endeavour on its final journey into space, possibly on Monday.

Coincidentally, today the Torrance-area campus is hosting its annual Space Science Day, with an astronaut on hand to speak to students. Also in attendance will be family members of an astronaut who perished in the tragic space shuttle Challenger explosion 25 years ago.

As for the Endeavour flight, it was initially slated for takeoff Friday, but was delayed due to a mechanical problem. Officials say the launch has been tentatively rescheduled for Monday, though the final date could be later.

On board will be Michael Fincke, who earned an associate degree in geology from El Camino in 1993. His stint in the South Bay was apparently short. Before attending El Camino, the 44-year-old Pennsylvania native received two bachelor's degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master's degree from Stanford University. In 2001, he earned a second master's degree at the University of Houston.

With his third space flight aboard Endeavour, Fincke will amass more hours in orbit than any other U.S. astronaut. He is one of the crew's three spacewalkers.

Meanwhile, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. today on the El Camino campus at 16007 Crenshaw Blvd., Space Science Day will feature astronaut Soichi Noguchi, who will be on hand to talk to students.

South Bay / Harbor Area business calendar

From staff reports
Posted: 04/29/2011

Small business program

Wednesday. The Small Business Development Center is offering an orientation for the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program from 1 to 2 p.m. at El Camino College Business Training Center, 13430 Hawthorne Blvd., Hawthorne. Call 310-973-3177 for eligibility information and to RSVP.

Noguchi lauds space on Challenger anniversary

The Japan Times Online

Kyodo

Tuesday, May 3, 2011

LOS ANGELES — Astronaut Soichi Noguchi shared his experiences in space with grade school students Saturday as part of his efforts to build their curiosity about space at a gathering commemorating the 1986 Challenger disaster.



Remembering Challenger: Astronaut Soichi Noguchi delivers a speech during an event in Torrance, Calif., on Saturday to commemorate the 1986 Challenger disaster. KYODO PHOTO

Noguchi impressed some 1,000 kids and their parents at the event in Torrance, Calif., with video clips and pictures from his moments in space, including scenes showing how he spent Christmas at the International Space Station and what an aurora looks like from up there.

Noguchi said in a speech that he wanted to convey to the students "that going to space is this much fun."

The astronaut told reporters after the event that he vividly remembers the horror he felt as a college student aspiring to go into space when the shuttle exploded before his eyes on television.

"What's going to happen from here on out?" he thought at the time, he said.

But his overall message to the audience appeared to have been not to let tragedies and disasters get in the way of challenges.

The annual event dubbed "Space Science Day," presented by the Astronaut Ellison S. Onizuka Memorial Committee and dedicated to the seven deceased Challenger astronauts, was held at El Camino College to educate science-minded students between the fifth and 12th grades.

Even though shuttle-related accidents have happened in the past, "I'm here, speaking in front of them after going to space and back," Noguchi said.

Lorna Onizuka, the 61-year-old widow of Challenger astronaut Onizuka, was also in attendance along with other remaining family members.

Noguchi credits her for teaching him "the importance of working together with family, and overcoming tragedies" through her experience and advice.

"I hope I was able to relay that to the students in attendance today," Noguchi said.

Despite attending an event that was dedicated to a disaster that happened long before he was born, a young aspiring astronaut in attendance left impressed with what he saw.

"An astronaut is something that I might be when I grow up," said 10-year-old Nick Barry, sitting next to his father. "I liked the pictures. I thought they were cool."

Noguchi first flew to space aboard a U.S. shuttle in 2005.

Admission constraints lead Cal State to favor 'local' students

But at popular campuses like Cal State Long Beach, many applicants considered 'out-of-area' are actually right next door. The policy has sparked a debate over equal access and the mission of state colleges.

By Carla Rivera, Los Angeles Times

May 3, 2011

It may be in their backyard, but for many South Bay students, a seat at Cal State Long Beach has become one of the toughest tickets in town.

Families in Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes, Torrance and elsewhere have become casualties of a confluence of circumstances that include education funding cuts, limited space and a local admissions preference that considers them outsiders.

In response to rising demand, the Long Beach campus, like others in the California State University system, several years ago began to raise such admissions criteria as grade point average and test scores for students outside of its immediate area.

That area includes the Anaheim, Bellflower, Compton, Downey, Huntington Beach, Long Beach, Los Alamitos, Paramount and ABC school districts as well as Long Beach City College and Orange Coast, Coastline and Golden West community colleges. Students from those schools are guaranteed admission if they meet Cal State's minimum admission criteria.

Students in many beach cities and even adjacent communities, including Wilmington and Carson, have to meet a higher standard.

Concern over the issue did not boil over until recently, however, when the state's budget crisis caused Cal State campuses to slash enrollment and to again boost criteria for out-of-area students. Last year, Long Beach's eligibility cutoff for incoming freshman — a number that combines GPA and test scores — was 2,900 for local students and 3,950 for nonlocals.

Since then, enrollment has plummeted among South Bay students who consider the Long Beach campus their local university: Freshman enrollment from four high schools in the Torrance Unified School District, for example, fell from 92 in 2007 to 44 in 2009. Transfers from El Camino College in Torrance dropped from 434 to 180 over the same period.

The decline prompted El Camino President Thomas M. Fallo to write an appeal to Cal State Chancellor Charles B. Reed noting his school's longstanding relationship with the Long Beach campus and asking to be included in its local service area.

"I would hope there would be some legacy consideration over the relationship we've had," Fallo said in an interview. "The current admissions policy is absolutely limiting options for our students."

Johanna Zamora, the student representative on El Camino's Board of Trustees, found out recently that her transfer application to Cal State Long Beach was rejected, even though she had been

admitted to the college as a freshman applicant three years earlier.

"I don't regret it now, what's done is done," Zamora said of her decision to start at community college to save money. A civil engineering major, she has also applied to Cal Poly Pomona and USC. "You're going to reach your goals no matter what path you take. But it's disappointing not getting into Long Beach because it is close."

Many South Bay students feel abandoned because no Cal State campus considers them local, said Torrance Unified School Supt. George Mannon.

Cal State Dominguez Hills in Carson is closer to many of the South Bay schools, but it and six other Cal State campuses designate the entire state as their service area. Those campuses, for various reasons, attract fewer students.

"There's a stereotype that students from the South Bay cities are all middle- or upper-income and can afford to go anywhere they want to go, and that's not true," Mannon said. As the continuing budget crisis threatens to reduce access further, he said, "kids in local admission areas have an advantage over kids like ours who are not in any local admission area."

Cal State Long Beach officials say they are dealing with enrollment pressures they can't control. In the last two years, three neighboring community colleges were added to Long Beach's local jurisdiction, and other colleges closer to the Long Beach campus than El Camino have also requested consideration, Reed said in a letter to Fallo.

In rejecting the El Camino request, he noted that the Torrance campus is six miles from Cal State Dominguez Hills but 20 miles from Long Beach.

The pressures are especially acute at Long Beach and a handful of other popular Cal State campuses that are considered "destination" schools because of campus amenities, academic programs and other features. Long Beach received 47,000 freshman applications and 18,000 transfer requests from California residents for fall 2011, more than any other Cal State campus.

The move by many schools to manage enrollment by raising standards has spurred debate over the changing mission of California's public universities as they confront expanding numbers of students and dwindling state support. For many Cal State campuses, the question is whether to maintain equal standards or give an edge to local students who may have lower grades.

The decisions at some universities are creating tensions.

San Diego State in 2009 ended an admission guarantee for local high school students by declaring all of its programs over-subscribed. The action triggered legislation requiring public notice and hearings before campuses change admission criteria.

In February, the state Legislative Analyst's Office recommended that Cal State's 23 campuses focus on providing access to local students.

"If you accept that some students are place-bound and can't easily move to a different area to go to college because of jobs and family responsibilities, the guarantee of access is pretty hollow if

it's not guaranteed in your region," said Steve Boilard, director of higher education for the agency and author of the study.

That doesn't sway parents like George Harpole, whose son James is a senior at Torrance's South High School. He was admitted to UC Santa Cruz, which he'll attend in the fall, but turned down by Cal State Long Beach.

After the Long Beach rejection, George Harpole did some research, wrote to Reed and the Cal State Board of Trustees and filed Public Records Act requests to obtain eligibility criteria for many Cal State campuses, including Long Beach.

"I would eliminate local admission areas for a more fair and equitable system," Harpole said. "Schools would improve if all students were working harder to get in."

Long Beach officials are attempting to chart a middle course that gives a boost to many local students while keeping the door open for deserving students from elsewhere in California, said vice provost David Dowell.

"In a better budget environment, the UC-eligible student and the C-average local student would both be admitted," Dowell said. "It boils down to what responsibilities campuses feel to help the state move forward."

What Good Do Faculty Unions Do?

The Chronicle of Higher Education

May 1, 2011

Research sheds little light on quantifiable benefits of collective bargaining

By Peter Schmidt

As unions that represent public-college professors have come under attack in state legislatures, the unions' leaders have fought back without being able to define what, exactly, they stand to lose if their right to collectively bargain goes away.

Many union leaders have declared that right essential if faculty members are to be paid adequately, treated fairly, and given a voice in their institutions' affairs. But the research that tests such assertions offers mixed findings. At most private colleges, as well as at public colleges where faculty members have chosen not to form unions or have been precluded from doing so by state law, many faculty members work without union contracts without feeling particularly exploited.

If anything, the research shows that the gains derived through collective bargaining are difficult to measure. Factors such as regional differences in the cost of living and market-related variations in what colleges are willing to pay their employees have confounded most attempts to determine whether faculty members with union contracts are better off than others. At four-year colleges, the financial payoffs from collective bargaining appear modest at best. At two-year colleges, such financial gains might be bigger, but they remain little studied and poorly defined.

The chief benefits of unionization appear to have less to do with getting faculty members more bread than in giving them some say over how it is sliced. Those who belong to collective-bargaining units have been found by researchers to have more say in the management of their institutions and how the faculty payroll is divvied up.

"At institutions where a substantial number of the faculty are represented in collective bargaining, you are much more likely to have a substantial faculty voice in governance," says Marc Bousquet, an associate professor of English at Santa Clara University, regular blogger for *The Chronicle*, and co-chairman of an American Association of University Professors committee on the working conditions of adjunct faculty members. "It is not necessarily the case that collective bargaining addresses governance procedures directly," he says, so much as it gives faculty members more power within their institutions than they might otherwise have.

"Across the broad spectrum of institutions of higher education, faculty unions do make a difference," says Philo Hutcheson, who has monitored research on faculty unionization as an associate professor of educational-policy studies at Georgia State University. While unions can bring about improvements in faculty members' pay and working conditions, he says, "they are far stronger, in general, in terms of protecting faculty members" from arbitrary management decisions.

Lingering Threats

It is common for state lawmakers to respond to economic downturns by calling on public employees to sacrifice pay or benefits to help close state budget gaps. This year, however, lawmakers in some states have gone beyond trying to extract financial concessions from unions and mounted all-out assaults on the unions themselves. Although the battles are hardly over, unions representing public-college faculty members are on the brink of being stripped of much of their power in Ohio and Wisconsin, and continue to face threats to their existence in Florida.

In Ohio, public employees' unions are urging voters to repeal a measure, signed into law by Gov. John R. Kasich in March, that would sharply limit the collective-bargaining rights of many state workers and specifically renders most public-college faculty members ineligible for union representation by reclassifying them as managerial employees. The campaign against the law has until late June to gather enough signatures to put a referendum to repeal it on the November ballot. If either the petition-gathering effort or the referendum fails, the new law will take effect.

Although the debate in Ohio has been highly partisan, pitting the state's Republican governor and lawmakers against Democrats and their union allies, the proposed reclassification came not from some conservative think tank, but from the Inter-University Council of Ohio, an association of the state's public universities. A similar provision was recently put forward by top Democratic lawmakers in Connecticut at the behest of the Democratic governor, Dannel P. Malloy, only to be killed by a legislative committee at the urging of groups representing public colleges' faculty members.

Faculty members and academic staff at the University of Wisconsin are denied the right to collectively bargain, under a law signed by Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican. The measure remains tied up in court, however, as a result of lawsuits alleging that a legislative committee violated the state's open-meeting laws in passing it. The Wisconsin chapter of the American Federation of Teachers is going ahead with union elections on the system's campuses, out of a belief—untested by any research—that such unions can be a major voice in their campuses' affairs even without collective-bargaining rights.

A bill pending before Florida's Legislature would revoke the certification of any public-college employee union that represents less than half of the workers eligible for membership unless those workers vote to recertify it by July 1. Union representatives have argued that the measure would stack the deck against them by affording little time for recertification votes and requiring the elections to be held during months when fewer faculty members are around.

Seeking More Say

Much of the research on the effects of such faculty unions was published in the 1970s and early 80s, and focused on the initial wave of unionization efforts made possible by states' adoption of laws letting public employees bargain collectively. In an exhaustive research review published in the journal *Higher Education* in 2008, Christine M. Wickens, then a graduate student at York University, in Toronto, cautioned that the research on fledgling unions from two or three decades ago might have little application to the current era, when faculty unions are more entrenched on college campuses and, at the same time, face comparatively more opposition from political conservatives.

In summing up the research to that point, Ms. Wickens said there was little consensus on the influence of unionization on college governance, and little evidence that unionization promoted

academic freedom. She found a fair amount of agreement among researchers that faculty members believe they benefit from unionization when it comes to job security, tenure, promotion procedures, and due process. The research she cited included a 1999 article, in the *Journal of Labor Research*, which concluded, based on an analysis of data from seven of Ohio's public universities, that belonging to a union appeared to increase a faculty members' chances of earning tenure and rising to full professor.

More recently, however, a study of more than 340 four-year colleges, presented last fall at the annual conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, concluded that unionization did not appear to give faculty members significantly more power over tenure-and-promotion decisions, despite the attention given such issues by collective-bargaining agreements.

The paper nonetheless painted a fairly positive picture of unionization's effect on the working conditions of faculty members, finding that unionization "greatly increases faculty influence" over pay scales, the salaries of individual faculty, and the appointments of department heads and of members of institutionwide committees, and shows some signs of giving college faculty members more say over curriculum and faculty teaching loads.

Stephen R. Porter, an associate professor of research and evaluation at Iowa State University, and Clinton M. Stephens, a graduate student there, conducted the study by analyzing the results of a 2001 national survey of faculty-senate leaders and college presidents.

Salary Crunching

Efforts to measure the financial benefits that public colleges' faculty members derive from unionization are complicated by factors that invalidate dollar-for-dollar comparisons of pay packages.

Among the chief obstacles to salary comparisons is the geographic distribution of unionized campuses, which are concentrated in states with relatively high costs of living. About half of unionized faculty members work in California or New York, and most work at colleges in the mid-Atlantic, Midwest, and West, according to data compiled by the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions.

Where public colleges in such states are found to pay faculty members more, it is hard to tease out whether their doing so stems from collective bargaining or the need to offer more so that faculty members can afford to live there. Further complicating the picture, colleges do not operate in isolation but in labor markets where they compete for talent, so the gains made by unionized faculty members at one college through collective bargaining might then be offered by colleges without unions to keep their faculty members from being lured away.

Also confounding such studies is the chicken-and-egg problem of differentiating unionization's causes and effects. A finding that unionized faculties are paid less than nonunionized faculties, for example, might reflect that collective bargaining does little to improve wages, or it might reflect that frustration over low wages often leads to unionization.

In a paper published in April in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, four economists—David W. Hedrick and Charles S. Wassell Jr., of Central Washington University, and Steven E. Henson and John M. Krieg, of Western Washington University—describe how they fashioned a study of full-time faculty at four-year colleges that sought to account for the effects of unionization alone. They mathematically accounted for cost-of-living differences as well as other factors, such as

professional background and institutional classification, that influence how much faculty members are paid, in analyzing data based on about 24,000 faculty members and 1,060 colleges collected from 1988 through 2004 as part of the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty. They concluded that the increase in wages associated with unionization was so small it was statistically insignificant.

The article, "Is There Really a Faculty Union Salary Premium?" cautions that "the weak effect that unions have on salaries does not necessarily indicate that they are ineffective advocates for their members," because it is entirely possible that unions win other gains, such as better benefits and improved working conditions.

Ronald G. Ehrenberg, a professor of industrial and labor relations and economics at Cornell University, says he is not surprised that the faculty members covered by the study did not reap significant financial gains from collective bargaining. Most states that let faculty members at public colleges engage in collective bargaining do not give them the right to go on strike or have salaries set through arbitration, and without either tool, he says, faculty members "have limited bargaining power."

Typically, Mr. Ehrenberg says, labor unions have won major wage gains for their members in industries that can tap into big profits—and state higher-education systems hardly fit such a bill.

Knowledge Gaps

Mr. Hedrick says he and the other authors of the paper on full-time faculty at four-year colleges are conducting similar studies looking at both two-year and four-year colleges and covering other types of faculty members, including adjuncts. They hope to publish results within a year.

Research on unionization's effects on two-year colleges is sparse, and the research on its effect on adjunct faculty is virtually nonexistent.

Full-time faculty members at community colleges in states that allow them to collectively bargain were found to earn substantially more than community-college faculty members elsewhere in a 2006 analysis of data from more than 1,000 institutions. The study was conducted by Jose F. Maldonado, then a doctoral student at the University of North Texas, with the assistance of David E. Hardy, an associate professor of higher education at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, and Stephen G. Katsinas, a professor of higher education there.

The three researchers broke out their results, which they have presented at higher-education conferences but never published, by institution size and by whether colleges were rural, suburban, or urban. They found that the pay advantage for faculty members in collective-bargaining states ranged from 11 percent, or about \$4,300, for full-time faculty members at small, rural community colleges to 48 percent, or about \$20,200, for those at suburban community colleges that were not part of a system. On average, community-college faculty in states that allowed collective bargaining earned nearly \$13,900, or about 32 percent, more than those who were in states that did not. Moreover, the community colleges in states that allowed collective bargaining spent an average of about \$4,300, or nearly 50 percent, more per head on benefits for full-time faculty members.

The study only gathered raw numbers dealing with compensation and made no effort to account for cost-of-living differences or other factors that could have skewed its results. In a recent interview, Mr. Katsinas expressed doubt that any such factors could fully account for the pay

differences that the study associates with laws allowing collective bargaining, but he acknowledged that such gaps cannot be attributed to collective-bargaining laws alone.

On the question of whether unionization has helped adjunct faculty members, Keith Hoeller, a longtime advocate for adjunct-faculty rights and a co-founder of the Washington Part-Time Faculty Association, is skeptical. Although unions that represent solely adjuncts have cropped up at many colleges, the chief national unions that they are affiliated with represent a mixture of adjuncts and tenured and tenure-track faculty members. Mr. Hoeller, who teaches in Washington State, complains that adjuncts have relatively little say in negotiations involving tenured and tenure-track faculty members, whose interests often are at odds with theirs. "When the dust settles," he says, "there are almost no gains for adjuncts from these bargaining teams."

Speaking From Experience

Public-college faculty members are themselves hardly in agreement on unionization's benefits, as evidenced by the failure of some votes on unionization and the inability of faculty unions to gain much of a foothold among the nation's most prestigious universities.

"The best and the brightest of the faculty don't feel they need a labor union. They feel they are professionals. They feel they are competing in a national market. They don't want to get bogged down by collective bargaining," argues Richard K. Vedder, a *Chronicle* blogger who is director of the Center for College Affordability and Productivity and a professor of economics at Ohio University, one of three public universities in that state where faculty members never went the unionization route.

But Rudy H. Fichtenbaum, a professor of economics at Wright State University and a member of the board of the Ohio conference of the AAUP, says he is convinced that the state's faculty unions are worth fighting for.

"We can definitely point to a lot of tangible benefits from collective bargaining," he says. At Wright State, he argues, it has led to a fairer distribution of raises, clearer tenure requirements, faculty input on annual evaluation criteria, and better benefits for faculty members. "There is no question that this is a better place to work."

Public pension reform, not public-worker bashing

LA Times

By Michael Hiltzik

May 15, 2011

We'll never achieve an equitable and effective fix to the very real problem of unsustainable public pension obligations until we dispel the miasma of non-facts enveloping this highly fraught topic.

Here's what we know for certain about the public pension crisis facing California: The obligations owed or promised to public workers are growing, and unsustainable.

Almost everything else said about public employees and their retirement packages is open to question, misleadingly simplified, or infected with ideology, partisanship or emotion.

One might ask if that matters, given the overwhelming weight of fact No. 1. The answer is yes, because we'll never achieve an equitable and effective fix until we dispel the miasma of non-facts enveloping this highly fraught topic.

For example, are public employees better paid than their private-sector fellows? Some are and some aren't. A study done for the California Foundation for Fiscal Responsibility, which is pushing pension reforms, found that public workers at the low end of the income scale were better paid than private-sector workers in similar jobs. But it was the opposite for those in management and specialized occupations, such as computer science.

That suggests that finding a one-size-fits-all pension solution will be difficult.

Are California public retirement plans better than those for federal or private-sector workers? Yes in some ways, no in others.

Generally they allow earlier retirement than their counterparts. Typically, public-safety employees such as police officers and firefighters have the best deals, schoolteachers the worst. Unlike the typical private-sector defined-benefit plan, state pensions often require a contribution by the employee, though this is covered by some public employers.

On the other side of the ledger, the formulas for calculating the retirement payouts are much more advantageous for state employees than in the private sector.

In a crucial way, public-employee pensions are a throwback. Such defined-benefit plans barely exist anymore for new employees in the private sector. These are classic pensions — they accumulate value slowly at first and rapidly toward the end of a worker's career and they can't be

transferred to other employers, so they're geared to encouraging long-term employer-employee relationships.

In return for employee loyalty, the employer bears the risk of bad investments or market reversals — the benefits have to be paid regardless. Today's private employers don't care as much about worker loyalty and don't like investment risk; hence the rise of the 401(k), which requires larger contributions from the workers and transfers market risks to them but can be ported from job to job.

In part because the state pensions don't include a 401(k)-style plan, they're less generous than many private-sector plans for short-term workers. A schoolteacher who leaves his or her job before 10 years leaves with nothing; a federal or private-sector worker might have money in a defined-contribution account and be on track to qualifying for Social Security, which doesn't now cover California schoolteachers or public-safety employees.

These distinctions aside, the overall costs of public pensions are poised to crush state and local services. The problem is bad nationwide, but especially severe in California, in part because state courts have blocked efforts to roll back pension benefits that haven't yet accrued, such as credits for future service.

Things are different in the private sector, where federal law prohibits reductions in retirement benefits owed for years already worked but allows employers to terminate or reduce benefits for future service. (Depending on applicable union agreements.)

Because 1978's Proposition 13 and other laws also make it very hard to increase taxes in California, the most practical way of covering the increasing costs of employee pensions is to cut back other programs — leading to closed libraries, fired teachers, less road repair, etc., etc. Public employees, whose jobs and public standing are on the line, have as much at stake in corraling pension costs as anyone.

Unquestionably, state and local political leaders have been profligate with pensions, awarding workers improved benefits and post-employment health coverage — the value of the latter being perhaps the largest single difference between California retirement plans and those of federal and private workers. Some enhancements were awarded retroactively, which is an absolute sin in the pension biz.

Typically they were extracted by public-employee unions from Democratic administrations and legislatures, especially when the dot-com boom made the state budget look flush and the enhancements look free. Everyone pretended that the boom would last forever, including, shockingly, CalPERS actuaries — public bodies even were permitted to forgo contributions to the system during the fat years, which only made things worse when the market crashed. The pols perceived that public employees were a potent voting bloc, but of course one thing that

makes them so is that so many other Californians sit on their duffs on election day. If you're one of the nonvoting masses, you're to blame for the pension fiasco too.

For years political leaders, union representatives and voters ignored the gathering clouds. No more. "You're seeing signs of movement," says Marilyn C. Brewer, a former Republican assemblywoman from Irvine who as a member of the Little Hoover Commission spearheaded that independent government watchdog group's remarkably clearheaded analysis of the issue, published in February. "The state's dire financial situation will push it forward." Recent changes have reduced the benefits for new employees, but in many ways they're still superior to what's available on the outside.

Finding a path through these brambles isn't made easier by today's craze for public-worker bashing, which is partially an artifact of the outrageous trend toward more income inequality in California and the U.S. alike. According to Franchise Tax Board figures, more than 70% of the \$300-billion increase in total adjusted gross income of California taxpayers between 1987 and 2008 went to the wealthiest 10% of Californians. The middle 20%, our valiant middle class? They got 3%.

This is connected to such phenomena as the decline of collective bargaining in the private sector, increased job insecurity and the explosion of household debt. Government workers are seen by the average strapped taxpayer as insulated from these pressures (public employees don't help themselves by engaging in scams like "spiking" their final years' pay to pump up their pensions), but the resulting resentment is the ultimate class-war victory of the haves over the have-nots. Middle-class taxpayers grouse about the retirement deals of teachers and DMV clerks, while bankers and CEOs, whose compensation and tax breaks really deserve public obloquy, slink away scot-free.

One can mourn the decline of traditional pensions in the private economy but still acknowledge that California public pensions are out of line by customary standards. It won't be easy to reverse the trend, but it's not impossible. The right place to start is with the Little Hoover Commission's recommendations. These include giving state and local governments the authority to change unaccrued future benefits for current workers, by a constitutional amendment if necessary; capping the maximum salary factored into the pension formula or capping pensions; shifting a portion of the pension to defined-contribution plans, which are less risky and expensive for the employer; and partially offsetting teacher and public-safety pensions with Social Security.

The mistakes of the past should be red-tagged: No pension contribution "holidays," ever again. No retroactive enhancements. Increases in the retirement age for most workers from 55 to 60 or 65. Voter approval of all pension increases.

The Little Hoover Commission's guiding principle is that public pensions should be restored to the original role of providing for an adequate and humane lifestyle after retirement, not for

creating wealth for a few at the expense of all Californians. It's the right course. Turning the state into a hollowed-out shell is bad for everyone.

College Presidents Are Too Complacent

The Chronicle of Higher Education

May 15, 2011

By Daniel Yankelovich

This issue of *The Chronicle* features two important surveys of higher education: one with college presidents and one with the public. These new data give us a chance to take a second look at some of the [trends I discussed](#) in an article for *The Chronicle* in November 2005. At that time, those trends appeared to be pushing higher education into a new era of turmoil, crisis, and challenge.

In sharp contrast to my 2005 article, the tone of the two new *Chronicle* surveys suggests to me the opposite of turmoil and crisis. Though some Americans grumble about not getting great value for their money, the vast majority are pretty well satisfied with the performance of higher education. Most Americans who have been exposed to higher education feel that their investment has been a sound one. A majority of college presidents believe that higher education is moving in the right direction. Almost four out of five (76 percent) say they are convinced that our higher-education system is doing a good or an excellent job of providing value for the money spent by students and their families.

The college presidents do acknowledge that higher education confronts many problems. For example:

- Troubling increases in student plagiarism.
- High schools doing an ever-poorer job of preparing students.
- Failure to do an "excellent job" of providing academic programs that meet the needs of today's economy.
- The increasing inability of students and their families to pay for a college education.
- The conviction that our system of higher education is losing ground relative to those of other nations.
- The likely failure of President Obama's goal to have this country achieve rates of college completion superior to any other country's by 2020.

But these decidedly nontrivial problems somehow fade into the background as the college presidents express their satisfaction with today's higher-education system. From the perspective of the trends that trouble me, this high level of satisfaction signals a lack of awareness of the dangers that lie ahead. The message I get from the survey of college presidents is, "We are doing just fine under difficult circumstances. If you send us more money and better-prepared high-school students, we can do an even better job." Neither the general public nor the presidents of our colleges seem conscious of the seriousness of the threat; they therefore lack the sense of urgency needed to confront it.

Both college presidents and the public seem to be reacting to what might be called "the old normal"—the world as it existed in the two decades before the deep recession of 2008-9. In the old normal, American universities were tops in the world; our economy was the undisputed world leader; the dollar was strong; income inequalities were much narrower than they are now; unemployment averaged about 5 percent; low-skill, high-paying jobs were commonplace; and our science and technology held undisputed world leadership.

In the old normal, higher-education credentials were seen by the public as desirable, virtually guaranteeing higher incomes and social status, but they weren't seen as indispensable to making a decent living. (In *The Chronicle* survey, Americans ranked having a strong work ethic, knowing how to get along with others, and learning new skills on the job as more important to success than achieving higher-education credentials.) And in the old normal employers valued higher-education credentials less for specific job skills than for a certain polish: being able to understand complex instructions, feeling socially comfortable, speaking fluently and grammatically, and making clear presentations. Companies felt that they could impart the specific skills they required to people whose college credentials proved that they were good learners.

That is not what higher education has to deliver in the world of the "new normal." In this emerging world, education beyond high school becomes indispensable to making a good living.

The threat, as I see it, is an impending crisis in this nation's powerful, if unwritten, social contract. Higher education is becoming the main battleground in a national struggle over how to keep faith with this contract.

At its core, the social contract that binds Americans together is amazingly simple. It is an implicit understanding that all citizens should be given a fair chance to achieve social mobility. It promises Americans the opportunity to better themselves and to improve their lot in life. Throughout much of our country's history, this social contract has functioned to the satisfaction of the public. Indeed, despite today's political polarization, we live with one another with a remarkable degree of social harmony.

The survey of the public shows that Americans don't believe that the lack of higher-education credentials has prevented them from getting the kinds of jobs, incomes, and social status they seek. But now all sorts of national and worldwide trends are merging to increase the importance of higher education. U.S.-government projections are that nearly eight out of 10 new jobs will require some sort of higher education, including work-force training.

It is not easy to discern to what extent structural change will reshape our economy. Some features of the new normal are all too clear. The era of low-skill, high-paying jobs is dead and gone. Many of those jobs are easy to export to countries with far lower standards of living.

Similarly, it is hard to imagine that we can quickly reverse the growth of economic inequality. The Institute of Policy Studies reports that CEO pay has soared from 30 times that of the average worker in the 1970s to more than 260 times today. The top sliver of the income distribution does better and better, while middle-class incomes stagnate.

We may not return to the old unemployment rate of 5 percent in the foreseeable future. Companies have learned how to make money even under recession conditions by laying off people and taking advantage of technology and manufacturing abroad. Asian countries are also

determined to overcome our lead in science and technology, and their students excel in math and related subjects.

Put all those conditions together, and you get a far different world than the one that existed in even the recent past.

The survey of college presidents shows that our institutions of higher education are making some constructive changes to adapt to the new trends. Most recognize that today's students need far more flexibility than in the past. The lockstep pattern of going to college directly from high school and spending the next two to four years there without interruption is no longer a practical path for many students. Increasingly, students spread their higher-education experience over a decade or more after they graduate from high school, and our colleges are preparing to provide this flexibility.

The presidents are also aware of the potential of online methods for delivering course instruction. The public still believes that online instruction is second-best to personal instruction, without realizing that online instruction enjoys several extraordinary advantages. The most obvious one is flexibility: the ability to learn at your own tempo and at times of greatest convenience (especially if you are employed). A less obvious advantage is that with online instruction, it is possible to have the nation's greatest teachers as your instructors.

Colleges are also aware of the increasing burden of higher costs on students and their families. Many institutions are pursuing programs to increase student aid and make loans more available to students.

Those steps are positive, but they fall far short of meeting the main challenge—the new normal for the world economy. If the United States is to live up to its social contract of offering Americans a fair shot at social mobility, higher education must make transformative changes in at least three areas: becoming more affordable, doing a better job of linking two-year colleges to the world of work and to four-year colleges, and ensuring that the nation maintains its lead in science, technology, and other high-level skills.

Affordability. Both the college presidents and the public agree that parents and students themselves should take the main responsibility of paying for college. But families can no longer meet those inexorably rising costs. Increasingly, students are dependent on financial aid or loans. In the public survey, only 39 percent of college graduates relied mainly on loans or financial aid to pay most of their costs. Among current students, that figure has soared to 65 percent, with only a minority able to rely mainly on their own or their parents' resources.

Clearly, higher education cannot continue its pattern of annual increases in costs without the system's becoming unglued. New initiatives to rein in costs and increase revenue are badly needed. For example, the desires of many baby-boom retirees to continue their college education opens a new market for colleges, especially among alumni.

Better integration of two-year colleges. Our system of community colleges is a national treasure, all too often taken for granted and undersupported. A significant and growing percentage of the nation's 12 million college students attend community colleges, and the number is likely to rise as the proportion of minority youths increases. Community colleges address the needs of our ever more diverse population, compensating for some of the failures of our K-12 system.

One of the country's most troubling societal problems is that the college-completion rate of students from low-income families is disastrously below that of students from middle-income families. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation for Education are devoting major resources to finding strategies for narrowing the gap, and we should be grateful for that effort, but it makes one wonder why the government and higher-education institutions themselves are not doing more to correct this potentially explosive problem. With the disappearance of high-paying, low-skill jobs, earning higher-education credentials becomes the only way that tens of millions of Americans can better themselves economically.

We cannot depend on our two-year colleges to alleviate that problem without helping them to create closer ties with employers and four-year colleges. A closer integration with employers will help to ensure that students have jobs waiting for them, and it will sharpen their focus on the skills that are most in demand in the workplace.

The relationship with four-year colleges calls for a subtler strategy. Many four-year institutions take a condescending attitude toward community colleges, regarding them as mere steppingstones to the "real education" that the four-year colleges provide. If they were to take a less patronizing attitude, they might find it easier to cooperate with community colleges in developing programs to meet the needs of today's economy. Such a strategy would enable the four-year colleges to keep faith with the mission that should mean most to them—a commitment to provide the broad-based education that promotes the intellectual growth of their students.

Imparting the higher skills that good jobs demand. I have saved for last the most complex area of necessary change—maintaining world leadership in science, technology, and related entrepreneurship. The issue here is not a matter of American hubris. It is a matter of economic common sense. Between them, China and India have populations of well over two billion people, many of them hard working, ambitious, smart, and talented. The Chinese, who have a long tradition of economic domination, are playing catch-up with the United States. If we are able to maintain our own entrepreneurial vitality, their successes will add to world growth. But if we lag too far behind, the Chinese will gobble up our high-level jobs as well as our low-level ones.

A survey by Public Agenda, a public-policy research group, shows that a major obstacle to better science-and-math education is that Americans simply don't see its relevance to their lives and believe that the training their children are getting in those subjects in the K-12 years is "fine as it is." Consequently, there is a lot of resistance to upgrading math and science instruction in the schools.

In my view, the single most effective form of intervention would be for the science and technology communities to prepare—and test with young people—persuasive online forms of instruction that communicate the relevance, importance, and magnitude of the opportunity that studies in science, technology, and math present, especially for women and minorities. Additionally, college science faculty should cooperate with local high schools to develop more-germane curricula and lesson plans.

If we do not act to prepare America's students to succeed in the emerging world economy, there simply won't be enough truly good jobs for them. Such a failure would violate the social contract and bring about the kind of unrest and resentment that plagues so many other nations.

Indeed, a huge responsibility rests on our institutions of higher education. A wake-up call is in order for the presidents who lead them.

In for Nasty Weather Inside Higher Ed May 16, 2011

Maybe it's because tenured professors are so disproportionately white male baby boomers that classic rock seems like a natural way to capture the sense that tenured faculty existence is vanishing.

First, summon the image of a tweed-clad, gray-haired professor exiting the halls of academe at the end of his career -- only to be replaced by an underpaid adjunct, whose credentials and teaching skills may well be far better than those the newly emeritus had when he started. Then, take your pick of the soundtrack. The song spoke to the tenured professor in his youth, but now it conjures a more forlorn feeling as he leaves campus -- and the kind of faculty job that he held leaves along with him: "Slip Slidin' Away," "The Song is Over" or maybe "Already Gone."

In an upcoming post on his [blog](#) that is tentatively titled "Full Moon Setting," James C. Garland, president emeritus of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, reaches for the album-oriented rock catalog (his title is a riff on the Creedence Clearwater Revival song, "Bad Moon Rising").

The song's lyrics seemed apt, he said. "I hear hurricanes a-blowing/I know the end is coming soon/I fear rivers overflowing/I hear the voice of rage and ruin."

"The metaphor in higher education is that the bad moon is rising," Garland told *Inside Higher Ed*. "You're hearing the voices of rage and ruin. It comes from unhappy faculty who want to form unions to protect themselves, declining standards, students who aren't willing to work, the corporatization of the university and the general sense that things are getting worse."

Garland's larger argument is actually more philosophical (and, he said, influenced by his wife's t'ai chi teacher) -- that those in higher education should seek to gracefully manage change rather than pine for a bygone era. "You've got to realize that full moons aren't forever, that the moon rises and sets," he said. "That's just in the nature of things. That seems to be what's happening, particularly to public higher education."

Still, the darker themes implicit in such narratives of decline resonated -- with some exceptions -- among many experts on higher education and the faculty who were recently interviewed by *Inside Higher Ed*. Faculty members have never been known for being particularly Panglossian, but most of those interviewed noted that things now really do seem to be worse. While the current state of affairs is, in one sense, a reflection of the wider economic shocks that have hit other workers, many of the problems now surfacing pre-date the financial crisis. The erosion of status, stature, and prospects for a future that much resembles the past has occurred for complicated reasons, experts say, including long-term, systemic, external and ideological ones as well as more recent political and economic developments, and some self-inflicted wounds.

"The American professoriate is in the midst of a major transformation, and it will very likely involve permanent changes to this line of work," Joseph C. Hermanowicz, associate professor of sociology at the University of Georgia and editor of the forthcoming book, *The American*

Academic Profession: Transformation in Contemporary Higher Education (Johns Hopkins University Press), said in an e-mail.

While he did not foresee the complete obliteration of tenured faculty, Hermanowicz said the trend of tenured and tenure-track faculty lines being replaced by adjuncts will likely continue, which will affect the nature of the university and higher education. "In the future, fewer and fewer people will know the academic life or the academic job that we have known over the past many decades," he said in an interview. "The consequences of that, on the whole, will be an eroded sense of what it means to be a faculty member and what a university faculty member actually is. We're in the midst of that confusion right now."

No Longer at the Center

Examples of the diminished stature of the faculty can be found widely. Governors have stripped public employees, including faculty members, of their collective bargaining rights. Legislatures and state systems of higher education have taken aim at tenure.

As intellectual elites, professors also make tempting targets. Classroom discussions conducted in the once-safe space of campus have been copied and distributed -- and heavily edited -- in what advocates of such measures tout as a bid for accountability, but that many faculty members see as propagandistic efforts at intimidation.

Others argue that faculty members wield too much power on campus and are too consumed with protecting their narrow interests at the expense of their institutions. Dick Arney, the former majority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives and, as chairman of FreedomWorks, a leading figure in the Tea Party movement, argued last month in the *Houston Chronicle* that universities must be restructured to "eliminate the faculty's iron grip over questions of governance" in order to hand over more authority to administrators, which, he said, would stamp out "cronyism."

And -- even as national politicians and foundations set goals for higher rates of educational attainment in the U.S. and as students grow increasingly diverse -- governors across the country have put higher education on the budgetary chopping block.

"Social, economic and political forces are converging in what you could say is a perfect storm," said Cathy A. Trower, research director of the Collaborative On Academic Careers in Higher Education at Harvard University. "Some would probably argue it's a storm whose time has come."

Faculty have not fared much better within the narrower confines of the campus. Just one-quarter of college presidents surveyed by *Inside Higher Ed* said that their faculty had proven helpful in responding to the economic troubles of the past two years (on par with student government representatives; elected faculty leaders scored slightly higher). The disconnect between faculty and administration was even more pronounced among presidents of private colleges. Asked what changes to campus they would make if not for fear of political blowback, private college presidents listed faculty-related options as their top three choices: mandating the retirement age for older faculty, changing tenure policy and increasing teaching loads.

“What is disturbing today is that it seems a generation of presidents and provosts, not external yahoos, seems bent on diluting one of the defining, strong features of their own universities” -- the centrality of the faculty -- said John R. Thelin, author of *A History of American Higher Education* (Hopkins) and a professor of education at the University of Kentucky.

Implicit in views like Thelin’s is the belief that the faculty’s stake in colleges and universities is not an esoteric matter, or something to be dismissed as petty self-interest. While few faculty members would deny that they are self-interested on these issues, many would argue that their concerns are quite reasonable when most of the adjunct jobs being created lack job security or health insurance, and adjuncts are given little input into their working conditions or the academic mission of their college. The faculty are at the heart of the institution, wrote Jack H. Schuster and Martin J. Finkelstein in *The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers* (Hopkins). “Whatever the distinctive contributions that have been made to societies over time by universities, those contributions are overwhelmingly the work of the faculty through their teaching and scholarship,” they wrote.

While many adjuncts argue that they are more skilled instructors because of their larger teaching loads, research also suggests that frequent contact between faculty and students outside the classroom -- the sort of contact for which adjuncts are neither compensated nor equipped in the form of office space -- is a solid predictor of student success. Being on campus also allows faculty members to weigh in on the direction of the institution in the form of shared governance. But that influence is ebbing, said many observers.

“The faculty is not, for the most part, in the center of the enterprise the way it was 20 years ago. We’ve had a mind shift,” said Finkelstein, professor of higher education at Seton Hall University. One example, he said, is that administrative oversight has grown in stature as traditional metrics for accreditation (the number of books in the campus library or the share of doctorates among faculty) have been replaced by a focus on desired outcomes -- outcomes that often are determined without significant faculty input. “It’s not that knowledge workers aren’t important,” said Finkelstein. “It’s that knowledge work is so important that we can’t leave it to knowledge workers.”

But, even amid such distress among the faculty, encouraging signs and counter-examples can be found, said Gary Rhoades, general secretary of the American Association of University Professors. He challenged the view that the faculty have been largely marginalized and that their influence is on the wane. “It’s probably not quite as bleak as that,” said Rhoades. “There is a lot of organizing, energy and pushback and an effort to create better working conditions for a whole variety of faculty.” Rhoades cited recent organizing victories for the AAUP and the American Federation of Teachers at the University of Illinois at Chicago and elsewhere.

Many faculty advocates are fighting back by seeking to reaffirm their role and more aggressively align their fate with that of students -- and their institutions. Faculty members in recent months have rallied alongside students to protest cuts to higher education, and academic labor unions on Tuesday will formally launch a national campaign, previously described here, that seeks to assure a brighter future for higher education.

Neoliberalism Coming Home to Roost

Although the recent stresses on the faculty have grown more evident, the underlying reasons for these changes, say many observers, are more complex and structural.

Attacks on tenure and on the role of the faculty tend to happen not just during times of economic insecurity, but also during periods of political flux -- both of which apply at present, noted several scholars. Added to the mix is a strain of anti-intellectualism and a suspicion of elites. Technology, too, has diminished many traditional avenues of intellectual authority, allowing the uninformed to appear, to the layperson, as well-versed as the expert. "You could say knowledge creation and people's views of that have changed," said Trower, of Harvard. "I'm not a big fan of Wikipedia, but it is information, and I do think it has caused a shift in how people think about what knowledge is and how it can be delivered and how it can be known."

But many agreed that perhaps the largest factor leading to the changed make-up of the faculty has been both slower moving and more consequential: the replacement of tenured faculty with adjuncts. Depending on the estimate, between one-half and two-thirds of the professoriate is composed of faculty members who have no tenure, low pay and little job security.

Thelin, of Kentucky, likened the structural integrity of higher education to a television commercial in which an exterminator tries to stop the spread of termites in a house, only to discover that the foundation has been devoured one morsel at a time, imperceptible to the naked eye. "It's like the man from Orkin: the termite damage won't be evident immediately," he said. "But over time it's going to nibble and nibble and nibble away the foundation of a sound academic institution."

The shift to a contingent workforce has been paralleled by changes that have altered the framework that once supported other highly trained professions, several experts noted. "We aren't the only profession that has had the nature of our job changed," said Gaye Tuchman, professor of sociology at the University of Connecticut and author of *Wannabe U.: Inside the Corporate University* (University of Chicago Press). "You used to have a family doctor who had a practice. There are fewer and fewer solo lawyers," she said. "What I think we have to recognize is that the transformation is not simply a transformation of the academy; there's a general transformation of the workplace."

That wider context doesn't make the reality of the academic job any more palatable to those in academe -- either for those who are in the ranks of the contingent workforce or for tenured professors who are among the beneficiaries of cheap adjunct labor.

"It is appalling to me. We have a two-class system in the American university," said Richard Vedder, distinguished professor of economics at Ohio University. "We have an aristocratic elite - the tenured class and those who have a reasonable probability of being tenured. On the other hand, we have these adjuncts."

This reliance on adjuncts, said Vedder, is in some cases an outgrowth of the increased institutional emphasis on research -- part of the arms race to boost rankings and prestige. Research output is relatively easy to measure, he said (far more than teaching). More critically, he added, research creates revenue for the institution. "In their zeal to get all this money -- research money -- they're paying more and more to full-time professors and giving them lower teaching loads," he said. "That's one dirty little secret we don't want revealed: as teaching loads

have fallen over the last half-century, we faced the little nagging problem that someone needs to teach the students." (Vedder's critique on teaching loads largely applies to more elite institutions -- and wouldn't make much sense to faculty at community colleges and access-oriented four-year institutions where 5-5 schedules are quite common.)

Attitudes among faculty, said Vedder – particularly at larger research institutions -- have hastened the transfer of teaching loads, in some cases, to graduate students and adjuncts. "Senior faculty can't be caught dead with undergraduate students," he said. "Moderately senior faculty members want to teach upper-level seminars and ... teach graduate students."

But the reliance on adjuncts, noted many experts, is just an example of a larger philosophical shift that has occurred, both in society at large and in higher education. "Most would narrow it down to the concept of neoliberalism itself," said Adrianna Kezar, associate professor of higher education at the University of Southern California.

Typically, neoliberalism is defined as a philosophy that prizes the operation and ethos of the marketplace as a model for all human endeavors. Growing out of this philosophy is the conviction that private industry is inherently more effective, efficient and responsive than public entities. Applied to higher education, neoliberal approaches tend to prize the business function of the university and to seek to quantify often complex and interrelated activities (such as education) into data-driven metrics -- a process that critics fault as reductive and skewed.

Neoliberalism was also evident in many of the seven factors Kezar described as both causing and reflecting the diminished role of the faculty, including putting money into revenue-enhancing areas like fund-raising instead of instruction and treating students like customers. A fresh example playing out in Texas is the effort to quantify the efficiency and productivity of faculty.

Kezar also pinpointed the Bayh-Dole Act, which was enacted in 1980 and amended in 1984, as a key turning point. The law, which has been much lauded by research universities, among others, for revitalizing U.S. competitiveness, spawning new industries and situating universities at the center of economic development, gave institutions of higher education, small businesses and nonprofits control of the intellectual property of inventions that were funded by government research money.

But Kezar, who credited Rhoades and Sheila Slaughter, in their book *Academic Capitalism* (Hopkins), for the original insight, described one of the law's consequences: the weaving of higher education more seamlessly into the fabric of the market place. "The following 20 years have just been a continuation and an acceleration of that 1984 act toward where we are today," Kezar said.

At the same time, several scholars noted that bottom-line considerations, some of which point to conclusions that are unfavorable to professors, cannot be ignored, either. A large proportion of an institution's budget goes to personnel -- and the faculty comprises a significant share of those costs (though it is diminishing compared to administration).

And, as colleges feel more pressure to increase access to students, certain kinds of higher education cannot be offered in the same way they have been. It is simply not possible to do so on

a wide scale, said Finkelstein of Seton Hall. "We can't have a model where a high-priced tenured professor teaches 20 students in a couple of courses," he said. "We have to do things differently."

Such a distribution of resources and, in a larger sense, the existence of a robust, tenured and institutionally powerful professoriate reflect a version of higher education that Finkelstein described as an historical aberration. The "golden age," as many referred to it, was the legacy of a huge influx of public money into higher education through the enactment of the GI Bill, which led many states to expand or add public institutions, and the establishment of the National Science Foundation, which helped give rise to the research university.

"We've had a 50-year run like nothing else," said Finkelstein. "We tend to think it's always been that way. It's never been that way. We've had all these great years and it's kind of a new historical moment."

But Rhoades of the AAUP countered this interpretation, saying that the "run" actually ended long ago. "The past has been past for 30 years," he said. "The condition we're in is not the result of the unsustainable halcyon days of the academy. The condition we're in is precisely the result of decisions."

Those decisions, said Rhoades, include prioritizing private gain over public investment -- for example, tax breaks for the wealthy over public education. In the context of higher education, he said, these decisions have resulted in a shift in the tuition burden from the state to the student, which has led to ever-increasing levels of student loan debt.

Another decision, made for what he described as short-term gain to the long-term detriment of both faculty and students, is the preponderance of adjuncts. "We've been at majority contingent faculty status at least since the early 1990s and it doesn't seem to be solving our problems," said Rhoades. "I would argue that this entrepreneurial model is what's unsustainable."

"It's not the new normal," he said. "It's old wine in a new bottle. We've seen the results of privatization and they're not great."

What's Next?

To newly minted Ph.D.s, the structural reasons for the lousy job market may well matter less than the inescapable fact that the job market is, well, lousy. Finkelstein said that the research he and Schuster have been doing "quite clearly suggests there isn't an academic career anymore."

While some observers thought that tenured faculty positions will remain a presence in the most elite colleges, nearly all agreed that the share of these jobs will continue to dwindle in most other areas of higher education. "Eventually, the last tenured professor will die," said Trower of Harvard. "We're not going to go back to the old days -- economically, technologically or politically."

For Vedder of Ohio, who has been teaching for 46 years, the darkening outlook has led him to change the advice he gives to his most promising students. "It used to be, until a few years ago, that I encouraged the best and brightest of my students. I urged them to consider following the

career I followed," he said. "Nowadays, I've sort of gone in the reverse. I tell them you don't want to rule out a college career, but it's not what it used to be."

While others said they understand that logic, and they fault academe for producing too many doctorates when there is clearly not a big enough market within universities to absorb them, they still worry about the larger ripple effects of bright students turning away from careers in higher education in search of greater stability and a better shot at a middle-class life.

"The deterioration of talent will completely alter the academic profession," said Hermanowicz of Georgia, "and its impact will be likely felt not only on the intellectual fabric of society, but on the nation's scientific and economic infrastructure."

He and others hoped that faculty would be among those who looked more widely and strategically at what their universities' priorities should be. And, while some experts acknowledged that faculty members too often reflexively resisted change, others noted that the frequent turnover of administrators also made it difficult for faculty members and management to work together productively.

In particular, some observers suggested that faculty members ought to help prod their universities, especially large public ones, to be more judicious in their ambitions, even if it means taking a hard look at their own departments. In some cases, this may mean attending fewer conferences or being more hard-nosed about the need for every department to cover every specialty in every discipline.

"Is it better to have a smaller institution with exceptionally well-trained faculty who do what they do at a superior level," asked Hermanowicz, "or is it better to have a very, very large institution in which you have a tremendous mixture of talent and an extraordinarily heterogeneous faculty whose net outcome of work is really performed in a mediocre way?"

For Thelin of Kentucky, as worrying as all these trends are, one overriding characteristic of professorial life remains true, though with a caveat. "My take on being a professor is that it's still one of the all-time great jobs -- but it is becoming less so and less certain to be so."

— **Dan Berrett**

Evaluating Community College Coaches Inside Higher Ed

May 16, 2011

Coaches at Division I programs in the National Collegiate Athletic Association are judged not only by their players' performance on the field but also by the players' performance in the classroom. A win-loss record is an easy enough gauge of the former. To judge a coach's effectiveness in encouraging the latter, presidents and athletic directors turn to the Academic Progress Rate, an NCAA-developed score that shows how a team's athletes are faring with regard to academic eligibility to play and progress toward graduation. Though it is rarely the sole reason for a coach's dismissal, a poor APR is becoming a factor in many institutions' hiring and firing decisions.

Community college administrators have no such formal metric to judge a coach's effectiveness on the academic side. In fact, because governing bodies like the National Junior College Athletic Association do not require their member colleges to track detailed data on their athletes, as the NCAA does for its members, very little is known about how community college athletes perform academically. Convinced that it can do more to track the academic progress of its athletes, Seminole State College, a two-year institution in Oklahoma, is testing a data-driven “accountability index” to gauge the job performance of its athletics coaches — one that objectively grades them on a scale from 1 to 10.

Thomas Mills, director of athletics and head men's basketball coach at Seminole State, said he developed his “accountability index” about three years ago, when he was getting ready to evaluate his coaches at the end of the academic year. Since he had only just then been promoted to director of athletics, Mills said he “wanted to have an objective way of starting the [evaluation] process so that everything didn't come out to be [his] subjective opinion.” He added that he was influenced at least in part by the NCAA's development of the APR and its other relatively recent academic reform efforts. Still, he bemoaned that there was no such help or movement at the community college level.

“As a coach, no one ever talked to me about graduation rates,” Mills said. “People talked to me about developing good solid students and citizens, and I knew getting them to graduate was thought of as a good thing. But there was never a strict connection between my leadership of a program and how many guys graduate. I thought, as an athletics director, that that ought to be part of the equation.”

At the end of the academic year, Seminole State coaches are graded on Mills's 10-point “accountability index,” which is determined using an equation that rates performance in five areas. Up to 4 points are awarded proportionally for a team's regular season winning percentage (e.g., a coach whose team had a .500 record would earn two of the four possible points). Up to 2 points are awarded for a team's postseason winning percentage and up to 2 more are awarded proportionally for its graduation rate for athletes who have exhausted their two years of eligibility (for example, if three of four players on a team who have exhausted their eligibility graduate, then a coach would earn 1.5 of the possible 2 points). Finally one point is awarded for winning a conference championship and another is awarded for making an appearance in a national tournament.

Only 2 of the 10 points on Mills's scale relate to academics, and focusing only on those athletes who complete eligibility is a rather favorable way of calculating graduation rates, in that it excludes players who stop participating in sports or drop out of the institution altogether. Though Mills said he believes his methods are sufficient for his purposes at Seminole State -- given that no one had considered graduation rates in evaluating a coach's performance before him — he noted that he is considering putting more emphasis on academics in the future.

Mills also awards coaches 0.25 “bonus points” for each athletic and academic All-American on their team and 0.50 “bonus points” for teams that have an overall graduation rate greater than 50 percent for entering scholarship athletes. (He provided *Inside Higher Ed* with a sample spreadsheet detailing how all of these different variables help determine an overall score for a coach on a scale of 1 to 10. The numbers used in the spreadsheet are real and document the recent performance of Seminole State’s women’s volleyball team, but the names have been changed to protect the athletes’ privacy.)

A coach’s score on the “accountability index” — along with his or her three-year average and career average score — is outlined on a detailed annual evaluation. In addition to providing this objective look at a coach’s performance, the evaluation has a section in which the athletics director can make subjective “performance observations.” For example, on a scale from 1 to 7, the athletics director determines how descriptive certain statements are of a coach’s performance — such as “monitors and vigorously promotes the academic success and graduation of student athletes” and “manages budget and resources of the program effectively.”

James Utterback, president of Seminole State, said he appreciates Mills's method of evaluating his head coaches. He added that it gives him more insight into their performance than he has ever had, which he acknowledged is helpful when determining whether to retain or dismiss a coach.

“I believe that there’s so much more to college athletics than winning and losing,” Utterback said. “So often how our sports are judged is simply based on whether or not a student can put a ball through a hoop or whether or not a team wins. But then there are the things that matter in life — like the retention rate of students and the graduation rate of students — things that are never looked at. That’s what I appreciate about what Dr. Mills has developed. It looks at all of the things that are important.”

Utterback also said he appreciated the “flexibility” of Mills’s evaluation system. For example, Mills said he believed other community colleges could use his method but alter the weight they give to variables like regular season winning percentage and graduation rate of players as they see fit. Mills said he likes there to be a balance between athletic and academic success when judging a coach’s performance.

“Athletics is about competition,” Mills said. “If you’re in a situation where you have the resources to be successful, then you should be successful. You should win championships and graduate kids. You do it in a high-character way. Both are important. There are people in athletics who are just about winning and there are people in athletics who are just about graduating kids. The purest form of athletics is for the people that are striving for both.”

Mills's coaches and others who have heard about the coaching evaluation system have mixed reactions. Some administrators who heard Mills and Utterback present on the system at the

annual meeting of the American Association of Community Colleges, which took place last month in New Orleans, complained that the system would not be a fair judge of their part-time coaches, many of whom are unpaid and do not have other connections to the institution. (Seminole State is a rarity among community colleges in that many of its coaches are also full-time instructors or staff members.) Even Mills himself said that one of his coaches, upon hearing of the new “accountability index,” asked him, “What score do I have to get so that I’m not fired?”

“There’s not a magical score that will get them fired or have them keep their job,” Utterback said. “But, if their overall score was going down for a three-to-five-year period, then that might tell us something. . . . We want head coaches that desire what we desire, and that includes making sure students go to class and graduate.”

Mills admitted he is still “working out the kinks” in his system but said, ideally, he would like for his coaches to maintain an average score above 5 and “consistently in the 6 or 7 range.” This is the third year the accountability index is being used at Seminole State, and Mills said he hopes to look at the three-year averages of his coaches and tweak it for future use after this academic year is finished.

Mills said he has not yet calculated longitudinal “accountability index” scores for his coaches or graduation rates for his athletes. Still, he hopes that implementing this system improves student outcomes at Seminole State.

Mills and Utterback both said they would be in favor of governing bodies like the NJCAA requiring that community colleges track the academic progress of their athletes via their coaches. Though Seminole State’s method is attracting some attention from some national community college athletics officials, it is unclear whether such an accountability system would ever be mandated.

“I think Dr. Mills has come up with a very logical and effective approach to evaluating his athletic program,” Mary Ellen Leicht, executive director of the NJCAA, who was on hand for Mills’s presentation at AACCC, wrote in an e-mail to *Inside Higher Ed*. “It takes into account not only the success of the coach/program at the competitive level but also factors in the academic achievements of the student-athlete.”

Still, Leicht added that every program has “its own definition of success.” And though she wrote that Mills’s evaluation system “would be welcomed at other two-year institutions,” she noted that it would not be “fair to assume his model would fit perfectly at every two-year college.”

NJCAA membership has repeatedly voted down attempts for academic reporting requirements of its institutions and strengthening its eligibility requirements — suggestions that outside critics, including those at the four-year level who are wary of accepting community college transfer athletes, have long advocated. Leicht, however, noted that “the NJCAA is continually looking at the association’s academic and athletic requirement so as to provide the best possible access to higher education for our student-athletes.” But she also expressed some anxiety about top-down mandates from the NJCAA.

“At a two-year college ... not every student-athlete who walks in the door is looking to graduate,” Leicht wrote. “Some are in certificate programs while others may be returning to school for retraining. Because the NJCAA does not have an age limit currently, we see many student-athletes who are not what would be considered traditional age. I think we need to be careful about labeling what is considered ‘successful’ at the two-year college level but do believe programs will be asked to justify their level of success (however they choose to define success) based upon objective data in the future.”

— **David Moltz**

Dan Walters: Latest Numbers reveal two-tier California

By Dan Walters
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A quarter-century ago, I wrote a series of articles about California's megatrends that transmogrified into a book, "The New California: Facing the 21st Century."

My chief premise was that intertwining cultural, demographic, economic and political forces were radically transforming the state.

I quoted one academic study that saw "the possible emerging of a two-tier economy with Asians and non-Hispanic whites competing for high-status positions while Hispanics and blacks struggle to get low-paying service jobs."

Last week's release of detailed 2010 census data and this week's unveiling of a massive statistical study of Californians' educations, incomes and health confirm that what was theory in 1985 has become reality.

The census tells us that the state's rapidly growing Latino population will surpass a declining and aging white population to become its largest ethnic group within a few years.

Meanwhile, data from "A Portrait of California," a 170-page statistical study from the Social Science Research Council, reveal a growing gap of personal well-being between a relatively small white and Asian overclass and a largely black and Latino underclass.

Both sets of data also confirm that there is a large geographic component to California's socio-economic stratification.

The research council's study, backed by foundation grants, developed a 1 to 10 index of well-being and applied it to communities and to ethnic, gender and geographic subgroups. It concluded that there are five distinct strata.

At the top, 1 percent of Californians live in "Shangri-Las" in and around Silicon Valley and portions of Southern California with an index of 9.35.

They're followed by 18 percent in a "metro-coastal enclave" (7.82), 38 percent in "Main Street California" (5.91), another 38 percent in "struggling California" (4.17), and finally, "the forsaken 5 percent" in central Los Angeles and rural areas (2.59).

"The analysis reveals that some Californians are enjoying the highest levels of well-being and access to opportunity in the nation today, while others are experiencing levels of well-being that characterized the nation decades ago," the report declares.

It cites these details:

- Asian American women have a life expectancy of 88.6 years, 18-plus years longer than African American men.

- A "stunning" \$58,000 gap in median personal earnings exists between Silicon Valley residents and those in East Los Angeles – \$73,000 a year in the former and \$15,000 in the latter.
- While only about 7 percent of white adults lack high school diplomas, it's 45 percent of Latino adults in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. More than half of public school students come from families in poverty, and just 100 of the state's 2,500 high schools produce nearly half of its dropouts.

Two tiers indeed.

Completing community college in L.A. County still a challenge

By Carla Rivera, Los Angeles Times

May 18, 2011

More than 70% of students fail to get a degree or transfer to four-year universities within six years, says a new report, adding that most of those students drop out.

Completing community college remains a challenge for students in Los Angeles County, with more than 70% failing to attain a degree or transfer to four-year universities within six years, according to a report released Tuesday.

Most of those students end up dropping out, the findings show. The study is a supplement to a statewide report issued in October by the Campaign for College Opportunity and the Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy at Cal State Sacramento.

"We are very much on track to producing a generation of young people less educated than we are," said Michele Siqueiros, executive director of the nonprofit Campaign for College Opportunity. "In California, with its growing diversity and needs of the workforce, what's at stake is the quality of life for all of us."

The study tracked more than 60,000 degree-seeking students who entered a community college in Los Angeles County during 2003-04 and analyzed their progress over six years.

Among other findings:

- 23% of black students and 20% of Latino students completed a degree or certificate or transferred after six years, compared to 39% of whites and 36% of Asian-Pacific Islanders.
- 44% of students completed the two years of credits required to transfer to a four-year university and only 27% completed the credits needed for an associate's degree.
- The county's overall completion or transfer rate of 29% was slightly lower than the statewide average of 31%.

Community colleges face special challenges because they have no admission criteria and accept a diverse population of young and old, many of whom may show promise but lack preparation for college-level study, said Francisco Arce, vice president of academic affairs at El Camino College in Torrance.

Reductions in state funding have also hampered student success. El Camino had to cut 1,250 classes over the last two years, Arce said. But his campus recently won a \$3.25-million, five-year federal grant to improve graduation rates.

"The most important thing we're trying to impress on students is to ... get an assessment so they know where they place in terms of reading, writing and math, to go through the college orientation process and to meet with a counselor to develop an educational plan," Arce said.

"Students who follow these steps are going to have much higher probability of success."

Doomsday budget forecast for schools may not materialize

By Sharon Noguchi

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After issuing thousands of preliminary layoff notices, drafting budgets with deep cuts and listening to sky-is-falling scenarios that would shorten the school year by a month, California schools now face a startling possibility: There actually may be the same amount of money as this year.

Now a preeminent school adviser, whom 90 percent of school districts pay to interpret the state budget and education laws, recommends districts add back the revenues they had planned to cut for next year. Ron Bennett, chief executive officer of the Sacramento-based School Services of California, said districts "will be able to bring back teaching, classified and administrative positions

But the rosy advice comes with a caveat: Plan on restoring it, but don't spend it yet.

"We're saying do not hire those teachers back until the (state) budget is actually enacted," Bennett said. That might be next month, or later.

That's in contrast to the agency's January advice, which was to prepare two budgets, one cutting \$19 per student and another cutting \$349 per student.

When state officials started hinting an "all-cuts budget," would be necessary without extra tax revenues, schools feared cuts of \$600 or even more per student.

School Services now recommends districts expect flat funding next year. Districts' basic revenue from the state averages less than \$5,000 per student for a unified school district.

Does this advice, coming after predictions of budgetary catastrophe, risk casting schools as Chicken Littles in the public eye?

New reality

Perhaps, but the reality is that the state budget picture changed. The Legislature acted this spring to impose deep cuts, income-tax revenues unexpectedly improved, and loud protests by teachers and lobbying by schools advocates made clear the political risks of further education cuts.

Now, after talk of budget Armageddon, a simple "more of the same" never sounded so good.

"I am excited by the fact that in the best case we're flat, and the worst we cut \$349," said Ann Jones, chief business officer of San Jose Unified School District. "A few months ago we were looking at this panic number that there was no way to respond to."

For San Jose Unified, the county's largest school district, even cutting \$349 per child would mean no layoffs -- but it would impose a furlough that shortens the school year by one week.

But in the complicated world of school funding, "flat funding" doesn't mean the same thing for everyone. For 15 of the county's 31 districts, those that draw revenues almost entirely from property taxes with minimal state funding, the state still has a hand in their pockets. Santa Clara Unified is one of those districts, and flat funding means it will cut \$9 million next year, Assistant Superintendent Jim Luyau said. That's because the state in March passed a bill ordering those so-called "basic aid" districts to fork over part of their revenues.

Luyau said, "It seems the state budget is still in the middle of nowhere."

Other districts also aren't optimistic. "Nobody has the inside track on what reality is going to be," said Rick Hausman, chief business officer of the Cupertino Union School District.

Hausman will recommend the school board stick with a \$349-per-student cut.

Because district voters earlier this month passed a \$125-per-parcel tax, the Cupertino district will not have to lay off employees. It rescinded more than 100 preliminary layoff notices sent in March.

How can Bennett be so hopeful when the Legislature remains at an impasse, the governor hasn't won either a tax extension or an agreement to place the question before voters, and there's still an estimated \$5 billion hole in the budget?

It's a combination of mathematics and political calculus, Bennett said. First, Brown led the state to solve 80 percent of its \$25 billion deficit problem by persuading the Legislature to make \$13.4 billion in cuts. The improving economy contributed \$6.6 billion in new income-tax revenue.

Now there are three main possibilities. In one, the Legislature approves a one-year extension of two special taxes, places a tax measure on the November ballot and state voters extend the taxes for five years. School budgets won't be cut.

Or the tax extensions fail. Then the state is short \$5 billion, but because of complicated school-funding laws, Bennett said, schools' share will be only \$1.6 billion. Even though Brown has expressed disdain for budgetary tricks, the governor could simply defer that amount in the state's payments to school districts until the following fiscal year.

Little support

Or, third, the state might try to close the deficit by cutting education. But to cut more than \$1.6 billion, the Legislature would have to suspend Proposition 98, the voter-passed funding floor for schools. Bennett contends neither legislative Republicans nor Democrats nor Brown support that idea.

Whether school districts take Bennett's advice depends on how California's 58 county offices of education direct their school districts.

Ken Shelton, chief business officer for the Santa Clara County Office of Education, said he hasn't made up his mind.

Whichever picture materializes, being better than expected shouldn't be confused with good, budget officials said.

"We've made major reductions in program and staffing previously," Hausman said. "Most districts have been deficit spending. That's not a windfall; it's just trying to get the program back to where it was."

Extension proposal splits community colleges

[By Matt Krupnick](#)

[Contra Costa Times](#)

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A proposal that could quadruple the price of some community-college courses has divided those trying to solve the 112-college system's funding problems.

The bill by Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica, and Assemblyman Cameron Smyth, R-Santa Clarita, would create a tier of "extension" courses -- similar to those at California universities -- where students would pay the entire cost of the class. The state traditionally has subsidized all but a small portion of the cost of community college classes.

The lawmakers envision the tier including, for example, classes that are more costly for colleges to offer, such as those that train dental hygienists, or popular programs where more course sections are needed.

Each college would determine the cost of each class, but the price would be limited to the direct cost of the course. Some have estimated courses will average \$150 per unit, or \$450 for a typical three-unit class.

Community-college courses normally cost \$26 per unit, although that price will go up to \$36 per unit later this year.

"Community colleges are shutting down summer sessions, winter sessions," Brownley said. "Students don't have access to the classes they need. (The bill) would provide a tool in the toolbox for some colleges."

The bill, Assembly Bill 515, prompted by requests from Santa Monica College and College of the Canyons, both in Los Angeles County, has met resistance since it was introduced in

February. Statewide faculty groups have rallied against it, and student leaders are leaning toward opposition as well.

Extension courses could create a "haves vs. have notes" system where wealthier students would be able to afford to take the classes they need to transfer to four-year schools or receive job training, said Shawn DeMille, the student body president at Pittsburg's Los Medanos College. Students also worry the system would draw resources from nonextension courses, he said.

"Every extension course you offer is going to be one less faculty member in the classroom for regular students," said DeMille, vice president of the statewide Student Senate. "It would further exacerbate the wealth gap."

But some college leaders have welcomed the proposal, saying California's dire budget situation demands innovative thinking.

"In some ways we're trying something that we wouldn't have ordinarily considered," said Peter Garcia, interim president of Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill. Garcia testified in support of the bill at a recent legislative hearing in Sacramento.

"I think it adds some capacity to community colleges when we're losing a lot," he said.

The state's community college chancellor, Jack Scott, has estimated more than 100,000 students were turned away from California campuses this year because they were not able to get the classes they needed. But critics say the Assembly proposal is the wrong way to address that problem.

Although the bill notes that extension courses may not replace cheaper ones, there is no good way to monitor the provision, said Steve Boilard, higher education chief for the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office. Boilard and others called the proposal "a slippery slope," saying it could persuade legislators to cut additional state funding if it appears colleges can charge more for classes.

"How do you know how much the state needs to provide if you have this open-ended amount?" Boilard said. "Where are the boundaries?"

Some lawmakers have already opposed the bill, which is still being considered by Assembly committees.

"This might create a whole new track of classes that are essentially moneymaking ventures," said Assemblyman Mike Gatto, D-Los Angeles. "I'm just a little hesitate about creating a separate tier for those who can afford it."

Matt Krupnick covers higher education. Contact him at 510-208-6488. Follow him at [Twitter.com/MattKrupnick](https://twitter.com/MattKrupnick).

Fire chief returns to his South Bay roots

Easy Reader

By **Andrea Ruse** | May 26th, 2011 |

Rialto Fire Chief Robert Espinosa, slated to take over the Manhattan Beach Fire Department on June 13, began his firefighting career following around Apache helicopters.

As a fire protection specialist for the U.S. Army in 1978, he was on-hand in case one of the top secret helicopters, of which there were four at the time, crashed and burned in the Arizona desert where they were being tested. By the end of his tenure, Espinosa, 52, was waking up at all hours of the day and night to jump in a helicopter and follow around the Apaches for 10 hours straight. During a 2 a.m. desert exercise during the Iran Conflict, he rescued two pilots knocked unconscious after their Cobra helicopter came down hard.

“My job was, if it crashed, to shut everything down and get the pilot out,” he said.

On June 13, the 29-year fire veteran will circle back to his South Bay roots and take over as chief of MBFD, replacing Interim Fire Chief Ken Shuck 15 months after former Fire Chief Scott Ferguson resigned.

“My heart’s always been in the South Bay,” said Espinosa, who started firefighting for the El Segundo Fire Dept. after he was discharged. “I’ve always enjoyed small-town firefighting. When this position opened up, it was a no-brainer for me.”

Espinosa was selected from 33 applicants and five interviewees after a search conducted in-house, according to Manhattan Beach City Manager Dave Carmany.

“Bob stood out as an experienced manager who has a consistent vision for the Manhattan Beach Fire Department,” Carmany said. “That, plus the VW camper.”

A home mechanic, Espinosa has been fixing up a 1986 Volkswagen Vanagon Westphalia he’s owned since 1987 and that has the “status of a loved family member.”

“When my kids were pre-teens they ducked when I dropped them off at school,” Espinosa said. “Now that they are grown up they ask for it in my will.”

Espinosa lives in Seal Beach with his wife, Laurie, and his step children James, 18, Aubree, 15, and Anthony, 13. He also has three other children, Angela, 30, Kelly, 27, and Jacob, 24, from a previous marriage.

Born and raised in Inglewood, Espinosa graduated from Leuzinger High School in 1977. At 16, he decided he wanted to be a firefighter after attending a high school career fair. He spent a semester at El Camino College in Torrance after graduation during which he took a call from a U.S. Army recruiter.

“I said, “Yeah, sure – if you have firefighters,” Espinosa recalled. “He said, ‘As a matter of fact, we do.’”

Three weeks later, Espinosa was training in the army at Fort Leavenworth, Missouri, before he was transferred to Alaska and later Arizona.

“In Alaska, people do whatever they can to stay warm,” he said. “There are a lot of fire activities and I learned quickly.”

After his discharge in 1982, Espinosa served as a firefighter with El Segundo for two years before transferring to Long Beach, where he said L.A.’s largest port, an airport and a diverse demographic afforded him the type of experience required to ultimately lead a department.

During his 24 years with Long Beach, Espinosa moved up the ranks to become assistant fire chief in 2007, before he was hired the following year as fire chief for Rialto where manages a department that has 72 employees, a budget of \$13.5 million dollars and responds to 8,500 calls annually. He also has an associate degree in Applied Sciences in Fire Science from Arizona Western College, a bachelor’s degree in Occupational Studies from California State University, Long Beach, completed the Managing Fire Prevention and Executive Planning programs and is enrolled in the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officers program.

When Espinosa learned of the chief position opening in Manhattan, he jumped on the chance.

“I’m most excited to be working in a small community that is very involved in government and really has embraced its fire department,” Espinosa said. “I like to create a vision so people know what direction they’re going in.”

Espinosa wants to look into incorporating new philosophies and technologies that have been successful elsewhere, such as the addition of mobile data computers to fire engines, which has reduced RFD’s response time.

“That kind of system has potential in the South Bay,” Espinosa said.

Last week, he toured the city’s fire department and met its staff.

“They just looked at me like the new animal in the zoo, trying to figure out what kind of animal I am – a reptile or a mammal,” he said. “But it was a good first meeting.” ER